

HERMISTON Early survey returns support allowing more food trucks

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The city of Hermiston still has another week left on a community survey about food trucks, but the results so far send a clear message.

During Monday's city council meeting, city planner Clint Spencer said so far 625 people who took the online survey (which closes July 15) said they were in favor of the city increasing the number of mobile vendor licenses from its current cap of three, while 110 people said the cap should stay the same.

"(The survey) runs through the 15th, but I don't think it's going to swing that much," Spencer said.

He said the survey isn't a perfect measurement of community sentiment — respondents are all people who sought out the survey, and there are no controls to make sure people answering are Hermiston residents — but the results do give a sense that there is support for a change in the city's mobile food vending ordinance.

The ordinance, passed in 2013, placed a cap on licenses (which cost \$500 per year) and set in place design and safety standards, including rules for handling gray water and a rule that the truck must be painted a neutral color. It also stated that trucks must be located at least 400 feet from other restaurants and in the city's outlying commercial zone, which does not include downtown. Trucks must move every night, can only operate until 10 p.m. and cannot provide seating.

About 89 percent of respondents to the survey so far have said that the city should allow food trucks downtown. Similar numbers supported temporary licenses for mobile vendors and the creation of a "pod" where multiple food trucks could park. About 80 percent of respondents supported an amendment that would allow small carts that can be pushed by hand in addition to the current large trucks.

Hermiston High School graduation to return to Kennewick's Toyota Center

HERMISTON — The Hermiston School Board agreed at a Monday night meeting that the district will once again hold graduation at the Toyota Center in 2019.

Hermiston High School Principal Tom Spoo made a brief presentation to the board, discussing the positives and negatives of the venue. He said the new location's capacity was one of the biggest benefits, as the school no longer had to give students a limited number of



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Rigo Garcia, owner of Tacos Garcia, serves customers at his food truck.

Councilor John Kirwan, who was on the committee that wrote the ordinance along with Manuel Gutierrez and then-councilor George Anderson, said that while the city is considering changes to the ordinance they needed to remember it was adopted because there had been issues with mobile vendors. Many of them were "mobile" in name only and spread out to become eyesores, he said. There were problems with how people were disposing of their wastewater, and customers of the food trucks were loitering and then using the bathrooms of nearby businesses.

"There still needs to be some regulations," he said. Members of the public present at Monday's meeting voiced their support for amending the ordinance. Jim Sawyer said allowing more food trucks in town would be an economic boon for the community and allow for more diverse food options in town.

"Food trucks are the remedy for this town," Sawyer said. "Applebee's is not breaking ground tomorrow, darn it."

Jose Garcia said he knows a woman who worked for Lamb Weston for decades and dreamed of opening her own "taco van" when she retired. When she was turned away by the city of Hermiston because there were no licenses available, she moved her family to Pasco so she could open her business there.

Patrick Hunt, who runs the Southern Twain BBQ food truck in Pendleton,

lives in Hermiston. He said he had wanted to open his business in Hermiston but was forced to open in Pendleton because there were no licenses available. After Monday's meeting adjourned he and his wife handed out free samples in the lobby to anyone interested in what Hermiston is missing.

Hunt said he would consider opening a second truck in Hermiston if more licenses were offered, although he also said that the requirement to move the truck every night is tiring for vendors who often work long hours. He supported the idea of a food pod, and said that having multiple food vendors together would help them put pressure on each other to keep the area clean and follow the rules.

Mayor David Drotzmann told the audience that their concerns were part of the reason the city is having the conversation about amending the rules to be less restrictive.

"Sometimes the pendulum swings too far," he said.

The council directed staff to come back at a future meeting with recommendations after the survey closes Sunday.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

HERMISTON Festival Street unveiling highlights Funfest

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

A highlight of this year's Hermiston Funfest is the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Hermiston's Festival Street.

"It's the grand opening, which is really exciting," said Debbie Pedro, Hermiston Chamber of Commerce executive director. "We want everyone to come out and celebrate what's great about Hermiston."

In its 13th year, Funfest kicks off Saturday at 7:30 a.m. and runs until 3 p.m. in downtown Hermiston. The Festival Street ceremony takes place at 1 p.m. Free ice cream will be served up to the first 500 people.

With the completion of the project, Pedro said the event's main stage will now be situated on Northeast Second Street. A huge canopy tent and bleacher seating will provide protection from the sun. Entertainment will take the stage throughout the day.

