

HERMISTON

Fourth of July is Butte-centric

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

As the sun went down and the sound of neighborhood fireworks began to fill the air, Hermiston's Fourth of July celebration was still going strong.

A pool party and 20 vendors kept visitors busy, as well as some new attractions scattered around Butte Park.

Steve Vickers of Nampa, Idaho, had brought 28 "bubble balls" — four to five-foot inflated balls with a hole in the middle — into which a child could be strapped.

Kids bumped into each other and rolled around, occasionally going rogue and tumbling headfirst into the sidelines.

"It's been crazy," Vickers said between checking in the long line of customers. "I've been doing this about three and a half years. I started with 12 bubbles, and now I have 90."

Vickers said his company, Vickers Entertainment, does between six and eight events per week.

Brandon Artz, recreation supervisor for the city



Children play in bubbles balls on the soccer fields at Butte Park during the Fourth of July celebration in Hermiston.

of Hermiston, said the turnout was good, and they were expecting more people to come as the fireworks started at the park.

Artz said the biggest change this year was the way they were handling parking lots.

"The biggest difference is the exit strategy," he said. "We're trying to do all right

turns out of parking lots. Last year we had two accidents right in front of the pool."

Artz said there were more than 100 staff members working the event, starting at 8 a.m. and going till about 11 p.m. on Wednesday.

Many families got to the park early, setting up blankets and chairs in prime

spots. The Zumaya family relaxed under some trees in the center of the park.

Flor and Juan and their daughter Gisela said they have lived in Hermiston for six years, and have come to the celebration before.

"To us, it's not a big deal," Flor said. "It's good. It's nice to be with family."

HERMISTON

Child drowns in pool

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A two-year-old girl drowned in a swimming pool outside a residence in Hermiston on Thursday morning.

Hermiston Police reported that around 9:49 a.m. Thursday, they and Umatilla County Fire District were dispatched to a neighborhood on East Main Street. A family member of the child was already conducting CPR. Officers said despite efforts by family, emergency personnel from UCFD and Good Shepherd Medical Center, the child could not be revived.

Hermiston Police Captain Travis Eynon said in a press release that the

department would not be releasing names yet; there did not appear to be anything suspicious about the death, and it appeared to be an accidental drowning.

"Tragedies such as this are obviously painful for the family," he said in a written statement. "They are also hard on our first responders as well as our entire community. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family during this difficult time."

Eynon said the girl was found in the in-ground swimming pool shortly after she went missing from the yard. She and her parents were from Utah and were in Hermiston visiting family.

BRIEFLY

Chase leads to arrest near Hermiston

STANFIELD — Stanfield police on Thursday arrested a man who crashed his vehicle into a ditch and fled on foot, leading police on a chase from the Stanfield area to near East Puntin Center and South Edwards Road.

Officers arrested Kody Michael Elmer, 23, shortly before 5 p.m., and booked him in the Umatilla County Jail on charges of attempt to elude, resisting arrest and criminal trespass in the second degree.

Elmer has been convicted of several crimes in the past two years, all in Linn County. They include strangulation and stalking, unlawful use of a weapon, use of tear gas or mace in the first degree, theft in the first degree and identity theft.

Boutique changes schedule back to three daily flights

PENDLETON — After fielding several complaints, Boutique Air will return to its original schedule.

In an email, airport administrative specialist Erica Stewart said she was informed by Kristen Ball, the customer service station manager for Pendleton and Portland.

"She had been getting a lot of negative feedback and reached out to the CEO, Shawn Simpson," she wrote. "He listened."

Since mid-June, Boutique has used a modified schedule that shifted some flights from Saturday to Sunday and moved its first daily flight from 8:05 a.m.

to 10:05 a.m. According to Airport Manager Steve Chrisman, Boutique altered the schedule to provide more flights during times when more passengers were boarding planes.

Starting July 15, the San Francisco-based airline will revert to a schedule that will feature three daily flights seven days a week.

While the schedule change was meant to boost boardings, airport enplanement data shows that Boutique continues to outpace its first year in Pendleton, and is the best since 2008.

Crash near Warehouse Beach injures man

HERMISTON — One man suffered injuries from a crash near Umatilla on Tuesday and was life-flighted to the Tri-Cities for medical care.

A white Chevrolet SUV driven by Dwight Finch of Hermiston was traveling westbound on Highway 730 near milepost 194 about 5 p.m. when the left front tire blew out and the vehicle swerved, sideswiping a motorcycle in the eastbound lane. The driver of the motorcycle, John Torres of West Richland, lost control and the motorcycle fell on its left side, skidding about 255 feet before going onto the south gravel shoulder of the road.

Torres was thrown off and suffered a broken leg, and was transported by helicopter to Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland. The motorcycle had damage to the entire left side, and the SUV had damage to the left front fender and mirror.

Umatilla gets five-year STEAM grant

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Umatilla students can learn as much outside of class as they do in, with the help of a grant the district just received to fund science and arts programs.

The district received a five-year grant from the Oregon Department of Education, and will receive \$467,572 per year for the first three years. The final two years of the grant will be funded at 75 percent.

