

HERMISTON

Plant sale fundraiser benefits FFA

By JENNIFER COLTON
Staff Writer



Staff photo by Jennifer Colton
Freshman Ethan Atkinson and junior Ellery Jones pinch yellow leaves off geraniums Monday in the greenhouse at Hermiston High School. The student-raised plants will be on sale to the public this Friday and Saturday.

Thousands of plants will be up for grabs this weekend for the annual Hermiston FFA Plant Sale.

Flowers, herbs, vegetables and even cacti will be on sale for the fundraiser, and each plant represents weeks or months of work from Hermiston High School students.

The process begins in January, when students begin to start products from seed. About 60 students — 20 in each of Hermiston High's horticulture and propagation classes — maintain the greenhouse, and two greenhouse managers, also students, take care of the weekend watering and fertilizing.

"In an average week, we spend about 70 percent of our classroom time out here watering, fertilizing, pinching, transporting and just taking care of plants," agriculture educator Alyssa Davies said.

This week, student have put finishing touches on the plants and hanging baskets

to make sure products are ready when the sale opens on Friday.

"Students put in a lot of hard work and effort for these plants, and it's a visual representation of what we've learned and what we've accomplished," said Ellery Jones, a junior. "We're

learning skills for the future."

Thirteen different types of flowers and six different types of vegetables will be available in the sale. Most plants cost about \$2, and hanging baskets cost \$30.

"I think our community takes a lot of pride in the fact students have grown

these," Davies said. "This is a great learning tool for these students, and the community supports that."

All proceeds from the sale will go toward the Hermiston FFA program.

The sale runs from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday and from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Hermiston man jailed after assaulting wife

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

A Hermiston man faces felony domestic violence charges after beating his wife with a tree branch while camping.

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson also said his office arraigned John Alexander Brown, 29, on one count of second-degree assault, two counts of fourth-degree assault and two counts of felon in possession of a firearm. The assault charges all relate to domestic violence.



Brown

at night, Nelson said, particularly after finding two firearms at the camp. Rather than take the unnecessary risk, the sheriff's office protected the wife and children and got them to an ambulance bound for Pioneer Memorial Hospital, Heppner, which released them the next day, Nelson also said the mother and her children now are safe.

Deputies caught Brown on Sunday as he was leaving with the pickup and camp trailer. The sheriff's office reported Brown did not fight during the arrest.

Brown, his 27-year-old wife and their daughters, ages 6 and 7, were camping in mountains above Blake's Ranch south of Heppner, according to a written statement from the Morrow County Sheriff's Office. The wife called 9-1-1 at about 8:30 Saturday night and reported her husband assaulted her. She also said he took off on foot and she did not know where he went.

Nelson said Brown used a large "branch/stick" to strike his wife, leaving her with bruises and cuts, and their children were present during the assault. He said her injuries could have been worse given the size of the weapon.

Law enforcement was concerned with tracking Brown through the forest

Nelson said Brown did not use the guns in the assault but instead fired them in the woods. Still, Nelson said, Brown has felony convictions in California, so it is unlawful for him to have guns.

Local circuit court records also show Brown has four open cases in Umatilla County — one for burglary, two for contempt of court and one for failure to appear. All involve the same victim.

Brown pleaded not guilty on Monday to the initial charges stemming from the assault. Nelson said he is taking the case to a grand jury this week. Brown remains in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, in lieu of \$150,000 bail.

HERMISTON

EOTEC added to transient room tax fund

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Money from Hermiston's tax on hotel rooms will now help cover operational costs for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The city council voted Monday to approve adding EOTEC to the list of approved uses for the transient room tax, but left the exact amount of money flexible. The city is responsible for splitting any needed subsidies for EOTEC's operations budget with Umatilla County, but because the center is not yet open those costs remain largely unknown.

The ordinance passed Monday night adds EOTEC to the "event center" category, where the Hermiston Conference Center has been getting approximately 28 percent of the transient room tax revenues.

City Manager Byron

Smith said for many years that percentage was not enough to cover the conference center's operating costs, and the city had also been using its general fund to subsidize its operation. However, in recent years substantial growth in room tax revenue has resulted in more funds being earmarked for the conference center than are needed.

This year the room tax is expected to generate \$161,000 for the conference center, while only \$90,000 is needed. The new ordinance means the extra money can go to EOTEC instead of into the general fund, meaning EOTEC's operations will be supported by the out-of-town visitors the project is meant to attract, instead of local property taxes.

"We're not proposing at all not to fund the conference center," Smith said, clarifying that the intent wasn't to reduce the money put toward

the center.

The ordinance also rounded all of the numbers in the room tax to flat percentages, adding the leftover fractions of roughly 1.5 percent into a fund that will put more than \$8,000 a year toward maintenance of the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center.

