

# COUNCIL: Primmer's biggest goal is improving public transportation

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balloon festival and recruiting entertainment to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

A third focus is mental health in the community, which he hopes the city can improve by recruiting more private sector providers to the area and working with state representatives to improve laws and funding.

## Manuel Gutierrez

Gutierrez is finishing his first full four-year term as a city councilor (he previously served part of a term before resigning in 2008 because he had planned to move outside city limits). He works as an advocate at Domestic Violence Services and represents the council on city committees, including the Hispanic Advisory Committee.

Gutierrez said water has been, and will continue to be, one of his top priorities for the city. Hermiston has invested in new water infrastructure in recent years and helped secure legislation to pull more water out of the Columbia River for agriculture, but he said it will be important to stay vigilant on the issue.

He also said the city needs to focus on economic development, particularly in "bringing Main Street alive" and being "aggressive"

in working to bring new businesses to the area through initiatives such as tax breaks and creating a city-owned natural gas company.

Gutierrez said he supports the city's planned \$1.5 million festival street, connected to the new senior center, as a means of bringing more life to downtown.

## Rod Hardin

Hardin, who serves as principal of Hermiston Christian School, first joined the city council in 1992 and is its longest-serving member.

He said he hopes to have the opportunity for one more term to see current projects such as the new bus route to completion, and also to provide stability and institutional memory while Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith, who just started his second year on the job, continues to settle in.

Hardin sits on the small cities steering committee for the National League of Cities and said the position gives him an opportunity to visit and stay in contact with other small cities around the country and see how they are handling similar issues as are facing Hermiston.

Hardin said he has always been concerned with making sure Hermiston's streets are properly maintained and hopes to continue to work toward the goal of having no unpaved roads in city limits.

Hardin also said urban renewal, code enforcement, transportation and finishing the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center are all priorities for him.

## John Kirwan

Kirwan is in his first term as city councilor, and said in the nearly four years he has sat on the council the city's transparency and relationship with its citizens has greatly improved. Council meetings have gone from 10 minute cursory sit-downs where little was discussed to meetings that usually stretch over an hour, he said, and there is less discontent on the council and in the city.

Kirwan said during that time the city has completed a long list of major projects, from rewriting the city's charter to creation of the urban renewal district downtown.

Now the city has formed a committee to create a prioritized list of needed capital improvements. Kirwan said a major focus of his, should he be re-elected, will be making sure the city has the infrastructure it needs to keep up with its rapid growth and attract new economic development.

He said another big focus for the city council has been improving Hermiston's livability through a robust parks and recreation department and investment in projects like the senior center.

He hopes to be able to see those projects through.

## Doug Primmer

Primmer said one of his biggest goals when joining the city council four years ago was to improve public transportation, so he is pleased to help the city plan a free fixed bus route through town in partnership with Kayak Transit and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation that will begin in 2017.

Primmer, who has worked for the Department of Corrections for 27 years and is also a reserve deputy for the Umatilla Sheriff's Department, also pointed out that the city council's accountability has been much improved during his time on the council.

He said making sure EOTEC is finished on time needs to be a priority for the city in the coming year, while also preserving the Hermiston Conference Center as a public asset. He is also anxious to see the new senior center built in 2017.

Primmer said he works hard to listen to citizens' point of view, gathering feedback through social media and on the street, and will continue to do so if re-elected.

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# OIL: Three local cities will vote in Nov. to allow marijuana sales

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said the labs are a threat to police and fire personnel, as well as to the general public. He said it would be one thing if the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, the state's regulator for recreational marijuana sales, or the legislature decided to allow a few companies to make the oil in a safe environment. But the labs police are finding, he said, are "entirely different beasts."

Pendleton, Hermiston and Milton-Freewater will vote in November to allow marijuana sales. Edmiston said he is worried about the "trickle down impacts" of marijuana to public safety, particularly to youth.

Roberts said as long as marijuana is legal, police and the public are going to have to contend with the hash oil "right here in river city."

# TAX: Contributions came from Comcast and Fred Meyer

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the Legislative Revenue Office that show that the tax would increase prices and slow job growth in the state. A legislative lawyer also issued an opinion stating that legislators are not restricted to using the money for purposes Our Oregon intended.

Both big corporations and local business groups have opposed the measure. Some of the opponents' recent contributions came from out-of-state mega corporations such as Comcast and Kroger/Fred Meyer, but the Craft Brew Alliance and Portland-based Jive Software also are among the contributors.

The campaign for the measure received contributions from the American Federation of Teachers and their Oregon chapter, the Oregon Education Association and Oregon AFSCME Council 75.

Fundraising could slow if there is any consistent polling showing the measure will be defeated, Moore said. So far, polls largely have shown the measure will pass, but the most recent poll by Portland-based Hoffman Research Group showed the measure would fail 47-to-41.

# AUTHOR: Main work as a biologist was saving the red wolf from extinction

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elephants, wild cats or wolves are often taken from his detailed, first-hand knowledge of their behavior.

Smith's first book, for example, published in 1990, is a nonfiction story called Sea Otter Rescue. It is based on his months-long experiences rescuing hundreds of sea otters from the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Smith said sea otters, unlike many other marine creatures, cannot get away from oil spills because they can't leave the shoreline. To survive, an adult sea otter must eat 25 pounds of shellfish per day, but can only dive up to 50 feet to reach them. Oil on their fur breaks its water-proof protection and results in hypothermia, which is why a team of scientists led by Smith had to quickly capture as many



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**Oregon author Roland Smith answers questions from the audience while speaking at Armand Larive Middle School on Wednesday in Hermiston.**

sea otters as they could, wash them, and keep them protected from the oil until they could safely be released back into the wild.

Smith said his main work as a biologist, however, was saving the red wolf from extinction. At one point only 17 red wolves, or

Florida wolves, existed in the world. Smith and other scientists captured all 17 and treated them for mange and heartworm, eventually getting the population up over 200 and becoming the first program to successfully reintroduce endangered carnivores into the wild

after taking them all into captivity.

Later he worked with elephants, his favorite animal.

"I love elephants," he said. "I've written a lot of books about elephants."

One of those books, "Thunder Cave," details the adventures of a 14-year-old boy who travels to Kenya and ends up tangling with poachers. Smith said if the world doesn't do more to stop poaching, elephants will go extinct in the wild within the audience's lifetime.

"I don't know about you, but I think the ivory looks a lot better on the elephant's face than on someone's shelf," he said.

Smith's Pacific Northwest home often enters his writing, which have included such famous incidents as the Mount Saint

Helens eruption, the D.B. Cooper hijacking and the journey of Lewis and Clark.

Smith arrived in Hermiston on Tuesday and will continue his week-long presentations at schools, made possible thanks to grants from the Hermiston Education Foundation, Altrusa International and each school's PTO. He told students and parents gathered at Armand Larive for parent night that he writes every day, so "when my new book comes out, you'll know some of it was written right here in Hermiston."

Kristi Smalley, a media specialist for Hermiston School District, said students have been reading Smith's books in preparation for his visit, and have been visiting the library to get more.

"It's not often they get to see the person behind the books," she said.



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EAST OREGONIAN Hermiston Herald

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Join us for Veterans Day Wednesday, November 9 in the Hermiston Herald and Friday, November 11 in the East Oregonian, as we honor the men and women of the U.S. Military. Their courage, hard work and sacrifice are the backbone of our nation, protecting freedom, liberty, justice and all we hold dear.

Bring in a photo and message to 211 SE Byers Ave, Pendleton or 333 E Main, Hermiston; or email to [classifieds@eastoregonian.com](mailto:classifieds@eastoregonian.com).

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