

# Rondon lands new position with pest management center

She is appointed director of Oregon Integrated Pest Management Center

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**  
*Capital Press*

HERMISTON — When Silvia Rondon first arrived in Hermiston in 2006, local farmers were struggling with a surge of potato tuber moths damaging their crop. Rondon, a professor and entomologist at Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center, was just establishing her program focused on integrated pest management for

irrigated row crops in the Columbia Basin. After studying the pernicious insect, Rondon and her team learned the moth's larvae prefer to feed on the leaves of young potato plants. Rather than spraying pesticide applications throughout the growing season, farmers could spray once or twice closer to harvest before the foliage shrivels and dies. "That is the critical time," she said. "Once the foliage, which is the preferred feed-



Rondon

ing host of the pest, is gone, that's when they start attacking the tubers." Over the years, Rondon has helped growers in Northeastern Oregon and Southeastern Washington battle a variety of infestations, including potato psyllid, potato beetle and lygus bugs. Her experience has led Rondon to a new position as director of OSU's Integrated Pest Management Center, helping farm-

ers across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest improve their production. The Integrated Pest Management Center — formerly known as the Integrated Plant Protection Center — is based at OSU's main campus in Corvallis, though Rondon said she will remain in Hermiston for the time being and continue to oversee the station's entomology program. Rondon was selected by an 11-person search committee consisting of members from OSU, the state Department of Agriculture and industry groups. Her appointment

is effective July 1. "I am super excited about this position, and the new challenge ahead of me," Rondon said. "I think my expertise fits really well." In an email announcing Rondon's appointment, Alan Sams, dean of the OSU College of Agricultural Sciences, said she will help to strengthen the center, "enhancing our strategic goal to help our industries compete in their markets, domestically and globally. Being based in Hermiston has given Rondon a broad grounding. The Columbia Basin, with its loamy soil and climate

consisting of hot days and cool nights, grows more than 200 irrigated crops, each of which poses its own challenges and opportunities. Umatilla County leads the state in production of vegetables, melons and potatoes, according to the most recent USDA Census of Agriculture, with sales topping \$111 million. "My specific program here in Hermiston will continue to be driven by the needs of local growers," Rondon said. "I am extremely appreciative for all the support they have given me."

## Couple complete companion book to memorial

By **JEDIDIAH MAYNES**  
*of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*

WALLA WALLA — This Memorial Day, one poignant stop could be the monument near Fort Walla Walla Museum on Myra Road that honors the local men who died during World War II. And to complete the ode to the fallen, you can even read a miniature biography on all 93 of them, thanks to the work now completed by Neil and Sherilyn Jacobson.

The book, "Infamy and Beyond: Servicemen from Walla Walla County, WA, Who Died in WWII," is available in paperback exclusively at Fort Walla Walla Museum's gift shop or its website. The project essentially went hand-in-hand with the creation of the monument, the Jacobsons said. "There were quite a few unusual things that don't usually go along with publishing a book," Sherilyn Jacobson said. "Because ... this turned out to be one of many offshoots from being involved in building the World War II monument." The duo began collaborating with team of volunteers building the monument early on and stuck with the project all the way up to its dedication in 2018.

"One thing led to another," Sherilyn Jacobson said. "And then — being masters of overkill — we wound up with a 400-page book." Their research even helped complete the monument to a greater extent.

Two soldiers had been left off, they discovered during their perusing. Luckily, the monument was designed with the idea that more names could be added, they said.

The process for the Jacobsons was a labor of love and longevity. The two veterans took the past two years and essentially any free time they had and poured it into the research and writing of the book.

Some of the content also was used in a Walla Walla Union-Bulletin supplement written by former U-B reporter Andy Porter and former U-B editor Tom Skeen. Porter was one of the final reviewers of the book, along with museum volunteer Kathy Stritzel who pored over microfilm of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin at Whitman College's Penrose Library for pictures of the soldiers.

What resulted is one of the most in-depth historical books written about Walla Walla County and its people.

"It was hard to know where to stop," Sherilyn Jacobson said.

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