Other actions taken at Monday's city council meeting include:

- The council approved a new stop sign at the intersection of Joshua Court and Southwest 10th Street. Smith said the cost would be minimal because the sign could be affixed to a street sign pole already in place.

- The council adopted a summary report of a January goal-setting session they participated in. City goals set at that meeting are to revitalize downtown, develop more parks and recreation opportunities, create an infrastructure master plan,

create a public transportation plan, perform an assessment of city facilities, support economic development, see EOTEC to completion, create a capital improvement plan, perform an assessment of city service levels and continue with ongoing projects such as adopting a new city brand.

- The council received an update on EOTEC. Rob Drier of Frew Development said the event center will be ready for an open house on May 13 from 3-7 p.m. with a ceremony at 4:30 p.m. The first event scheduled after that is a League of Oregon Cities meeting on May 18.

- The council discussed the April 9 community recycling event, which Mayor David Drotzmann called "an event the community can be proud of." Approximately 270 people brought in 83 tons of junk to be recycled, up from 200 people and 61 tons in 2016.

'Listen to Her' will gauge women's experience

PENDLETON — Those who care about the issues that affect women and girls are encouraged to attend the "Listen to Her" town hall Wednesday, April 27, at BMCC.

The event will provide an opportunity for the Women's Foundation of Oregon to gather the experiences of women to show the stories behind the statistics. Information gathered from statewide town halls will appear in a comprehensive research report to be released in the fall.

The event is 5:30-7 p.m., Wednesday, in BMCC's Science & Technology building, room 200. The foundation will host a smaller gathering the next morning for community leaders.

BMCC to hold groundbreaking for bond project

HERMISTON — Blue Mountain Community College will break ground Thursday on its new precision

irrigation agriculture center on the campus of Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

The project is one of three approved by the BMCC bond measure which voters passed in 2015. The college will also build a new workforce training center in Boardman and rebuild its facility for agricultural resource management later this year.

The precision irrigated agriculture center will train students how to use technology like GPS, satellites, drones and smartphones to make agriculture more efficient. Precision irrigation focuses on the idea of using just the right amount of water and fertilizer at just the right time to maximize yields while conserving resources.

The public is invited to a groundbreaking ceremony, which will start at 2 p.m. HAREC is located at 2121 S. First St. in Hermiston.

Family History Center holds open house Saturday

HERMISTON — An open house celebrating the

new look of the Family History Center will be held Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the center, 850 S.W. 11th St., adjacent to the Hermiston Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The open house will feature 20-minute presentations at the top of every hour, tours of the facility and refreshments. Visitors also are encouraged to bring family photos and a flash drive for a quick lesson in scanning.

The Family History Center is a genealogical research library that serves communities in western Umatilla County and Morrow County. In addition to online computers with access to Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org and Find-A-Grave.com, printers and scanners are available to digitize your genealogical records for no charge. The center also has microfilm and microfiche readers with more than 6,000 film items on site, and millions more available to order. And staff is available for one-on-one assistance during the center's regular hours: Tuesday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday

from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Thursday from 6-9 p.m. In addition, monthly workshops are offered on the fourth Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. On May 28, the center will host a workshop on the intricacies of Ancestry.com

For more information, call 541-567-6067 during open hours or 541-561-5137.

Inmate dies at TRCI

Fourth inmate death in 3 months

East Oregonian

An inmate at Two Rivers Correctional Institution died unexpectedly Monday morning.

Avis Woodrum, 60, was being treated in TRCI's Health Services Unit when he was pronounced deceased at 8:53 a.m. Monday.

Woodrum entered Oregon Department of Corrections custody on Aug. 30, 2011 on one count of kidnapping in the second degree out of Marion County. His earliest release date was March 25, 2017.

The Oregon State Police Criminal Investigation Division is conducting an investigation, as with all unanticipated deaths in

state prisons.

Next of kin has been notified, and no other details are available at this time.

Woodrum is the fourth TRCI inmate to die in three months.

On April 3, inmate Shawn McMillian, 44, incarcerated out of Lane County, was transported to a local hospital for medical care and died early on April 4. On March 20, inmate Ronald Marcus, 60, out of Multnomah County, was found unresponsive in his cell and later died.

And on Feb. 27, inmate Joel Abbot, 60, was found unresponsive in his cell and flown to a Portland hospital, where he later died.

TRCI is a multi-custody prison in Umatilla that houses approximately 1,800 male inmates and opened in 2000.



Woodrum

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Worried About Falling?

Presented by Adrian Cagigas, MA, ATC/L

More than half of people over the age of 80 will fall every year, and 87% of all fractures in this age group, are due to falls. The good news is that falls can be prevented. Join us for an educational session on what causes people to fall, and what can be done to reduce the risk of falling.

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