

Hermiston celebrates Cinco de Mayo

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Music filled the fairgrounds all weekend long as Hermiston hosted its annual Cinco de Mayo celebration.

The event, which outgrew its previous homes at various city parks and downtown streets, took place at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center on Friday through Sunday.

On Saturday, the slate of live performances kicked off at 5 p.m. Luz Lopez of Boardman, who was listening with her friends from the bleachers, said she hoped people got up and started dancing soon.

"I came here because of the music, and I wanted to dance," she said. "It's been a long time since I've danced."

She said she appreciated the local volunteers that come together each year to put on the event.

Lopez said she was there because it seemed like a fun way to spend a Saturday night, but also



Staff photo by Jade McDowell
People watch Cuarto Concepto perform on Saturday night at Hermiston's Cinco de Mayo celebration.

because "it's my culture."

While Americans sometimes incorrectly assume that Cinco de Mayo is Mexico's independence day, the holiday actually marks Mexicans' victory in a single battle against the French in 1862 at the Battle of Puebla.

In the United States, the day has evolved into an opportunity for Mex-

ican-Americans to celebrate their heritage.

Bands performing throughout the weekend ranged from local bands to international stars, such as Huichol Musical.

Other performers included Paso Firme, Plebiloz Style, Inizzio Norteño, Cuarto Concepto, Herencia con Estilo and more. There was also danc-

ing by Baile Folklorico.

Christian Contreas, a guitarist from the local group Herencia con Estilo, was spending time with friends Saturday while waiting to go on. He said he always enjoys the games, food and music at Hermiston's Cinco de Mayo celebration.

"We're here to just chill and have fun," he said.

In addition to live music the weekend featured a carnival, food vendors, beer garden and a pageant.

Lili Juarez was crowned this year's Miss Cinco de Mayo during the pageant on Sunday afternoon. Also competing for the title were Hermiston teens Nayeli Resendiz, Paloma Silva and Bresieda Sandoval.

The Cinco de Mayo pageant began as a city-sponsored event planned by Hermiston's Hispanic Advisory Committee. In recent years, it has been run by an official Cinco de Mayo nonprofit organization that brings together volunteers and sponsors each year.

Hermiston man injured in motorcycle wreck

East Oregonian

A Hermiston man was hurt Friday when he crashed a motorcycle.

Sgt. Adam Gregory with the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office said Nychal Gritz, 22, regained consciousness at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland.

Gritz, a former Hermiston High School baseball player, rode off from a party near Stanfield. His friends noticed he was gone. They looked, found Gritz crashed near North Loop Road, Stanfield, at 7:40 p.m. and called 911. Gregory said it appeared Gritz went around a corner too sharp and struck his head.

The air medical service LifeFlight flew Gritz to Kadlec Regional Medical Center, Richland, Washington, which transferred him to the Portland trauma center. Gregory said Gritz remains there and has injuries but is awake and doing well.

Pendleton police and medics responded to a

multi-vehicle crash Monday. Police Lt. Charles Byram reported a three-vehicle collision occurred at 7:40 a.m. at Southgate Place and Southwest 37th Street. Officers and medics arrived at the crash at 7:44 a.m.

Kenneth R. Morrison of Pendleton was stopped in a red 2011 GMC Sierra at the stop sign facing east on 37th Street at the intersection of Southgate Place. Renee M. Sweet of Pendleton was driving south on Southgate Place in a blue 2015 Hyundai Sonata. According to Byram, Morrison entered the intersection without seeing the Sonata.

Sweet's vehicle collided with Morrison's, which caused both vehicles to cross the intersection and collide with a gold 1995 Honda Accord traveling north on Southgate Place.

Sweet and Hansen suffered injuries, and ambulances took them to the nearby St. Anthony Hospital for evaluation. Linda J. Hansen of Pendleton drove the Accord. Police did not indicate she was injured.

Spring cleaning



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A volunteer picks up trash from the south bank of the Umatilla River during Saturday's cleanup of the Pendleton River Parkway, sponsored by Stewards of the Umatilla River Environment.

Contentious airport clause could be approved by Pendleton City Council

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

On Tuesday night, the Pendleton City Council will revisit contentious contract language that has previously raised the hackles of the airport's general aviation community.

Businesses can only lease land instead of buying it at the airport, and the airport wanted to update language that allows the city to automatically acquire the building

once the business' lease ends. This contract language is referred to as a "reversionary clause."

The reversionary clause was an anathema to airport businesses, whose operators and owners said the contract language would devalue their investments and kill further entrepreneurship at the airport.

To accommodate the airport business community, the airport commission approved a lease option where tenants

could avoid a reversionary clause if they agreed to pay twice the standard land lease rate.

Although the commission's recommendation is still intact, City Manager Robb Corbett has also provided the city council with a possible amendment, which would allow the city to negotiate a new lease without obligating them to do it.

The council meeting will be held Tuesday at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Hermiston Marlette employee retires after 50 years at the plant

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

When Alex Garcia started working at Marlette Homes in Hermiston, the Vietnam War was in full swing and Richard Nixon had just been elected president.

Garcia retired Monday after more than 50 years at the manufactured home plant. He started work there on Nov. 7, 1968, at age 21.

He started out installing floors and during the ensuing five decades moved through plumbing, insulation, framing, painting and welding.

"The only thing I haven't done is shingles," he said. "I've learned just about everything else."

Most recently he ran the tool crib. His job included keeping track of the facility's tools, loaning them out and repairing them.

Garcia said he has seen plenty of changes in the industry over the years, down to the very tools used to build the homes.

"We started with a hammer and nails, and now we use air tools," he said.

Tom Shimp, production manager and Garcia's

supervisor, said Garcia will be "very hard to replace."

He described Garcia as a "super great guy" with an impressive work ethic and attendance record.

"He's one of those guys who you don't have to manage his time, he manages his own time," Shimp said.

He said Garcia was an important part of the team and will be greatly missed.

During a barbecue at Marlette in Garcia's honor on Monday, Shimp presented him with a \$500 gift card to Ranch & Home and told him that he was welcome to come back and visit at any time.

Members of Garcia's family, who were also present for the celebration, thanked the company and said they had enjoyed the decades of attending company picnics and other events.

General manager Glen Alessandri said the staff wanted to make sure Garcia's family was present because he is a "family man."

He, too, said Garcia would be missed.

"He's quiet and unassuming — you would never

know he had been here 50 years," Alessandri said.

Christina Mendoza, one of the many employees at the barbecue, said Garcia's job in the tool crib touched every department and everyone at the Hermiston facility knew Garcia.

"He's always nice and always puts a smile on my face," Mendoza said. "He's just a good guy all around. If you don't know who he is, you're not going to make it here."

Garcia waved off most of the attention at his surprise party, saying there wasn't much to his longevity there.

"I needed the work, I got a good job and I stuck to it," he said.



Garcia



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- Aristotle

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