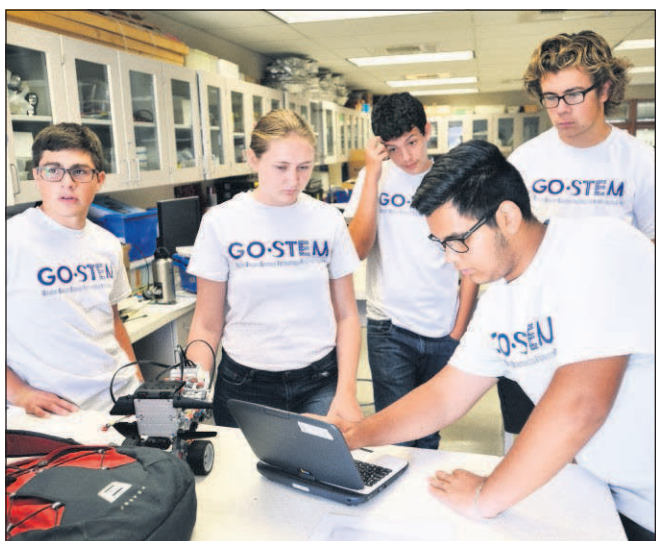
Grant money will go toward developing STEAM — science, technology, engineering, art and math — programs.

Superintendent Heidi Sipe said the grant will allow the district to supplement existing programs, as well as add some new classes and services.

"We'll get to add so many cool things, like Saturday classes and mental health," she said.

The district has an active after-school program that about 50 percent of students attend, and offers classes that are driven by student interest and often taught by high schoolers.

The grant will allow for more classes, Sipe said, and will especially focus



Alexander Gutierrez, second from right, instructs a group of campers in August 2016 on how to program a robot during the Greater Oregon Science Engineering and Math camp in Umatilla.

on expanding arts opportunities. Previously, the after-school program focused on "STEM" — science, technology, engineering and math — but Sipe said they are added to include more art components.

"We're looking at dance, probably more drama offerings than we had before," she said. "We're really hoping we can expand the anime club."

The grant will also fund expansion of the district's mental health and adult education programs.

"It'll be a lot of the same

mental health services offered during the day," Sipe said. "But the challenge was that families had to leave work, or kids would have to leave class to participate. This gives families the option of having the same services, after school and in the evening."

The district will also expand the time and funding options for evening education programs. Family members can take GED, ESL and parenting classes. The district will now be an approved GED testing site, meaning fees will be

absorbed by the district, and testing times will become more flexible.

This year, Sipe said 26 people attended the ESL class, and four are taking the GED class.

Umatilla has had some form of after-school program since 2003, originally funded with Title I money and limited to reading and math instruction. Sipe said the first grant from the Oregon Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center Title IV-B was received in 2005. A grant in 2013 allowed them to expand the program to include Friday after school, when they conduct many of their field trips.

"A lot of kids don't get to travel and experience things outside our community," Sipe said. "So that's when we take them kayaking with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, to the planetarium, to Intel. They get to explore career opportunities."

Sipe said initially, the district was nervous about applying for such a large grant, and thought about sticking to smaller grants.

"Ultimately, we decided if we wanted to provide the best quality program, we needed to go for big funding," she said.

RVs meant for camping, not permanent dwelling

East Oregonian

HEPPNER — The Morrow County Planning Department is reminding residents that recreational vehicles can be a fun way to travel during summer vacations but are not allowable as a permanent residence outside of an RV park.

The department stated in a news release that RVs do not meet building code standards that have been "established to protect public health, safety and wel-

fare." As such, using them for camping in designated camping areas is "wonderful and encouraged" but other uses can run afoul of Morrow County's code enforcement and zoning ordinances.

Temporary permits can be obtained in certain circumstances, including medical hardship and during construction of a new dwelling. RVs can also be used as temporary housing to accommodate visitors of a primary residence in a residential or farm zone for less than 30 days in a 12-month period.

For further information, contact the Morrow County Planning Department at 541-922-4624 or visit www.co.morrow.or.us/planning.

Forest Service unveils recreation application, has nearly 10,000 downloads

East Oregonian

PORTLAND — Oregon and Washington outdoor lovers have a new app to help enjoy and navigate national forests.

The United States Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region announced the recent launch of the Pacific Northwest Forest Service recreation app for Android and Apple mobile devices.

The app provides infor-

mation on hiking trails, camping, picnicking, boating areas, and more across 16 national forests, one national scenic area and two national volcanic monuments in Oregon and Washington. The app also provides information on passes and fees, visitor center locations and hours and alerts on fires and road closures.

Jim Peña, Pacific Northwest regional forester, in a news release

said "the app is a response to people wanting more mobile-friendly ways of getting their hiking, camping, and other recreation information."

The Forest Service released an Apple version of the app in May, and it has nearly 10,000 downloads with a 4.7 rating in the Apple app store.

You can download the app on Android or Apple. To learn more about the Forest Service in the

Pacific Northwest, please visit www.fs.usda.gov.

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