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# EAST OREGONIAN

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## IRRIGON

# Adan gets his chair

### GoFundMe supporters and wheelchair company surprise student

By **KATHY ANEY**  
*East Oregonian*

Jose Adan Guardado's world just got bigger. The Irrigon high school student learned he has a brand new ride — a cutting-edge power wheelchair equipped with Bluetooth and infrared technology. Teachers, staff and students gathered last Thursday in the Irrigon High School cafeteria to surprise Adan.

Born with severe cerebral palsy, Adan can't speak clearly or control his muscles, but he has an agile brain. He communicates by pressing his head against a padded bar to piece sentences together letter by letter. Even with his dysfunctional body, he fixes school computers, creates 3-D videos, dreams of working as a computer technician and has an omnipresent smile.

His rickety old power chair frustrated him. The chair regularly powered down at unplanned moments and sometimes refused to restart. Adan mounted a GoFundMe campaign to raise \$18,000 for a high-tech replacement.

Irrigon life skills teacher Mark Rouska latched onto the effort and acted as an engine. The teacher, who has stage 4 lung cancer, hoped to secure the chair before the end of a school year that could be Rouska's last.

The campaign rose steadily to \$13,000 and caught a big break this month from Nu Motion, the chair's manufacturer. The company would take money raised and write off the rest.

Rouska brushed tears as he watched Adan take ownership of his high-tech chair.

"It was really emotional," he said. "It kind of gave me hope for my own situation. It reinvigorated my own fight and my own medical battle."

Rouska admitted by phone Tuesday that his condition has taken a downturn. His goal is to get back for the last few weeks of school.

See ADAN/8A



Irrigon senior Jose Adan Guardado has a brand new, state-of-the-art wheelchair thanks to donations gathered using the website GoFundMe and a sizable donation from the wheelchair company. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**"This new chair will help with my life, my job and school. I can go to places and feel safe in my new wheelchair and I can be more independent."**

— Jose Adan Guardado, Irrigon high school senior, in a letter to supporters

## HERMISTON

# Senior center plans OKed

### City adds \$550K basement to project

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
*East Oregonian*

The city of Hermiston has decided to add a basement to the new senior center planned for downtown.

The city council approved plans for the Harkenrider Center on Monday night, including a \$550,000 basement that would come from the city's general fund reserves.

The rest of the building would be paid with the remaining \$1.63 million from a Community Development Block Grant. The city will pursue other options for the \$200,000 needed for the parking lot, but could eventually end up paying for that too if other possible funding sources don't pan out.

"\$2 million doesn't go as far as you'd think it would," grant director Larry Fetter said, referring to the original grant amount.

The current Hermiston Senior Center on the fairgrounds is 5,500 square feet. The plans approved Monday include a 7,200-square-foot main level (including great room, reception area, kitchen, storage, two breakout rooms and an office) and a 3,800-square-foot basement with elevator access.

Reducing the main floor plan from the \$2.5 million design presented a month ago to the \$1.6 million design presented Monday came with some sacrifices. Members of the senior center told the council they were unhappy with the changes.

Virginia Beebe said changing the fireplace from a double-sided one in the center of the building to one against the wall meant people would end up looking out the window instead of at the fireplace.

"If we're going to have a fireplace it belongs in the middle of the building," she said.

There were also concerns that the kitchen size had been reduced — despite still being 50 percent larger than the current senior center kitchen — and that the senior center bus would be parked in a secure area at the public works department instead of an on-site garage.

City administrators and councilors responded to the concerns by pointing out that the previous plans

See HERMISTON/8A

## PENDLETON

# Old bank goes to the auction block

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**  
*East Oregonian*

An old bank is back on the market in Pendleton. Realty Marketing/Northwest of Portland is brokering the auction of the former Wells Fargo bank branch at 256 S. Main St.

According to the Realty Marketing/Northwest website, the minimum bid for the 9,500-square-foot building is \$135,000 and the auction will take place Saturday.

Mostly vacant for the past 15

years, the building still contains all the makings of a functional bank.

"It has a main level lobby and teller area, and has secondary access from S.E. Dorion Avenue," the ad states. "There is a large walk-in vault with safe deposit boxes that remain. There is a 2,500-square-foot mezzanine area with lunch room, offices, work area, and two restrooms. There is a small basement that had been used for storage which also contains a walk-in vault."

See BANK/8A



The former Pendleton Wells Fargo branch sits vacant Tuesday afternoon. The 9,500-sqaure-foot building will be auctioned off in Portland May 14. Photo by Antonio Sierra

