

HERMISTON

Farmtastic event brings agriculture to children



Entomology grad student Matt Klein, center, shows participants in Farmtastic samples of spiders at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

When Lauren Smith pulled out a collection of spiders at the Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center Friday she had an eager audience.

The children participating in the station's first-ever Farmtastic event crowded closer to the Oregon State University graduate student, passing around the vials of specimens preserved in alcohol and commenting on the size of what was inside.

"Why are spiders beneficial?" she asked the group.

"Because they eat bugs!" a student piped up.

The lesson was part of a free day-long activity at HAREC for children interested in science and agriculture. Annette Teraberry, administrative assistant for

the center, said the event was conceived and designed by the center's graduate students as a way to introduce science to local youth.

The program was advertised through Hermiston's Parks and Recreation department, and 20 spots were available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Sarah Light, a graduate student working on a dual master's degree in soil science and plant pathology, said the group tried to come up with a curriculum that was a mixture of hands-on activities, games and informational lessons.

"The idea is to get kids excited about science in the context of agriculture," Light said.

She said each of the program's five graduate students have a different area of expertise, so the children were getting exposure to a wide range of elements of farming.

Before Smith's lesson on beneficial bugs — which also included a demonstration on pollination using an armful of flowers and a collection of preserved bees — Light had been teaching the group about plant pathology.

"Plants can get sick, too," she told the group, noting that plant diseases cost the United States about \$8 billion annually.

Later in the day the group would learn about soil and creek ecosystems, take a tour of the experiment station and visit the pathology lab. The center's staff hopes to make Farmtastic an annual event.

"It's been going great," Light said. "The kids seem really into it and we're having a lot of fun."

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

BRIEFLY

Splash pad opens in Boardman

BOARDMAN — About 130 people gathered Friday in Boardman to celebrate the grand opening of a new splash pad on Northeast Front Street.

Mayor Sandy Toms cut the ribbon and turned on sprinklers at the 3,500-square-foot pad, which features multiple jets of streaming water and more than three dozen water features.

It is free to use Boardman Splash Pad, which is part of a larger park area on Northeast Front Street near the SAGE Center. The splash pad is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. through Labor Day, and may stay open through fall depending on weather.

Toms thanked former Boardman city councilors Mark Pratt and Neil Livingston for bringing the idea of a splash pad to the council in 2011, and current city councilwoman Brenda Proffitt for obtaining a grant from the Wildhorse Foundation to bring the project to life.

The park area will get new picnic tables and benches later this summer. More information and photos of the splash pad are available online at www.cityofboardman.com.

Umatilla County announces new dispatch advisory committee

Umatilla County released a list of regional officials who will comprise an advisory board to oversee the contentious county dispatch system.

Issues have cropped up in recent months with the dispatch system. The county's new Sun Ridge Systems Inc. computer-aided dispatch has not been able to shake glitches, and officials from smaller towns in Umatilla County have expressed worry about the fairness of billing for use of the county's main communications center.

The advisory board is meant to examine these and other concerns.

The list of representatives includes: Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan, Undersheriff Jim Littlefield, Dispatch Commander Kathy Lieuallen and Commissioner Bill Elfering; Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts;



The city of Boardman celebrated the grand opening of a new splash pad Friday.

Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith and Police Captain Travis Eynon; Pilot Rock Mayor Virginia Carnes; Stanfield City Manager Blair Larsen; and Umatilla Police Chief Darla Huxel.

Portland State introduces new population forecast program

PORTLAND — Cities and counties will have better access to population forecasts after the state implemented the Oregon Population Forecast Program.

The university is touring the state to explain the new program. Umatilla County residents can find out about it Oct. 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center, 975 S.E. Columbia Drive in Hermiston.

Municipal governments use population forecasts to plan everything from new schools to urban renewal districts, and the state uses those forecasts to determine urban growth boundary expansions. In the past, various cities have used different consulting firms and different methods to create their forecasts on different schedules, making it difficult to compare numbers across the state.

As a result the state legislature tasked Portland State University's population research center with creating a single coordinated effort that cities and counties will be able to

access while making decisions about their future.

7-Eleven robbery suspect to be tried as an adult

HERMISTON — The 15-year-old suspect accused of holding up Hermiston's 7-Eleven convenience store is being tried as an adult.

Moises Flores was arrested early Tuesday by Hermiston police on suspicion of an armed robbery that had occurred about 12:30 a.m. He was arraigned Wednesday in Hermiston on charges of felony first-degree robbery, unlawful use of a weapon, first-degree theft, menacing and second-degree theft.

Hermiston Police Department initially did not release Flores's name because he was a juvenile. Chief Jason Edmiston reported on Tuesday that after 7-Eleven employees reported the armed robbery, Capt. Darryl Johnson spotted a teenage boy matching the description given by witnesses in the area of East Jennie Avenue and Northeast Third Street. He fled on foot but was captured and found in possession of a loaded handgun and a bag of money believed to be from the crime.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

PENDLETON

Man volunteers to paint house, asks for help

By JONATHAN BACH
East Oregonian

Josh Cyganik was just cleaning his truck when he heard two kids across the street say someone should "burn down" an old man's house.

"This is the crappiest house I've ever seen. Someone should tear it down and burn it," he recalled them saying as the house's owner, an older gentleman, sat on the porch. He admitted censoring some of the fouler language the kids used.

The house at 214 S.W. Goodwin Avenue is in ill repair. The look of shame on the owner's face after he heard the comments resonated with Cyganik. He decided not to let the insults stand as the last word.

"Nobody should have to feel that way as far as respect goes," he said Friday afternoon.

After he heard the conversation, he got the idea to paint the man's house. He went to Tum-A-Lum Lumber and asked if the company would be interested in donating supplies to help him paint the house.

They donated paint for the job, he said. Once that was confirmed, he said he asked the owner if the project would be okay. He said the owner agreed it would.

Cyganik has volunteered to paint the house and has invited community members to join him to help on Saturday starting at 8 a.m. The house is across Southwest Goodwin Avenue from the Union Pacific Railroad yard office.



On Friday, Josh Cyganik, 35, prepares the house at 214 S.W. Goodwin Ave to paint the next day. Cyganik put out a call on Facebook for volunteers to join him at the house on Saturday starting at 8 a.m.

Contact Jonathan Bach at jbach@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0809.

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Wed. Aug. 12 • 9pm
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