



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

A Columbia Basin Student Homes truck sits across the street from the newest Fieldstone Crossing student-built home on Southeast Angus Court in Hermiston Tuesday, June 29, 2021.

HHS:

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3-bedroom, 2½-bathroom home from foundation to its recent sale for just under \$450,000.

The home features high-end finishes, such as speakers, a central vacuum system, an oversized refrigerator and hidden pantry. The students also work with Energy Trust of Oregon and its partners to ensure the home exceeds codes for energy efficiency.

Todd Blackman, an outreach specialist with EPS New Construction, said the home tested 18% above energy code in insulation, air sealing and appliances.

"A lot of people think they build an efficient home," he said. "But unless you test it and build it right you don't know."

Berger said students have their hands on all aspects of the construction process, from foundation to framing to the finishing touches.

"If we don't do something we see it done and they get to work with the contractors throughout the process," said Berger.

Saul Cadenas was among those who took part in this year's project. He described the build as an a positive learning experience. He said prior to the home construction he'd worked on little projects but never imagined building a home.

"It was something new



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Curt Berger, right, hands over the keys to the seventh Fieldstone Crossing student-built home to Mike and Loy Stratton in Hermiston Tuesday, June 29, 2021.

that I really enjoyed doing," he said. "I learned a lot through the process."

Cadenas said he learned how to read blueprints and apply them to a construction process, and the class ultimately inspired him to want to build his own home someday.

"It gave me more motivation to further my career and be able to get to building a home," he said. "Take that class, it's definitely worth it."

In 2013, the district received a \$372,674 Career Technical Education grant and joined forces with the Northeast Oregon Homebuilders Association to train

high school students in residential construction through the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilders program. Each year the district uses the sale of the home to fund the home for the upcoming year.

This year's program only was open to Hermiston High School students due to COVID-19 restrictions, though a traditional year would be open to high school students from schools throughout the Columbia Basin, said Berger.

In addition to construction, Hermiston High students handle the architectural design and landscaping of the homes.

Bryson Bonnifer said it was a "pretty cool" experience to help assemble the framing and other aspects of the house.

"I learned everything really, it was interesting," he said. "I really enjoyed climbing in the trusses and putting studs in."

Bonnifer said the experience allowed him to receive a scholarship from Columbia Basin Student Homes, and he will continue to pursue an interest in construction, adding that the experience was unlike any other.

"I just toured the finished house," Bonnifer said, "and it was pretty incredible."

Records:

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"The sheer magnitude of the temperatures is unprecedented," Cole Evans, a forecaster for the weather service station in Pendleton, said.

Meteorologists often have referred to the heat wave as a "heat dome," a phenomenon Evans compared to a car parked under the sun for an extended period of time. Evans said a layer of high atmospheric pressure formed over the Northwest, allowing warmer temperatures to build over time until they crested this week.

The heat may have been harsh enough to claim a life. The numbers still are preliminary, but the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office reported Wednesday, June 30, one death related to the heat wave in Umatilla County.

Umatilla County was not alone. The Oregon Medical Examiner's Office also reported preliminary investigations revealed Columbia County had one death due to heat, Clackamas County had two, Washington County had five, Marion County had nine and Multnomah had 45.

While some Northwest communities nearer to the Pacific Ocean already are starting to see significant cooldown, it may take a little longer for Eastern Oregon to break the heat. Although temperatures are expected to retreat from their record-breaking patterns, Evans said the tempera-



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An electronic display registers 116 degrees Tuesday, June 29, 2021, at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston. The National Weather Service reported the temperature in Hermiston that day topped out at 118, setting a new record high for the city.

ture is expected to stay in the triple digits through the Fourth of July weekend as stagnant wind conditions will keep much of the heat in place. The temperature isn't expected to dip down into the 90s until well into the first full week of July.

Another unusual aspect of the heat wave is how early it came in the summer season. Evans said the region likely will see more standard heat waves in July and August, but they are unlikely to be as severe as their predecessor.

The potential for fire danger prompted the Umatilla National Forest to implement more public use restrictions effective as of 12:01 a.m. July 1.

The U.S. Forest Service in a press release stated the increased restrictions pertain to the use of campfires, smoking, chain saws,

internal combustion engines and generators.

Under the stricter rules, campfires only will be allowed in designated campgrounds and recreation sites. Liquefied or bottled gas stoves and heaters are allowed for cooking and heating.

Operating an internal combustion engine, such as a chain saw, requires a valid permit. Generators will only be allowed in the center of an area at least 10 feet in diameter that is cleared of all flammable material; or when contained within a pickup bed that is devoid of all flammable material; or when factory installed in a recreational vehicle and the generator exhaust discharge is in the center of an area at least 10 feet in diameter that is cleared of all flammable material.

Smoking is only allowed within enclosed vehicles, buildings and developed recreation sites or when stopped in an area cleared of all flammable material.

For more information about the Umatilla National Forest's public use restrictions, contact the Umatilla National Forest Information Hotline at 877-958-9663 or visit its website at www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla.

The Oregon Department of Forestry also could have restrictions in place. For information, contact a local Oregon Department of Forestry office or visit one of the interagency dispatch center's webpages:

- Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch webpage: www.bmidc.org.
- John Day Interagency Dispatch webpage: bicjddc.org/index.shtml.

