

Umatilla County Fair bestows titles of grand marshals on **LONGTIME VOLUNTEERS**

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Since the 1970s, Gay and Alice Newman have been constant, steady figures within the Umatilla County community. Now, after a lifetime involved in the Umatilla County Fair and as COVID-19 restrictions lift, they are looking forward to being the first grand marshals as the Umatilla County Fair bounces back.



ALICE AND GAY NEWMAN

The Newmans will be in the spotlight as fair festivities commence, riding in the fair's Kick-off Parade on Aug. 7, starting at 6:30 p.m. The fair then gets going in full Aug. 11-14.

The parade starts on Southwest Seventh Street near West Highland Avenue and heads north to turn east onto West Hermiston Avenue, crosses the railroad tracks and continues on East Gladys Avenue, then turns south onto Northeast Third Street for a block, then goes west on East Main Street until it ends at Bi-Mart on South First Place.

The Newmans were selected as the grand marshals in January 2020 for last year's fair until the pandemic hit and the parade went into the cancel bin with other live events.

Yet the duo continued helping with livestock intake for the auction and helping youths show their animals even though they couldn't be there in person during the pandemic.

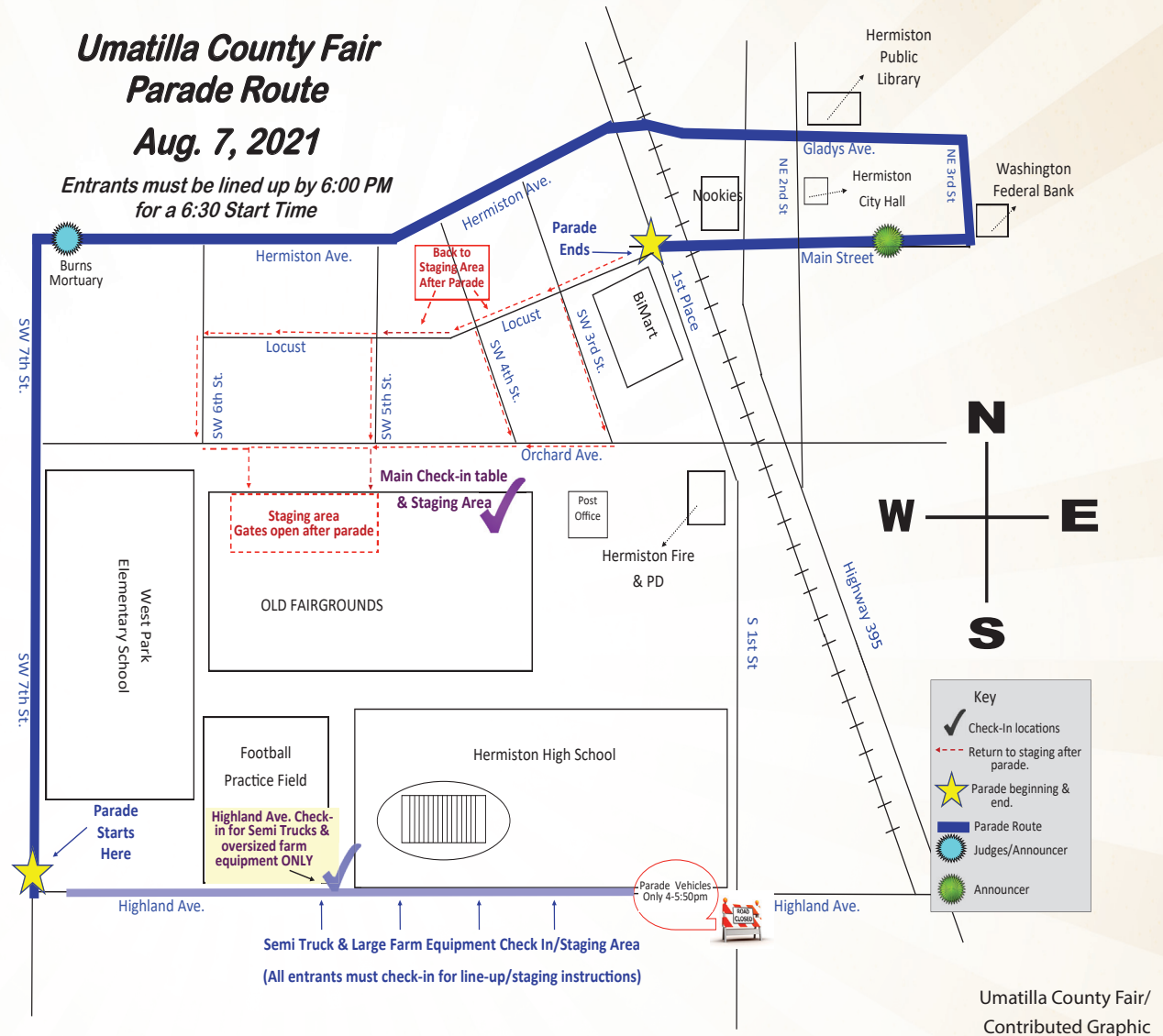
"It's always been there for us," Alice said, "and we just like to give back and help work and volunteer anywhere we can form."

The Newmans see their duties of promoting the fair, bringing the community together and helping get youths involved as a way to give back to the community that has done so much for their children and grandchildren over the years.

"It's kind of just giving back to the community and county," Gay said.

The pair moved down to Hermiston from the Yakima Valley in Washington in the early 1970s when Gay got the opportunity to move to either Missouri or Oregon for work. They picked Oregon.

According to Alice, they came down to Hermiston to talk with people who sold livestock with Gay on



a Thursday, moved down on Sunday and have stayed ever since, even though the position only was supposed to last for the summer.

The two have always worked in farming, agriculture and livestock. Gay was raised on his family farm in Washington and said farming is in their blood. His family farm goes back generations when his grandparents had the farm as a dairy and milk producer. When his mom was young, she'd hook up the horses and wagons and deliver the milk around town.

"He lived there his whole life until we got married," Alice said. "He never lived anywhere else."

When they arrived in Umatilla County, Gay got involved in the fair when it used to be a hog show and helped start the livestock sale — an important feature for the community that brings in attendees from all

over the state.

"I have been involved in fairs everywhere," Gay said. "I actually was on the college judging team and went to a lot of the big fairs and then I started judging as a sideline at fairs too."

For the Newmans, the Umatilla County Fair has been an important family tradition and one they are passing onto their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The children who were around when Gay and Alice first got involved at the fair are adults now and many are staying involved, bringing their own children this time.

"Now their kids are showing. They're there with us. And they're remembering all the memories of us and they're trying to make those same memories for their kids," Alice said. "And it's great to see all that."