

WALLA WALLA MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN UMAPINE SHOOTING

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HERMISTON'S ABBY SHARON SWIMMING TO NEW ADVENTURES

SPORTS, B1

# EAST OREGONIAN

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EDUCATION

## Pandemic makes college choices tougher

Students report excitement, anxiety, while colleges adjust to COVID-19

By MEERAH POWELL  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

MILTON-FREEWATER — It's a month until high school graduation. For many high school seniors in Oregon, it's a race to complete classes and iron out college plans for the fall, in a year like no other.

The pandemic has placed extra pressure on all students, but for high school seniors who are the first in their families to attend college, navigating school applications, scholarships and financial aid — without the usual support at school — is even more challenging.

"It's been kind of rough on us — all of the students," Rafael Pereyda, a senior at McLoughlin High School in Milton-Freewater, said. "I think I'm somewhat prepared, but overall I'm not that prepared because learning through online classes is kind of hard because it's just like it's all new."

Pereyda is McLoughlin's valedictorian. He's lived his whole life in Milton-Freewater, a small city nestled in the Walla Walla Valley of Eastern Oregon, just a few miles from the Washington state line.

Pereyda said he was initially thinking about going to a four-year university but ultimately decided on Blue Mountain Community College, which has a branch in Milton-Freewater.

"I don't want to be too much in debt because of college," Pereyda said. "And community college is a lot cheaper, so I'll probably do that for a year or two and then I might transfer to a bigger school."

Pereyda said he only really decided he wanted to go to college around the beginning of this year, and he missed some of the bigger scholarship deadlines that could have given him a "full ride."

Nearly two-thirds of McLoughlin High's students are Hispanic or

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## Whisky Fest is on for July

Original headliners pushed to 2022

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Whisky Music Fest will be back in 2021, but it will look significantly different than anticipated.

A year after event organizers were forced to cancel the concert due to COVID-19, Whisky Fest

announced it would come back on July 10, albeit with new headliners. Facing a 12,000-person capacity limit at the Round-Up Grounds, Whisky Fest is postponing previously announced headliners Macklemore and Eric Church to 2022 and bringing in a new slate of musicians. Whisky Fest will announce its new headliners on May 28.

According to Whisky Fest co-founder Andy McAnally, trying to organize a concert as reopening standards shift was a challenge.

"This has been an extremely challenging 15 months from rescheduling the entire line-up from 2020 to 2021 with the intentions of having a full capacity event in 2021," he wrote in an email. "Switching gears again to a limited capacity event with an entire new line-up of artists is extremely difficult to pull off."

Macklemore, a rapper, and Church, a country artist, were supposed to perform in 2020 before being moved to the 2021 show. For

McAnally and fellow co-founder Doug Corey, the reasoning behind changing the musical acts in 2021 was simple: the capacity limit made Macklemore and Church unaffordable.

After the co-headliners moved to 2022, Whisky Fest is offering ticket holders the option of transferring their tickets to next year or getting a full refund. McAnally wrote that ticket holders cannot

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Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

An American flag hangs in a World War II-era hangar at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton as people gather during an event to announce Blue Mountain Community College's new UAS program on Wednesday, May 19, 2021.

## READY FOR TAKEOFF

### Blue Mountain Community College plans out its unmanned program

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — According to Steve Chrisman, Pendleton's airport manager and economic development director, the world is in the midst of nothing short of a "fourth industrial revolution" thanks to the rise of drone technology.

With drone operations continuing to increase at the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range, Blue Mountain Community College is starting a UAS program with the hope of helping locals get a piece of the pie.

On Wednesday, May 19, about 100 people gathered at the Pendleton airport's World War II-era hangar for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the grand openings of the expansion of the UAS industrial park and a new flex hanger, more signs of the test range's growth.

Despite some of the range's success, Chrisman said he still



Chrisman

Green

couldn't answer some questions about the range's future, like how many jobs it would ultimately create or when it would attract manufacturing, a feature that could further jumpstart job growth.

He did tout the growing number of UAS companies that were utilizing the range to test their commercial drone products, a trend evidenced by the more than 1,000 operations range staff were projecting for 2021.

With the heightened activity has come jobs. According to Chrisman the range has attracted 75 permanent jobs and many more transient positions.

After local officials simultaneously cut two ribbons, one at the hangar where the ceremony was taking place and another in front of the new flex hangar, interim BMCC President Connie Green went to the podium to make her own announcement: The college was starting its own UAS training program to help local students gain a foothold in the industry.

"It's starting now so you can

be a part of the first 10," she said. "There's jobs, there's opportunities."

Green went on to describe the basic details of the program. A noncredit certificate program, BMCC's UAS program would begin with a 10-student cohort on June 21. Spanning 10 weeks, the program would cost students \$4,600.

The program is a partnership between the college and Volatus, a UAS training company owned by DelMar Aerospace Corp., of Nevada.

According to people involved in the inception of the program, its establishment has been a longtime coming.

"It's an evolution of a marriage that we've been trying to date for years," Stanley Springer, the chief operating officer of DelMar, said in an interview.

Drew Leggett, a precision agriculture instructor at Blue Mountain, said the discussions over incorporating UAS into BMCC's offerings long preceded his arrival at the college in 2018.

It evolved out of talks about UAS' role in precision agriculture, the use of drones, sensors and other technology to help make farming more efficient and sustainable.

"It's important that we just don't

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## Learning lessons about life

FAB Life returns to teach Hermiston students how expensive it is to be an adult

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Joshua Farias needed a roommate.

The single father of two, making \$36,480 per year as a restaurant manager, was almost out of money for the month but still needed to pay for utilities, a car and clothing for himself and his children. So he asked around until he found someone willing to pay half the mortgage for a room in his three-bedroom home.

Fortunately for Farias, he isn't actually a father of two, just a Hermiston High School senior participating in a budgeting simulation meant to teach students about the cost of living. And he learned, to his surprise, just how expensive adult life can be.

"Housing is the most expensive," he said.

The budgeting exercise, known as FAB Life, took place on May 19-20 at the high school. Seniors were each given a scenario sheet detailing aspects of their "life," including their profession, annual salary, monthly take-home pay, married status and number of children. They had to then visit booths around the gym, staffed by volunteers who explained their spending options to them.

At the child care booth, students were given options ranging from public child care centers to a nanny, with price tags based on the number and age of their children. Kory Terry and Miranda Cranstons, who were running the booth, said students were often surprised at the cost.

"They're giving us 'wow' eyes, like, 'Are you serious?'" Terry said.

### Important choices

Cranston said a few students said it was important to them that their child got the best care possible and hired a nanny, but most students

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