

IMESD adds facility support to growing list of services

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian



Mulvihill

Glaze

Unlike many school districts it provides services to, the Inter-Mountain Education Service District is expanding.

In July, the IMESD hired former La Grande School District Superintendent Larry Glaze to lead its new facilities program.

Acting as the district's director of operations, Glaze will not only manage the IMESD's facilities but provide assistance for five-year maintenance plans, safety reports, bond and grant support, water and radon testing and pest management certification.

Glaze said his experience passing a \$32 million bond for the La Grande School District in 2014 motivated him to take the job.

Budget and time constraints can make it difficult for school districts to keep up with facility maintenance, Glaze said, especially in small districts where a superintendent might be managing curriculum, special education, Title I, athletics, the budget and other duties.

"That's a big part of being stewards of taxpayer money," Glaze said about facility management, which ensures that schools are passed down to future generations.

IMESD Superintendent Mark Mulvihill echoed Glaze's comments, saying that some facilities like Helix School and McLoughlin High School in Milton-Freewater are community landmarks.

With the hiring of Glaze,

Mulvihill has continued the trend of stocking his departments with former superintendents.

Mulvihill brought in former Athena-Weston Superintendent Jerry Copeland to serve as the head of human resources, and after being hired to work as the director of strategic services, former Pendleton superintendent Jon Peterson is now the IMESD's assistant superintendent.

But bolstering its staff isn't the only way the IMESD is growing.

In addition to its usual special education and technical support services, the IMESD has created and developed several new programs over the past decade, including Eastern Promise, IMESD Online, the Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub, the Wellness Hubs initiative and others.

Hiring staff like Glaze and Peterson to lead these initiatives is made easier by making them part-time employees, gaining their experience for a fraction of the cost.

But what makes these new programs possible for the IMESD is something other school districts don't have — an entrepreneurial division.

While local school districts are heavily reliant on property taxes and state

funding to provide the lion's share of the revenue, the IMESD sells services like technology support and communications for additional revenue.

For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the IMESD is anticipating nearly \$7.8 million in revenues, more than a \$1 million more than they received in 2013-2014.

Mulvihill said the key to the entrepreneurial division's growth is the district's ability to find niche services that don't compete with existing businesses.

The Morrow County School District is one of the beneficiaries of the IMESD's programs.

With help from IMESD Online, the district launched the Morrow Academy this year, an attempt to regain some of the students its lost to statewide online charter schools.

Morrow County Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said the district hasn't yet determined how much new enrollment is due to Morrow Academy, there is express interest in the program, especially the blended learning option where students combine in-person classes with online school.

Dirksen also plans to utilize the facilities program. With a bond expiring off the books, Morrow County will need to take another look at their facilities with a focus on capacity issues in Boardman and aging facilities in Heppner and Irrigon.

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Pow wow traditions pass to next generation

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
East Oregonian

Saturday's Kidz Pow Wow at Tamástlikt Cultural Institute was a celebration of both the past and future. In its seventh year, the event honors the continued passing down of American Indian traditions by showcasing the talents of children 12 and under.

About 20 children spent the afternoon dancing and listening to tribal members talk about the importance of their history.

As several men sat and beat on a drum while singing, children joined the circle and danced, some fully dressed in traditional outfits, and some in their Kidz Pow Wow shirts. Randy Minthorn, one of the men, had his young grandson on his lap as he played the drum. The toddler sat calmly, absorbing the music and dance around him.

Minthorn was also the event's emcee, and talked about the importance of preserving their culture amid contemporary lifestyles.

"Thank you to everyone for making time to support your young people here," he said. "The heartfelt feeling to see young people putting forth effort for you and I — each of us can feel really good that this is our future."

Children were eager to dance despite the heat. Eleven-year-old Sunhawk Thomas was new to the event this year, but the Pendleton resident was one of the most enthusiastic participants. Clad in a breastplate, beaded cuffs, a bustle made of red-tail hawk feathers, beaded and fringed siders, bells, and an eagle-feather headdress, Thomas stood out for his regalia and for his dance skills.

"I like dancing," Thomas said. "I'm not dancing for a prize. I just like it."

Thomas' mother, Wynema Thurman, said her son is also currently in competition for the Little Warrior role for National Indian Days in Toppenish, Washington.

Thomas, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, has been dancing since he was five years old.

The event was broken up into several segments — dances open to everyone were interspersed with comments from Minthorn and tribal elders, as well as dances specific to certain age groups. There were also "prize dances," where children were given gifts at the end. Prizes included school supplies such as notebooks, crayons and scissors.

