

HERMISTON

Bulldogs carry on flag tradition

Football team lays out 800 flags for Memorial Day

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Hermiston High School football players did their part Friday afternoon to help remember the veterans who sacrificed for their freedoms.

The team — plus some alumni and incoming players — put up almost 800 flags around the Hermiston Cemetery to mark the start of Memorial Day weekend.

“We preach family and brotherhood, and this is in remembrance of the guys who paid the ultimate price for them to go out and play on Friday nights and attend safe schools,” said David Faeteete, head coach of the Bulldogs.

He said he appreciated the tradition, which started before he arrived in Hermiston, as an opportunity to build a sense of citizenship in his players and give them perspective on their lives. Each flag they put up memorializes a different veteran from the area who died. Thinking about those individuals’ sacrifices makes the things asked of them, like working hard in practice and doing their schoolwork, seem like less of a burden.

“Waking up early doesn’t seem like much of a sacrifice looking at these,” Faeteete said, gesturing at the hundreds of full-sized flags lining walkways and rows of graves.

He said he appreciated the veterans who help put together the Avenue of Flags project for taking the time



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Emilio Ortiz, left, and Jonathan Hinkle put together a flag pole for the Avenue of Flags at the Hermiston Cemetery.

to talk to the team each year about the values of teamwork and trust.

On Friday two trailers pulled by tractors circled the cemetery slowly, piled high with flags. Football players and coaches ran back and forth, grabbing a new flag pole and then working in teams of two or three to snap the poles together, place them upright in the holes in the ground and unfurl the flag wrapped around it. Late Monday afternoon they will repeat the entire process in reverse.

Emilio Ortiz, a junior, said the small holes around the main walkways were marked in orange, but the ones running through the grassy parts of the were harder to find. He didn’t mind searching in the hot sun, however.

“We’re just giving back

to the community for all the stuff they’ve done for us, and for our program,” he said.

Jonathan Hinkle, also a junior, echoed Ortiz’s sentiments as the two worked together to put a flag pole in place. He said he liked the opportunity to give back to the community and pay respect to veterans. He also appreciated the symbolism of all the flags.

“It represents America to me,” he said.

Phil Jarmer of Hermiston’s Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4750 said a lot of the veterans who attend the annual Memorial Day ceremony are no longer physically able to come out and help drag flag poles off trailers and put them up, so the football team’s work is something the VFW is very grateful for.

“They help us every year and we really appreciate it,” he said.

Jarmer said they also appreciate the Boy Scouts who came out ahead of time to clear grass and mud out of hundreds of small holes in the ground so that the football team could find them and fit the poles in.

Jarmer and others from VFW Post 4750 and American Legion Post 37 will head up a Memorial Day program at 10 a.m. Monday at Hermiston Cemetery. The event, which is free and open to the public, will include a short message, recognition of all local veterans who died in the past year, the playing of “Taps” and a flag folding and presentation ceremony for a local veteran who recently died and has yet to receive military honors.

Oregon wandering wolf is alive and well

By **ERIC MORTENSON**
EO Media Group

His tracking collar went dead in 2015, but OR-7, the wandering wolf, is alive and well. This spring, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service trail camera caught him trotting along with what a wildlife biologist said is an elk leg in his mouth.

Federal wildlife biologist John Stephenson said OR-7 was taking food back to his den. For the fourth consecutive year, OR-7 appears to be denned up with the same unidentified female who joined him in the Southwest Oregon Cascades in 2014.

The Rogue Pack, of which he’s the alpha male, numbered six over the winter. This spring, Stephenson saw tracks in the snow of at least five wolves.



Courtesy U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In an April 14 photo taken by a remote trail camera in the Southern Oregon Cascades, wolf OR-7 trots past carrying what a wildlife biologist said is an elk leg.

OR-7 has shown up in trail camera photos several times this spring, most recently on May 18.

“He looks good,” Stephenson said.

OR-7 is now 8 years old, which is somewhat

old for a wolf in the wild, Stephenson said. It became Oregon’s best known wolf when it dispersed from the Imnaha Pack in Northeast Oregon in 2011 and cut a diagonal across the state and into California. Because

he was wearing a tracking collar, wildlife agencies and the public could follow his travels, and for better or worse he came to symbolize the return of wolves to Oregon’s landscape.

OR-7 was the first documented wolf in California since 1924, but eventually returned to Oregon and established what ODFW named the Rogue Pack in the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest. He and his mate have produced several litters of pups over the years.

His mate has never been caught or collared and is something of a mystery. Analysis of her scat, however, showed she is related to wolves from Northeast Oregon or Idaho.

Stephenson said he hopes to fit a new tracking collar on OR-7, his mate or one of the other adults in the pack.

Morrow County launching online school

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Students will be able to do more of their learning at home next year as Morrow County School District rolls out a district-sponsored online learning program.

“This is obviously the wave of the future, and we have to be proactive in offering that opportunity,” superintendent Dirk Dirksen said.

Students will be able to take all of their classes online, add a single online class to their school day or split their time between taking core classes online and electives like band and weight-lifting in a school building.

