

HERMISTON

First Thursdays thriving

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Lucky Endz Gifts was crowded with customers Thursday night as Hermiston residents took advantage of the refreshments, sales and longer hours that come with First Thursday.

"I've never been in here before and I freaking love this place," said Destiny Irevia as she browsed through a rack of colorful blouses.

Her enthusiasm is what First Thursdays are trying to create.

Judy Currin-Pederson of Lucky Endz Gifts said the point of the events, which she helped start this summer as a member of the Hermiston Downtown Association, is to get people into downtown businesses to meet the owners and become familiar with their products and services.

"It's nice if people buy but we don't expect them to buy," she said. "We just want them to see what we have to offer."

The idea was working for the Irevia family. Destiny's mother Debbie Irevia said she heard at work that she could get scrubs from the downtown business ReScrub on sale on the first Thursday of the month. Afterward she and her children browsed the sales at other downtown businesses.

"I think it's great," she said. "I like the evening hours for people who work."

The family was headed to Sharon's Sweet Treats next, which was offering a single baby back rib with coleslaw, a pulled pork slider or a glass of watermelon lemonade for a dollar apiece.

Down the street, Bonnie Cobb was browsing stores like Defining Details and Indulge, where free refreshments and sales were drawing customers in.

"I hadn't taken advantage of the fact that we had new businesses on Main Street and I wanted to come check them out," she said.

She said she read about First Thursdays in the newspaper and thought it sounded like a great idea.

Currin-Pederson said the events have really taken off with downtown business owners, an increasing number of whom are volunteering to extend their hours on the first Thursday of every month and to



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Abigail Hernandez performs outside of Defining Details on Main Street during First Thursday.

offer special deals and giveaways to get people out and about.

"Everyone's just really jumping on board," she said.

She said customers seem to like them, too, and she hopes that word of mouth continues to build the event.

"You can snack, walk, and shop and then end the night with a nice dinner," she said.

The event was started by the Hermiston Downtown Association, formerly known as the Hermiston Downtown Merchants Association. The group of 21 businesses meets once a month to brainstorm ways to help promote downtown. They help sponsor events like Funfest, act as the "go-to" for all things downtown for entities like the city and the chamber of commerce and create marketing activities like the passports customers were getting stamped to be eligible for a door prize drawing.

In the past the health of the downtown business area, especially Main Street, has drawn concerns from city leaders who worried about empty storefronts. But those storefronts have been filling up lately.

Currin-Pederson said she could think of seven new businesses that have opened up shop downtown this year, and as far as the Downtown Association is concerned things are really looking up for Main Street these days.

She said downtown merchants are grateful for Hermiston residents who support them by shopping local, and they try to do what they can to give back to the community.

For this summer's set of First Thursdays, they have worked on raising money to buy new back-to-school shoes for children whose parents can't afford them. Before Thursday's event about \$800 had been raised, Currin-Pederson said, and efforts that night such as Nookies' pledge to donate \$8 for every growler filled were helping increase that number.

There will be no First Thursday event in September but Currin-Pederson said the Downtown Association plans to run them in October, November and December.

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STANFIELD

Council bans pot businesses

By SEAN HART  
East Oregonian

Pot businesses will not find a home in Stanfield.

City Manager Blair Larsen said the city council unanimously approved an ordinance Tuesday prohibiting both medical and recreational marijuana facilities.

While the majority of Oregon voters in 2014 approved Measure 91 — which legalized recreational marijuana and created a permitting process for pot businesses — 63 percent of Umatilla County voters opposed it. House Bill 3400, passed in the legislative session this year, allowed local governments in counties where at least 55 percent of voters opposed the measure to ban pot businesses.

Larsen said that after House Bill 3400 passed he informed the council, which instructed him to draft an ordinance enacting a ban.

"I found some examples (of similar ordinances) and brought it before them, and it was unanimous," he said. "I don't think it really changes anything because I don't think we were in danger of having any shops open up."

Larsen said, however, the ban has consequences. He said the city will no longer be entitled to the tax revenue generated from marijuana sales, but he did

not believe it would not have a significant fiscal impact on the city.

"Our population is so small that I don't know that we would have gotten that much in the first place," he said. "And then after two years, they're not going on population (for tax distribution), they're going to base it on where the retail shops open up, so the only way to get any tax money is if you have a shop and it's based on how many shops you have."

Larsen said the facilities ban does not affect the non-business aspects of Measure 91. Possession and private use of marijuana by adults and the private cultivation of up to four plants at a residence remains legal.

"You can still use in the privacy of your own home," Larsen said. "I believe you can still grow in your back yard as long as it's out of public view. You just can't open up a shop."

The ordinance, which took effect immediately, states the city will use "any and all enforcement remedies available" to shut down any facilities in violation of the ordinance, including nuisance laws and court action.

It also repealed a previous ordinance that regulated the time, place and manner of medical marijuana sales because the businesses are banned entirely.

HERMISTON

Winning the gold in front of Hitler

Speaker to share memories of 1936 Olympic victory

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Umatilla County residents can get a glimpse inside the head of the 1936 Olympic gold medal rowing team that beat the Germans in front of Adolf Hitler.

