

**HERMISTON**

# Boy in hospital after bike accident

East Oregonian

A Hermiston boy is in intensive care at a Portland hospital after an accident riding his bike on Thursday. Around 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Zed-drik Cota, 12, was riding his bike at the Campus Life skate park, when he did not see a drop-off.

According to a Facebook post by his father Oscar Cota, "he fell off the deep end face-first to the pavement below."



Cota

Cota was airlifted to Portland, where he remains in intensive care at Legacy Emanuel Medical Center. His father wrote on Facebook that he is in a medically induced coma and has swelling on his brain.

Nick Gutierrez, a neighbor and friend of the Cotas, has started a GoFundMe page to raise money for the family. As of Friday evening, \$840 had been donated.

Gutierrez relayed information that Oscar Cota had sent to him Friday evening, saying that his son was still

in intensive care but the swelling on his brain was going down.

He said that Oscar wanted to thank the people of Hermiston for supporting their family.

"He said he never knew so many people cared so much about his family and his children," he said.

Gutierrez relayed that Cota's brother, Junior, called the paramedics.

He said Oscar Cota mentioned that there were no barriers that prevented kids from using the skate park at the youth center on South First Street near the high school, and he felt it was unsafe. He said he believes Cota was wearing a helmet at the time of the accident, and that his father was present when it happened.

Cota attends school in Hermiston, and has a brother and sister. Both his parents are with him in Portland now, Gutierrez said.

"He's just an awesome kid, and full of energy," Gutierrez said.

**HERMISTON**

# Principal touts new graduation location

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian

The Hermiston School District wrapped up its first out-of-state graduation on June 7, successfully getting diplomas into the hands of 342 students at the Toyota Center in Kennewick. Now, school officials are taking stock of the event and considering their options going forward.

Though most acknowledged that the high school gymnasium could no longer hold the growing graduating classes, many debates preceded the move to a Washington state graduation, including looking at holding the ceremony at several Hermiston venues, such as Kennison Field or Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, before the school board voted 6-1 to move the ceremony across the river.

Hermiston High School principal Tom Spoo said he was satisfied with the ceremony, and that things had gone largely as planned.

"Almost to a T," he said. "The only thing that didn't go the way I intended was simply time. The kids ended up speaking a little longer than anticipated. Outside that, it went well."

Spoo said he started the ceremony a few minutes late because of another

unexpected issue — traffic coming from Hermiston to Kennewick.

"We didn't anticipate it being that bad," he said. "The kids got there a little late. We were ready to go by seven, but I felt that there were still parents that weren't there."

The other issue, he said, was getting the crowd of more than 4,000 reunited with their graduates after the ceremony.

Spoo said he, the board and interim superintendent Tricia Mooney have yet to discuss where they will hold graduation next year.

Spoo and Mooney did a lot of planning leading up to the event, both in training the students and collaborating with Washington schools' superintendents that already held their graduations at the center.

"No matter how well it goes, there's always going to be naysayers. So I was very adamant with the kids that I wanted this to go well, and we wanted to be respectful."

Spoo said with many logistical issues, they had to start from scratch.

"Transportation was a big, big deal," Spoo said. "It's not something we'd ever dealt with at graduation before. I can't tell you how many times I changed the leave times, the load times."

**MISSION**

# New tribal education center will allow Nixyaawii to grow

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

The building boom on the Umatilla Indian Reservation continues unabated.

Months after the new Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center opened and amidst serious plans to expand the Wildhorse Resort & Casino, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation held a groundbreaking ceremony Friday for a new educational facility that will house Nixyaawii Community School, a charter high school established in 2004, Cay-Um-Wa Head Start, and adult education programs.

After the ceremony ended, Nixyaawii Principal Ryan Heinrich explained how the 60,000-square-foot facility would be an improvement over the school's current building at the July Grounds. One of the biggest upgrades, Heinrich said, will be an increase in space.

Sally Kosey, an at-large member of the Board of Trustees and a member of the Nixyaawii school board, said the school's current building was "out-of-shape" and "overcrowded."

While some of Nixyaawii's current classrooms are under 900 square feet, all six classrooms in the new facility will be more than 1,000 square feet.

With language classes or



Photo courtesy of BBT Architects and the Wenaha Group

A rendering of the new CTUIR education center.



Photo by Antonio Sierra

Tribal officials and local children take part in the groundbreaking ceremony.

electives, Heinrich said the school could subdivide the rooms and science classes will feature full lab space. And more space also means more enrollment.

A surge of freshman enrollees forced Nixyaawii to set a 75-student enrollment cap for the 2017-2018 school year. Heinrich said Nixyaawii is projecting to nearly double its cap to 140 in the new facility.

Other improvements include a modern security systems and "community rooms" as well as a gym, cafeteria and commons area.

But beyond a new building, the tribal officials who spoke at the ceremony made it clear that the school will have a wider cultural resonance.

"It was expressed: At school, learn as much as you can, but don't forget who you

are or where you came from," said Gary Burke, chairman of the CTUIR Board of Trustees.

According to the *Confederated Umatilla Journal*, a learning center has been a tribal goal since 1975. Multiple speakers mentioned the years of work that went into making the project possible.

Kosey was hopeful that the new Nixyaawii would not only provide students with a diploma, but also set them up for success in higher education or other opportunities.

Although young tribal members may leave the reservation to seek out those opportunities, Kosey said the education at Nixyaawii could set them up to return as the tribal leaders the CTUIR needs in the future.

The new Nixyaawii site is located west of the new Yellowhawk and the Nixyaawii Governance Center. The school is scheduled to open September 2019.

**PENDLETON**

# Veterans memorial could get boost from city council

VFW has pillars, arts commission asks to buy medallions

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

Following a two-year hiatus, Pendleton is getting back into the public art business.

At a meeting Tuesday, the Pendleton City Council will consider authorizing \$3,300 in medallions for a veterans memorial sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Let'er Buck Post 922.

According to a staff report from Charles Denight, chairman of the Pendleton Arts Commission, the city would use the money to purchase five 16-inch, brass medallions that represent each branch of the military at a yet-to-be-determined public

park. The medallions will be placed on basalt columns that will circle a sculpture that will be installed later.

The VFW has a large stake in getting the project completed.

"Members of the VFW wish to take responsibility for building the memorial and have already sourced and transported the basalt columns to Pendleton," Denight wrote. "They would set up the columns, attach the medallions, install landscaping, perform electrical and masonry service as need, using the skills of veterans. They would work with the Arts Commission to obtain additional funding for the art centerpiece and work with the Parks Department to complete landscaping and

lighting."

Pendleton's public art is funded through a 1.75 percent earmark from the transient room tax. If the council approves the medallions, \$52,000 will be left in the art account with no other commitments.

This is the first public art project considered by the city since a series of Main Street bronzes. The sometimes contentious series ended in 2016 when the city installed statues of Cayuse Chief Clarence Burke and "Mother of Pendleton" Aura Goodwin Raley.

Prior to the council meeting, the Pendleton Development Commission will approve a 2018-2019 budget for the urban renewal district.

If approved as presented,

the commission's \$2.2 million operating budget would be nearly \$1 million more than last year.

Just before the commission meeting starts, the council will hold a room dedication ceremony for Councilor John Brenne, who died in January. The city council chambers annex will now be called the John Brenne Room.

The dedication meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m., the commission meeting at 6 p.m. and the council meeting at 7 p.m. The latter two meetings will be held inside council chambers at city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

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**OCEANS 8 (PG13)**

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