"It's a non-formal way to introduce people to the pow wow," said Cassandra Franklin, the event's organizer and the outreach and events coordinator at Tamástlikt. "It's open to the public, and is meant to bring in kids from the community."

Franklin said the event usually marks the end of



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

A boy gets ready to dance at the Kidz Pow Wow on Saturday at Tamástlikt Cultural Institute.

the cultural center's Living Culture Village.

Katie Blackwolf Bevis was one of a few adults dancing. Dressed in full regalia, she led children into the circle for the first few dances.

"I'm a Yakama," Bevis said. "I married into the tribe (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla)."

She and her husband have been coming to the event every year. She said she likes how the children seem to be impacted by the event.

"We have pow wows whenever we can," she said.

The dance welcomed all those who wanted to participate, from tiny children barely able to walk, to 12-year-olds who had been coming to the event for several years.

The children also participated in a flag ceremony,

where they sang a song composed to honor a flag recently designed to represent the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

"We adopted a new tribal flag that's been sanctioned and officially recognized," Minthorn said. "It represents the contemporary way of life we enjoy today."

The children lined up near the flag, and those who knew the song sang along.

"We want to teach young people," Minthorn told the audience. "So they can pass that on, and share with one another. We're proud to show there is a bright, vibrant and very strong future."

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at 541-564-4534 or jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com.

BRIEFLY

Restoration projects slated for Wallowa-Whitman forest

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has signed off on a pair of restoration projects to thin overly dense and beetle-killed tree stands.

The Split Rail Project, located adjacent to last year's Rail Fire five miles west of Unity, will target mostly lodgepole pine within a 250-acre area. Dead and beetle-infested trees will be removed and replaced with ponderosa pine and Western larch seedlings.

The Sparta Vegetation Management Project, meanwhile, will encompass 17,951 acres in the Whitman Ranger District near Eagle Creek. It includes 4,196 acres of commercial thinning and 1,362 acres of noncommercial treatment, such as prescribed burning.

"Thinning allows healthier, larger trees to thrive with decreased competition from younger saplings," said Jeff Tomac, Whitman District Ranger. "Our goal with Sparta is to help the landscape to become more resilient in these times of severe weather and fire."

Tomac said he is confident both projects will contribute to a healthier, more vibrant forest.

First Thursday highlights Main Street

HERMISTON — Refreshments, specials and a bonus drawing are featured during the Hermiston Downtown District First Thursday.

The event is Thursday from 4:30-7 p.m. in more than a dozen Main Street businesses. People are encouraged to come down and take a stroll, visit with friends and shop local.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/hermiston downtown.

AAUW hosts potluck, meeting

PENDLETON — The public is invited to a gathering to learn more



Photo contributed by U.S. Forest Service.

The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest has signed off on two projects to thin overly dense and beetle-killed tree stands.

about the American Association of University Women.

The group is hosting a potluck and membership meeting Thursday, Sept. 7 at 5:30 p.m. in the Vert Clubroom, 345 S.W. Fourth St., Pendleton. People are encouraged to bring a dish to share. Beverages and tableware will be provided.

The AAUW works to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy, education, philanthropy and research. The Pendleton affiliate is the closest group in the region.

For more information, contact Kathy Chaney at cecil296@aol.com.

Knights of Columbus host spaghetti dinner

HERMISTON — A fundraiser for the Knights of Columbus Scholarship Program features a spaghetti dinner.

The event is Friday from 6-9 p.m. in the parish hall at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church, 565 W. Hermiston Ave. The meal, which costs \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 10 and under or \$30 for a family of six, includes spaghetti, soup, salad,

garlic bread and dessert. For more information, call 541-567-5812.

Sun Terrace hosts Grandparents Day event

HERMISTON — In celebration of National Grandparents Day, the Old-Time Fiddlers will perform at Sun Terrace.

The public is invited to stop by and visit, tap your toes to the music and enjoy a tasty treat. The event is Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at 1550 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston.

For more information, call 541-564-2595.

Class of '52 celebrates 65 years

In celebration of 65 years since graduating, the Hermiston High School class of 1952 recently announced reunion activities.

The event includes a potluck Friday, Sept. 15 and a no-host gathering Saturday, Sept. 16 at 3 p.m. at Midway Bar & Grill, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston.

For more information, including directions to the Friday evening event, call Louise at 541-567-2105.

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