The nine men from the University of Washington who rowed their way to an improbable victory in Berlin are all dead, but Jack Roth, 97, joined the crew two months later and stayed with them for four years. Altrusa International of Hermiston is sponsoring a visit from him Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center. Roth will share his memories of the crew featured in Daniel James Brown's book "The Boys in the Boat," and their dedication. Their determination to succeed meant Roth and the rest of the crew found themselves practicing through storms and ice.

"Day after day that's the kind of weather we went out in," Roth said.

He said more than anything else crew taught him a sense of determination, which sustained him through the Great Depression, serving in the Navy during World War II and afterward becoming an avid outdoorsman and wood craftsman.

More than anything, though, the thing he misses about crew is the "boys in the boat."

"I think it boils down to the camaraderie," he said. "Crew was something that took 100 percent of your extra time and efforts."

When the team won the Olympic gold medal for men's eight-man rowing, it was considered one of the biggest upsets of the games. The blue collar farm boys and lumberjacks from Washington were on a choppy outside lane and fighting a headwind when they pulled off an impressive win against several highly polished European teams.

"Can you just imagine what it was like with Hitler standing there? He wanted to prove his dominance, and to have that taken away by a three foot loss ..."

Roth said, trailing off. His daughter Carol Roth will also speak Tuesday. She said reading "The Boys in the Boat" really helped her understand her father and his constant drive and focus. She said she grew up in the outdoors, sailing and climbing mountains with her father since she was a child.

"When Dad talked about crew he would tell funny stories but I never really understood the discipline and perseverance required," she said.

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MILTON-FREEWATER

Muddy Frogwater seeks backyard grillers

East Oregonian

For bragging rights and a chance to win Ranch & Home gift certificates or a Pit Boss Pellet Grill, backyard grillers are invited to register for the Muddy Frogwater BBQ Cook-Off Competition.

Barbecue rib masters are encouraged to grab their favorite rib recipe and put together a team to compete in the event, which is Sunday, Aug. 16 with check-in from 6-7 a.m. at Yantis Park during the Muddy Frogwater Country Classic Festival. Although there's no registration fee to enter the contest, participants must provide their own ribs and spices.

The first place winner will receive the pellet grill,



EO file photo

Boardman firefighters Gene and Tammy Shepperd add seasonings while competing in the Buckaroo BBQ Challenge in Pendleton. Backyard grillers have an opportunity to compete during the Muddy Frogwater BBQ Cook-Off Competition in Milton-Freewater.

which was donated by Ranch & Home. Second and third place finishers will

receive \$150 and \$75 gift certificates from the store.

Participants will fire up

the barbies at 7 a.m. Meat will go to the judges by 1 p.m. In addition, ribs and salads will be available for purchase after the awards are announced at 3 p.m.

Other park activities during the cook-off include a community worship service at 9 a.m., followed by a Christian concert at 10 a.m. People can browse the vendor booths from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. And the beer and wine garden is open from noon to 2:30 p.m. Shaniko will rock the stage from 12:30-3:30 p.m.

To register for the rib cook-off or for more information, contact the Milton-Freewater Chamber of Commerce at 541-938-5563, mfmfdfrog@mfcchamber.com or visit www.mfcchamber.com

PENDLETON

City council approves road crack seal project

East Oregonian

While the Pendleton City Council continues to debate how best to use funds for major road repairs, work on minor road damage will commence much sooner.

The city council unanimously voted to award a \$45,235 bid to Kerry Fuller Enterprise Inc. of Bend to do a citywide crack seal project.

According to a report written by City Engineer Tim Simons, the project will cover seven miles of road and will be applied to streets that were overlaid within the last 12 years.

Simons said crack seals work best on new streets and help stave off the need for a new overlay, which costs 100 times more per linear foot than crack seals.

Most of the chip seals will be applied to Pendleton's

busiest streets, which have received the bulk of the city's \$300,000 pavement preservation budget. Neighborhood streets recently built in subdivisions or upgraded through local improvement districts could also be included in the project.

To avoid drawing money from the city's paltry pavement preservation budget, the city specifically earmarked the crack seal project separately from pavement preservation with the intention of continuing it in future years.

Simons said this will be the first time in his 12 years as a municipal employee that the city has done such a project.

The council also approved a \$241,875 bid from Pioneer Construction Inc. to overlay Northwest Carden Avenue, from the Pendleton High School entrance to Northwest 10th Street, and Southwest

Second Street, from Southwest Dorion Avenue to Southwest Emigrant Avenue.

Other topics discussed during the meeting include:

- The city council unanimously approved to set up a public hearing for a \$296,000 local improvement district for the second and third phase of the Pendleton Heights development.

Under the terms of the district, the city would provide a bridge loan to build roads and infrastructure that would service the development, which the developers would need to pay back in full.

The second phase, which the developer has already obtained financing for, is 10 units and the third phase is 18 units.

Pendleton Heights' first phase, comprised of 22 units, opened late last year with

plans to ultimately expand the subdivision to a total of 72 units.

- The council also approved an intergovernmental agreement with the city of Pilot Rock to provide administrative services for its police department.

Due to the absence of a police chief in Pilot Rock since Jan. 30, the city of Pilot Rock will pay Pendleton \$4,000 a month to provide administrative services including training and employee evaluation.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said the agreement balanced Pendleton's ability to be a good neighbor while avoiding completely subsidizing Pilot Rock's police force.

Pendleton police will not have to provide patrol services as a part of the agreement.

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