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\$1.50

"IF ANYTHING, IT'S OPENED MY EYES TO MORE THINGS I COULD DO."

Saige Melson, a Hermiston High School senior, who is enjoying her internship at Hermiston Municipal Airport. Melson hopes to become a pilot.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Airport manager Rolf Anderson Leirvik, left, and mechanic Lisa Sturgeon move a Piper PA12 out of the maintenance hangar for repairs on Tuesday at the Hermiston Municipal Airport.

SMALL HERMISTON AIRPORT TAKING OFF

Mechanic services and youth outreach among offerings under new management

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

In the months since Gorge Aviation Services took over management of the Hermiston Municipal Airport, the airport has expanded its services.

Flying lessons, on-site mechanics, internships, student field trips and other perks have been drawing more people to the airport and could be fostering some future aviation careers.

Previously, Hermiston's plane owners were taking their machines outside of Hermiston for repairs and required annual inspections. Now they can get those services right at Hermiston's airport.

Rolf Anderson Leirvik, airport manager, said not only are local pilots getting their airplanes fixed and inspected in Hermiston, but there are people flying in from cities in other parts of Oregon and southern Washington to have their planes seen by Ron Berg, the full-time mechanic and Leirvik's partner in Gorge Aviation Services.

"Ron Berg has a great reputation and following, and people bring their planes to him because they like him so much," Leirvik said.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Hermiston High School senior Saige Melson files paperwork on the computer in the front office Tuesday at the Hermiston Municipal Airport.

He said the aviation industry has a shortage of mechanics, pilots, air traffic controllers, engineers, technicians, airport planners and other related careers, so Hermiston is lucky to have local mechanics.

"There is a tremendous need for those kinds of workers," he said.

Gorge Aviation Services is trying to do its part to entice the younger generation to look into aviation careers. The airport just took on its first high school intern, and is hosting activities

for teens to learn airplane repair skills.

Saige Melson, a senior at Hermiston High School, started her internship in January. She said she wants to be a pilot someday.

So far Melson has gotten a wide range of experience, from working with the mechanics to helping out in the offices. But her favorite so far has been getting to try out the flight simulator. She said it was harder than she

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Pendleton to take out \$2.6 million loan for new hangar

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Pendleton City Council has always bet big on the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range, and they're willing to take on more debt to keep it growing.

The council on Tuesday approved taking out a \$2.6 million loan from Business Oregon to build an 18,000-square-foot hangar at the airport.

The council got a letter from PAE ISR President Chico Moline saying that his drone company would like to expand their presence in Pendleton by leasing the new hangar for five years, adding that their intention was not a "binding commitment."

The state proposed the city pay back the loan over 25 years, using \$216,000 in expected annual rental revenue to make the payments.

Associate engineer Wayne Green said the new hangar would be near Northwest 56th Street, adjacent to the hangar rented by A³, the Airbus subsidiary that is

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Hermiston woman gets six months in prison

Veronica Rivera gets federal sentence for dealing fentanyl

East Oregonian

Veronica Rivera of Hermiston will spend six months in federal prison after she was sentenced on Tuesday for selling fentanyl.

According to federal court documents, Rivera, 46, was part of a drug trafficking organization the Drug Enforcement Administration and local Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team investigated in October 2017. The organization was distributing small blue pills pressed to look like oxycodone 30 milligram tablets, but the pills contained fentanyl, a Schedule II controlled substance.

A DEA agent wrote in court records that a confidential source met Rivera on two separate occasions in March of 2018 in Hermiston, and she sold them 167 pills.

Rivera was charged with two counts of distribution and possession with intent to distribute fentanyl. She pleaded guilty to one count, asked for five years probation and 250 hours of community service and she agreed to forfeit \$5,000. The U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon asked for Rivera to serve 15 months in prison with three years of supervised release and a \$100 fee.

Rivera has several charges of drug possession in Umatilla County, including possession of methamphetamine in 2014.

Wait, I owe the IRS how much this year?

Many Americans shocked by impact of new tax law

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL
AP Personal Finance Writer

The first tax filing season under the new federal tax law is proving to be surprising, confusing — and occasionally frightening — for some Americans, especially those accustomed to getting money back from the government.

Take Andy Kraft and Amy Elias of Portland. The couple had grown comfortable getting a small refund each year, a few hundred dollars or more.

Then they found out they owe \$10,160 this year.

"I will never forget the moment, I thought 'We look good' and then we added in the next W-2 and my jaw hit the floor," Kraft said. "There was no way I wanted to believe that what I was looking at was accurate."

President Trump promised a reduction in taxes with the new law. And by most measures, the majority of Americans will see one. The non-partisan Tax Policy Center projected the tax law would reduce individual income taxes by about \$1,260 on average, although it benefits higher earners more.

So not everyone will see a massive tax bill or a drop in their refund. Some

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AP Photo/Gillian Flaccus

Husband and wife Andy Kraft and Amy Elias, of Portland, talk during an interview about their 2018 tax paperwork in their Portland home on Monday. The couple got a small refund last year but this year owe more than \$10,000 in taxes under the new tax law.