The heat wave still could have long-term consequences for fire season, which was reflected by Gov. Kate Brown declaring a state of emergency over the imminent threat of wildfire.

As temperature records broke across the Northwest, some residents have expressed fear that climate change means the heat wave has established a new normal for summer conditions.

Paul Loikith, the director of the Portland State University Climate Science Lab, told Willamette Week the "heat dome" still is possible regardless of climate change, but global warming played a factor in making the heat wave more intense than it usually would be.



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Fireworks explode over the drive-in screen at Weston-McEwen's commencement ceremony at the M-F Drive-in in Milton-Freewater May 28, 2020. The city of Milton-Freewater announced a burn ban that includes fireworks on June 21, 2021.

Fireworks:

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issues of public safety and act when it's necessary. And we believe we're in the conditions right now that require unique action."

Commissioner Dan Dorrان said in the six months he has served on the county board, he has received more communications and phone calls on this issue than any other.

"The fear is real," he said. "As a property owner, it scares the heck out of me. As a citizen it really scares me in regards to the rest of the public. It's just an accident waiting to happen."

Pendleton Police Chief Chuck Byram told the council that officers will approach enforcement of the fireworks ban like they do when responding to the use of illegal fireworks. Once police spot a firework in the sky, they will attempt to track down the person who set it off. He added the police intend to only fine violators if they don't respond to a warning.

Ashland, Sandy, Portland, Tualatin, Bend, Hood River and The Dalles have implemented some form of fireworks ban, according to The Oregonian/OregonLive.

Oregon outlaws fireworks that fly, explode, travel more than 6 feet on the ground or 12 inches into the air, but officials said this doesn't stop some residents from buying fireworks in other states and shooting them off in Oregon.

The Rotary Club of Pendleton has organized an official Fourth of July fireworks show in years past, but Byram said there will be no show this year. Pendleton joins Umatilla County and Milton-Freewater in banning local fireworks.

Milton-Freewater Fire Chief Shane Garner announced a burn ban on June 21, which includes fireworks, according to a press release from the city.

Hermiston will not ban fireworks, according to Mark Morgan, the assis-

tant city manager. Forecasts show triple-digit temperatures in the Hermiston area throughout the next week. Since April, Hermiston has reported some of the driest conditions ever recorded, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

Rather than making a formal statement cautioning people against the use of fireworks this holiday, Morgan said, the city will rely on local fire officials to encourage people to be safe.

The city is planning a fireworks show from the Hermiston Butte under contract with a licensed firework vendor. The vendor, according to Morgan, has a wind threshold and will decide with the fire marshal whether or not to cancel.

Pendleton Fire Chief Jim Critchley said officials will be on the lookout to enforce these rules.

"It's the ones that go off illegally that we will find and we will give you citations," he said. "Those are the ones that are going to cause problems and burn down a house or burn down a field. That's what I dread."

Critchley and Jimmy Davis, the operations chief for Umatilla Fire District 1, which covers Stanfield and Hermiston, said they are concerned for the firefighters working through the extreme heat.

"Fortunately, we haven't had any major fire calls yet," said Davis. "But this is the kind of weather where we start losing firemen very quick too, when it gets this hot."

Davis and Critchley each said the fire departments will increase staffing over the weekend.

"Of all the weeks I spend worrying about that world, this is the one I worry the most about," Critchley said. "I worry about the heat, I worry about the fires and having enough resources to get in front of a fire when it starts."

East Oregonian reporter Antonio Sierra contributed to this feature.

Manager:

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forced the city to reckon with new tech needs like Zoom, it also resulted in millions of dollars in federal stimulus. The city eventually allocated \$3.4 million for facility maintenance projects at the Vert Auditorium, the Pendleton Convention Center and the Pendleton River Parkway.

Reflecting on his career, Graham said he was fortunate to have good staff working under him and good city managers working over him.

City Manager Robb Corbett said Graham was the type of employee "who seemed to know a little something about everything," someone who could harness his institutional knowledge not only to help the city, but to help anybody who needed to lean on public resources.

"He's on speed dial for everyone we work with every year," he said.

Corbett pulled Graham's 1987 performance evaluation, where the evaluator praised Graham's knowledge of mechanical systems while noting he was not

easily replaceable.

John Nelson, who served as Pendleton's city manager at the time, said another employee likely wrote that evaluation, but he agreed with everything it said. He called Graham a "two-fer," an employee who did a job that it would take two staff to replace.

As he heads into retirement, Graham said he now has more time to spend with his wife, who retired several years ago, and with his hobbies. Graham now is free to take his fleet of three Jeeps into the mountains or use his time to build "steampunk lamps," a do-it-yourself activity that repurposes old materials into new lamps.

Graham may not get a building named after him or a statue like other Pendleton luminaries, but there are more subtle markers of his legacy.

Back in the 1970s, Graham said the city used to send an army of staff to places such as Olney Cemetery and Community Park to manually water the lawns with hoses. Much has changed in the city of Pendleton over the past 45 years, but the sprinkler system Graham helped install remains in use today.