“All of those combinations are very possible,” Dirksen said.

Parents and students can learn all about those options at informational sessions at 6 p.m. at Heppner Jr./Sr. High School on June 5, Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School on June 7 and Riverside Jr./Sr. High School on June 8.

In the past, students living in Morrow County School District have been able to take a college course or credit recovery course online, but their only option for a full day of online learning has been to join charter schools like Oregon Virtual

Academy, which directs state funds for that student outside the school district.

If students choose to switch to Morrow County’s Online School-At-Home, that state education money will go to support a local instructor the district has hired to help teach and mentor online students.

That instructor will work in concert with online learning companies and with the InterMountain Education Service District’s new online school to offer a package of options to students. The

education service district officially launches their IMESD Online program in July as a way to staunch the flow of students in Eastern Oregon enrolling in online schools sponsored by other districts.

Although re-capturing the state money for those students will be helpful to districts, Dirksen said Morrow County School District is offering online school to benefit students by offering them more choice and flexibility in their learning. He said

some students work better in an online environment at their own pace, while others respond better to the in-person interactions of a brick and mortar classroom.

“I really think it’s an individual choice,” he said. “It’s difficult to say which is better or worse. I’ve seen kids do really well in school, and seen students do really well online.”

For more information, parents can attend the informational sessions in June or call the Morrow Education Center at 541-922-4004.

BRIEFLY

Hermiston and county commissioners to hold joint EOTEC meeting

HERMISTON — The Hermiston City Council and Umatilla County Commissioners will meet together Thursday to discuss the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The meeting will be June 1 at 6 p.m. at EOTEC, 1705 E. Airport Road.

The EOTEC board had previously asked the council and commission for approval of a management plan comprised of a general manager supervising an administrative assistant and contract for maintenance and janitorial. The two entities asked the board to come back to another joint meeting with budget and salary comparison information before they made a final decision.

The meeting will include a chance for public comment.

Umatilla residents invited to hear downtown revitalization plan

UMATILLA — The public is invited to the unveiling of Umatilla’s downtown revitalization plan on June 6.

Graduate students from Portland State University, working under the name Confluentis Planning, have been working for the past six months on the plan as their capstone project for graduation. They held several public input sessions and focus groups and worked with city officials to get feedback on Umatilla’s strengths and needs.

The final plan will be presented at a Umatilla Together event on Tuesday, June 6 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at city hall, 700 Sixth Street. Spanish translation and refreshments will be provided.

Hermiston accepting applications for open committee positions

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston is accepting applications for the Hispanic Advisory Committee and Library Board.

The Hispanic Advisory Committee has two open seats with terms running from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020. The Library Board has three vacancies with terms running from July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2020.

Applications are due May 30 by 5 p.m. They can be submitted at city hall, 180 N.E. Second St., or by email to lalarcon-strong@hermiston.or.us. Applications can be found at city hall or on the city’s website.

Health district offers well care exams

HEPPNER — The Morrow County Health District will provide adolescent well care exams at no charge.

Beginning Thursday, June 1 and continuing through the summer, people need to make an appointment for the evaluation at Pioneer Memorial Clinic, 130 Thompson Ave., Heppner. The exams can include an evaluation for OSAA sport and activity requirements for youths ages 11-21.

If the patient has insurance, it will be billed. However, if there is a balance owed, it will not be charged to the patient.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call Pioneer Memorial Clinic at 541-676-5504.

Free day camp reaches out to youths

A free summer day camp is designed to help youths develop and practice positive skills and improve their social skills.

Presented by Lifeways, the REACH Summer Program is offered in Pendleton (June 26-29 and July 5-6 at the First Christian Church), Umatilla (July 10-13, 17-20 and 24-27 at McNary Heights Elementary School) and Milton-Freewater (July 31-Aug. 3, Aug. 7-10 and 14-17 at Freewater Elementary School). It’s open to kids entering first through sixth grades. In addition, older youths may register as a mentor/helper.

The events also provide free dental screenings and educational labs (June 26 in Pendleton, July 13 in Umatilla and Aug. 3 in Milton-Freewater). Meals are also available during the day camps.

For more information, visit any Lifeways office in Umatilla County to pick up a registration or visit www.lifeways.org/forms. For questions, call 541-276-6207.

"Scramble for Scholarships"
Friday, June 9th
1pm Shotgun Start

GOOD SHEPHERD
COMMUNITY HEALTH
FOUNDATION

Big River Golf Course - Umatilla

Golfers of all skill levels are being invited to participate in the 24th annual "Scramble for Scholarships" golf tournament. Four person teams can sign up together or individuals pairings can be made by the tournament committee. Your \$70 entry fee covers green fees, a box lunch at noon, and BBQ at the end, plus makes a charitable donation to the foundation to use in awarding scholarships for local health care students. Join us for a fun afternoon of golf for a good cause by calling 541-667-3405.

Entry deadline is June 7th.

Great prize holes and Hole-in-one on #1 & #9 wins a new car sponsored by Tom Denchel Ford and Hermiston Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram!

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