HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

For a list of Fourth of July events around the region see COMING EVENTS/ PAGE 6A

EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, JULY 4, 2017

141st Year, No. 186 | WINNER OF THE 2016 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD | One dollar

Hermiston Foods to close in late 2017

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Hermiston Foods, which is the city's ninth largest employer, will close sometime after the end of the current harvest season.

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Hermiston will lose one of its top employers by the end of this year.

Hermiston Foods Incorporated, a subsidiary of NORPAC Foods, will close later this year as its functions are consolidated into NORPAC's facilities in Brooks and Quincy, Washington. An exact timeline has not been announced, but NORPAC spokeswoman Amy Wood said processing will proceed as normal through the end of the current harvest season.

The vegetable-processing plant is Hermiston's ninth-largest employer, according to the city's 2016 financial report. NORPAC was not able to provide information about its number of employees and other questions submitted on Monday, but according to the city's report the plant employs 325 people, most of which are seasonal.

The plant, however, is NORPAC's smallest operation, according to the *Statesman Journal*.

The closure was listed as part of a broader announcement by NORPAC that it has sold off its canning operations to Seneca Foods Corporation and was closing its beet-canning facility in Salem as a result. New NORPAC CEO Shawn Campbell said in a statement that the sale of the canning operations and the closure of Hermiston Foods will "help us drive efficiencies and reduce operational complexities as we invest in continued growth and innovation in our frozen product lines."

Hermiston Foods opened in April 1990, and the *Hermiston Herald* reported that more than 3,000 people toured the new $9 million facility during the grand opening, where NORPAC executives praised the Hermiston Development Corporation, city of Hermiston and other partners for working together so quickly to get the infrastructure in place to allow NORPAC to locate there.

City Manager Byron Smith said it was unfortunate to hear that one of Hermiston's large employers would be closing its doors. Hermiston Foods is the city's largest water customer at 115,047,200 gallons per year, which is more than the next nine water customers combined. However, Smith said there were still so many other users on the system that it was still a small enough percentage that the impact would be felt but would not be "huge."

POW WOW WEEKEND

Dancers stop at Wildhorse on summer tour

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The sun beat down on the dancers at the 23rd annual Wildhorse Pow Wow, but most of them knew that when they were done their family and friends would be prepared with shade canopies, coolers of water and snacks.

It was — as the announcer commented — not their first pow wow. In fact, many of the more than 300 dancers will spend more of their summer weekends than not traveling to compete in pow wows around the Pacific Northwest.

More inside

For results of the pow wow **see Page 10A**
More photos are online and will appear in the July 8 edition.

"I've been to a lot," said Dana Sotomish of Lapwai, Idaho. "Pretty much every weekend there's one somewhere."

Sotomish, dressed in a light blue dress with silver bells, said she participates in fancy and traditional dances sometimes, but jingle dancing is her specialty. Sometimes she wins one of the cash prizes, but the money is not what she's there for.

"I just like being able to express my culture, because not a lot of people get to do that," she said.

Sotomish said sometimes she travels alone and other times with her parents. Each time she must pack her suitcase tightly so that her regalia doesn't jostle around too much and get damaged.

The pow wow began Friday

See POW WOW/10A

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A baby watches the action from the arms of a family member Saturday during the grand entry of the 23rd Annual Wildhorse Pow Wow at the Wildhorse Resort & Casino.

Managing the transportation package will cost $115.2M

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM – Three state agencies expect to hire 60 positions and spend $115.2 million to execute a proposed $5.3 billion statewide transportation funding bill.

The spending plan is separate from the greater transportation funding legislation, House Bill 2017. Both bills are headed to a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives later this week. The Joint Committee on Ways and Means on Monday, July 3, voted to recommend passage of the spending plan, called House Bill 5045.

At the Capitol

Sen. Fred Girod, R-Stayton, said he would vote no on both the transportation funding bill and the spending plan.

The positions and agency spending limits cover levying and collecting new taxes and fees, managing and reporting on transportation projects, overseeing an electric vehicle rebate program and processing a surge of storm water permits.

The spending bill includes:

- $110.9 million and 50 positions for the Oregon Department of Transportation for direct project costs and project-related studies in the first six months of the next two-year state budget cycle,
- $3.9 million and eight positions for the Department of Revenue to levy new taxes on payroll to pay for transit, car and bicycle excises taxes and hikes in the gas tax.
- $389,122 and two position for the Department of Environmental Quality to

See TRANSPORTATION/2A

Sights and sounds of the Rainbow Gathering

GEORGE PLAVEN
Comment

Welcome Rainbow Family. The colorful sign marks the entrance into the 2017 Rainbow Gathering at Flagtail Meadow, on the Malheur National Forest south of John Day. I make my way along the dry, dusty trail past groups of people lounging in the shade to beat the high afternoon heat. Clothes, at this point, are optional and a few folks have chosen to go au naturale.

As of Monday, more than 11,000 members of the Rainbow Family of Living Light have arrived to participate in the annual gathering. With a notebook tucked in my back pocket, I decided to pay a visit Sunday alongside Tim Trainor, *East Oregonian* deputy managing editor, in an effort to better understand the essence of Rainbow living.

Neither of us knew quite what to expect, and we pledged to go in with open minds. Regardless of the environmental impacts on the land — and the Forest Service has made it abundantly clear there will be impacts to the ecosystem — we simply had to witness this gathering for ourselves.

Immediately, we were struck by how expansive the gathering truly is, hiking from one camp to the next with names like "Jesus Kitchen" and "Granola Funk Theater." Maps were posted around the entrance, along with general guidelines for things like

The Eagle/Rylan Boggs

A banner welcomes people to the Rainbow Gathering on Saturday.

More inside

- **Faces of the Rainbow**
- **Man dies at gathering** **See Page 3A**

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