



EAST OREGONIAN

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HERMISTON

Officers sort through stolen property, search for thief

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Hermiston Police are sorting through a mountain of seized stolen items — and the pile keeps growing.

A room at the police station on South First Street was filled Tuesday afternoon with stolen items recovered from several different

locations, including storage units in Hermiston and Umatilla. Large items include bicycles, firearms, electronic devices and artwork.

As police work to reunite victims with their stolen property, they continue to search for the suspected thief, Russell Greene, 36, of Hermiston.

Hermiston police chief Jason Edmiston said it was hard to assess

the monetary value of the stolen property.

“I couldn’t even tell you how many truckloads have been seized,” he said.

He said the department is still working to track down victims, but he estimated they’ve identified about 20 so far.

See THIEF/6A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Hermiston Police have an entire floor’s worth of seized property to sort through from multiple burglaries all connected to one perpetrator.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Kindergartners from the Pendleton Early Learning Center looks at artwork at the Pendleton School District art show on Tuesday at the Pendleton Convention Center. Hundreds of works of art from students at every grade level was on display.

ART INITIATION

East Oregonian

Fourth-graders from Pendleton’s McKay Creek Elementary gave thumbs-up to the school district’s annual student art show.

Juliana, Charlotte, Chaistyn and Hunter raved about several pieces, including the Star Wars diorama, a cardboard Star Destroyer spaceship complete with dueling small fighter ships of paper.

“That was awesome,” Juliana said.

They also were big fans of the work of West Hills teacher Trina Merriman’s third-grade class, which combined geometric

shapes to produce computer-like images of an array of animals.

“It blew our minds,” Chaistyn said.

And Hunter said he found the large poster “Study” interesting and worthwhile. Pendleton High School senior Isaac Haskins created that plus “Big Bittorf is Watching You,” as satirical pieces using George Orwell’s dystopian novel “1984” and referencing English teacher Michael Bittorf.

The Pendleton School District Art Show runs through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate. Admission is free.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
A poster inspired by George Orwell’s dystopian novel “1984” was created by Pendleton High School senior Isaac Haskins.

Council OKs funding downtown association

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Two weeks after its request for public funding failed to elicit a vote, the Pendleton Downtown Association returned to city council chambers and saw their fortunes reversed.

At a meeting Tuesday, the council unanimously voted to cover the nonprofit merchant association’s operational costs for the next two years and paying at least \$25,000 in perpetuity.

At the last meeting, some councilors said they wanted more financial support from the downtown business community before they committed public money.

Under a new funding formula, the association will get indirect support from the business community — but it won’t be exclusive to the downtown area.

The city will pay the association’s entire \$55,000 operating budget in the first two years of the deal, before the city’s contribution decreases by 10 percent each year in years 3-5. Although funding will come from the urban renewal district to start, each successive year will see more money coming from city business license fees. From year six onward, the city will pay the association \$25,000 entirely from business license fee revenue.

When the city council increased business license fees in 2007, it was to cover the salary and operating costs for an economic development director position.

But when Steve Chrisman took on airport manager duties, the city started dispersing some of the revenue elsewhere.

See FUND/6A

Council candidates share vision for Hermiston

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Four Hermiston City Council seats are up for grabs in May, and three of those races are contested.

While each seat represents a specific ward in the city, each Hermiston voter will be allowed to vote for their favorite candidate in all four races. The May 15 election will be considered the general election for Wards 2, 3 and 4 while Ward 1 — facing a three-way race — will be considered the primary, with the top two vote-getters advancing to the general election in November. If the top candidate gets more than 50 percent of the vote, their name will appear alone on the ballot in November with an opportunity for a

write-in challenge.

Below is an introduction to each of the candidates running (while Michael Engelbrecht’s name will appear on the ballot for Ward 4, he has dropped out of the race):

LORI DAVIS, WARD 1

Davis has been a city councilor since 2010. She works for Two Rivers Correctional Institution. She grew up in Hermiston, and said she is running again for the city council because she feels like she still has more to contribute after gaining experience and confidence on the council.

Her vision for Hermiston: Ten years from now, Davis would like to see Hermiston have a YMCA-type recreation facility with an indoor pool, paid for through a voter-ap-

proved taxing district on the west side of Umatilla County, as well as added restaurants and retailers like Target. She would also like to see the city pay more attention to its homeless population, and work on getting increased housing to the area.

Overall, Davis said the city has been doing a lot of things right, including getting a free public bus system going for residents and providing the right business incentives to bring projects like a major expansion of Lamb Weston’s food processing operation to town.

MARK GOMOLSKI, WARD 1

Gomolski is a school board member for the Hermiston School District, a member of the city’s Hispanic Advisory Committee and

a volunteer with several organizations including Agape House, Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church and the Aspire program at Hermiston High School. He retired to Hermiston from the Chicago area in 2014, where he worked in local government.

His vision for Hermiston: Gomolski believes the city has made several missteps in the last few years and would like to be involved in city decision-making going forward. He cited the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, the new senior center and the city’s decision to take over ownership of the Hermiston Community Center from the chamber of commerce as examples where he believes the city council

See COUNCIL/3A