Also, as the sun heats up, several activities offer a way to cool down, including a fire hose fountain. And for a splashing good time, enter Splash and Dash 2018. Mobile race bathtubs are provided. There's no entry fee, but teams need to register Friday by 4 p.m. at Herm-

iston City Hall. Participants must be at least 18 years old and the driver is required to wear a helmet. Warning — you WILL get wet!

Other festival highlights, Pedro said, are the Outlaw Lawn Dragsters. She said the souped-up mowing machines will tear up Main Street in front of the *Hermiston Herald* office.

"It's really unique and people love them," Pedro said.

Also returning is Bear in the Box, featuring chainsaw artists. They will be showing off their skills and selling unique wooden creations, including a 2 p.m. auction.

Eastern Oregon Art Show
Showcasing the work of regional artists, the Eastern Oregon Art Show runs Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Victory Baptist Church. Presented by Desert Arts Council, it offers \$1,500 in cash prizes, including a \$250 people's choice award.

It's open to amateur and professional artists as well as youths in a special teen category. People may enter up to two works in any medium. Entries must be submitted Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Hermiston City Hall. The per piece entry fee is \$10 for adults and \$5 for teens. Information and a form is available at www.desertartscouncil.com.

Cool Rides Car Show
Be sure to cruise on over to McKenzie Park for the 23rd annual Cool Rides Car Show. Vehicle registration begins Saturday at 7 a.m. The show starts at 9 a.m. and finishes up with the awards presentation at 3 p.m.

Activities rev up Friday for registered participants. A poker run starts at 5 p.m. at the park and pulled pork sandwiches will be served when everyone returns. Club president Larry Stormont said those not entering vehicles in the show can participate for \$5.

Registration is \$25, which includes a dash plaque raffle ticket, event T-shirt and the Friday evening activities. Vendors, live music and food will be available at the park.

Awards will be presented in more than a dozen classes, including motorcycles. Also, prizes will be given for Best of Show, Andy Anderson Memorial, Mike Monroe Memorial, longest distance traveled and "I Built My Car."

For more information about Funfest, call Pedro at 541-567-6151 or visit www.hermistonchamber.com. For questions about the art show, contact 541-667-5018 or bkander29@gmail.com. And, for the car show, call Stormont at 541-571-5960.

Help still needed for Umatilla County Fair parade

HERMISTON — The fair board is still searching for volunteers to help with the annual Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade, which is Saturday Aug. 4.

According to Gay Newman, Umatilla County Fair board chairman, the parade is still lacking about eight to ten volunteers and is looking for people to work from 3:30 to 7 p.m. on Saturday. He said it takes about 16 volunteers to put on the parade.

The fair board made a public appeal for volunteers in May. Then in June, fair coordinator Angie McNal-

ley published another call for volunteers on the Umatilla County Fair Facebook page. The post said the fair board is looking for a volunteer group or organization of 15 people that would help with the parade and develop a partnership to run it each year.

"We have never experienced a lack of participation or volunteerism within the UC, so we are confident that we will receive the help that we are looking for," she wrote.

According to the Facebook post, volunteers would be responsible for mark-

ing lineup spaces, lining up and routing parade entries, handing out entry numbers and organizing paperwork before the parade.

"Our parade is a huge parade out here," said Newman. "We had somewhere around 140 entries in it [last year] and the streets are full."

Newman also said the fair in general requires an extensive amount of volunteer help. He estimates about 500 people volunteered last year.

The Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade is Aug. 4 at 6:30 p.m.

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Downtown HERMISTON

SATURDAY • JULY 14 • 9AM-3PM

- Rotary Breakfast 7:30-9:30am
- Vendor Booths
- Classic Car Show in the Park
- Eastern Oregon Art Show
- Club 24 Glow Run
- Chain Saw Wood Carvers
- KOHU/The Q Cash Machine
- Bounce Houses & Games

Festival Street Entertainment

9:00 Gems & Gents
9:30 Big Top the Clown
10:00 Hermiston School of Karate
12:00 Bram Brata Steel Band
1:00 Ribbon Cutting of Festival St.
1:15 Bath Tub Races
2:00 Wood Carver Auction

10:00/12:00/2:00 **3rd St & Main Lawn Mower Drag Races**

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