

# Hermiston adds more kiosks to share info with community

East Oregonian

**HERMISTON** — The city of Hermiston is expanding its wayfinding program and communications outreach efforts with the installation of five digital kiosks around the city.

The solar-powered signs created by Soofa use an e-ink display and will share local updates, community-generated content and local business information.

The city has signs operating at Funland Park, Victory Square Park and on Festival Street.

“These signs are a helpful addition to some of our most-visited locations in Hermiston,” said Clint Spencer, city planner. “They will provide timely news and information as well as directions to help people find their way around. As more people move to and visit Hermiston, the signs

will help orient and inform them.”

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan described the signs as a helpful boon to the community.

Each sign includes both a digital display and a vinyl map of the nearby area. The digital display shares updated news from the city, a calendar of upcoming events, live Twitter feeds of community organizations, including the Hermiston School District

and Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, and paid advertising through Soofa.

The city plans to install more of the kiosks, including at the Food Pod once other renovation work is complete.

Soofa is a female-founded startup out of the MIT Media Lab. Engadget, which covers technology, gadgets and consumer electronics, featured the Soofa Sign as a finalist for Best Vision for the Future at CES.



Daniel Wattenburger/Contributed Photo

**A kiosk in Hermiston's Victory Square Park displays a greeting Oct. 21, 2021. The city is installing several of the signs to provide information to the public.**

# Hermiston Assembly prepares for rebrand

## Documentary at Nov. 7 service tells the history of 90-year-old church and reveals church's new name

By ERICK PETERSON  
East Oregonian

**HERMISTON** — When is Hermiston Assembly not Hermiston Assembly? When is something else, of course.

The church at 730 E Hurlburt Ave., Hermiston, soon will undergo a name change.

Church leaders are keeping the new name a secret for a big unveiling at an upcoming celebration but want to make one thing clear: Although the name will change, many of the most important parts of the church will remain the same.

The reveal of the new name will come during a service Nov. 7. At that service, a film also will be shown, which describes the history and mission of the church.

“This has been something that has been in the works,” Clayton Haight, Hermiston Assembly experience pastor, said.

He, as well as other workers and volunteers, recently upgraded parts of the church building. Now complete with the physical changes to the

building, Haight said the church wants to show off a “significant change in the life of our church, which is a name change.”

The theology of the church is not changing with the name, Haight said, neither are the message or the church’s “heart for Hermiston” becoming different.

Haight expressed his feelings for why a name change was needed, pointing out the “interesting” past two years. The coronavirus pandemic is a historic event, he said, which we are all living through.

As the effects of COVID-19 are monumental, church members felt inclined to contemplate their role in Hermiston, Haight said, and questioned if they were being as effective as possible.

They had been, he said, bringing hope and life to members of their congregation every Sunday morning, and they had been working outside of their building, but church leaders believed like they could do more and wanted to be do more to “make Jesus and God famous” in their city.

He said leadership looked back at the past few decades and asked, “Are we being effective?”

Coming out of those contemplations, they decided they were holding onto a name, Hermiston Assembly, which does not “carry a whole lot of identity.”

Hermiston Assembly is part of a denomination, called Assemblies of God. It was founded in 1914 and

claims 13,000 churches in the U.S. with more than 3 million believers, according to the Assemblies of God website, ag.org. The website also claims there are 69 million believers worldwide.

Hermiston Assembly, though under a new name, still will be an Assemblies of God church, Haight said. He met with state leaders about the continued association already.

### The upcoming event

At 10:30 a.m., Nov. 7, the church is hosting “Name Change Sunday.” It is planned to be an hour-long event with live music and a premier of a documentary.

The film, Haight said, is the work of a professional team of California filmmakers. It will tell the history of the church and its story in Hermiston. He said he wants to “provide the story of what has happened with our church over its last 90 years of existence.”

The documentary, at the end, will reveal the church’s new name.

The secrecy around the name, according to Haight, is because the need for context; before one knows the name, it is important to know the history leading up to it.

“We’re not just changing the name to do something cool or flashy,” he said.

Guests are expected to appear by video, congratulating Hermiston Assembly’s big change. Following that, the church plans to hold an after party, 12-2 p.m. at the Maxwell Event Center, 145 N. First Place, Hermiston.

Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

**A sign Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2021, in front of Hermiston Assembly, Hermiston, welcomes people to upcoming services. The church is changing its name on Nov. 7.**



# East Penney Avenue project moves forward

East Oregonian

**HERMISTON** — Hermiston is going forward with building East Penney Avenue’s connection between Southeast Kelli Boulevard and Highway 395.

The Hermiston City Council at its meeting Monday night, Oct. 25, voted 6-0 to authorize accepting up to \$596,600 from the Oregon Department of Transportation’s Immediate Opportunity Fund to develop and complete the road.

The city also has to provide a 50% match against the grant funding. The city has received \$1.9 million in federal American Rescue Plan funds, and should receive at least that in 2022. According to meeting docu-

ments, the city can use those funds to provide the 50% match.

The council voted 6-0 to approve the agreement with ODOT to accept the grant.

The next steps are for the engineering and design firm of Anderson Perry to work on the design in the next month or so. The city plans to advertise for bids from January to February 2022, select a bid and have construction going by the summer.

The council also returned to amending a pair of ordinances it tabled at the last meeting. One is the city law regarding nuisances. The ordinance has several updates, including to a number of definitions and adds graffiti as a nuisance.

The update also clarifies the appeals process. In special circumstances when the council declares a nuisance the appeal would go to circuit court.

The council voted 6-0 to approve it and make it effective 30 days after the vote.

The second city law grants the code enforcement officer the authority to issue traffic citations, establishes a parade permit process and simplifies bicycle regulations in downtown Hermiston.

City Manager Byron Smith said the staff brought this back to the council for feedback only from the council. The council gave several suggestions. City attorney Richard Tovey suggested it would be beneficial to allow

enough time to incorporate the council’s feedback to amendments and bring back a complete proposal at a future meeting. The council voted to table approval.

In related city business, the League of Oregon Cities announced Mayor Dave Drotzmann is the new treasurer for the league.

# High-speed car chase ends after police send in dog, fire stun gun

Police say car went from Pendleton to Arlington and exceeded 115 mph

By BRYCE DOLE  
East Oregonian

**PENDLETON** — A high-speed car chase along Interstate 84 through Umatilla and Morrow counties on Saturday, Oct. 23, ended in the arrest of a man who officers shot with a stun gun while he was trying to choke a police dog, according to law enforcement officials.

Christopher Rich Mollette, 48, of Boise, is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, for attempting to flee, reckless driving and endangering and interfering with a police animal.

Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney said he first responded to the chase after receiving reports that a “mentally unstable man” who had gotten into an altercation in Baker City was heading west on I-84. Police reported the man, Mollette, was calling law enforcement, telling them where he was and how fast he was driving. Cooney also said Mollette made threatening remarks.

Oregon State Police called the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office at 9:11 a.m. and reported Mollette was driving in a blue Dodge Dart heading west from Pendleton on the interstate, Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack said, adding catching Mollette was considered a “high risk traffic stop.”

Cooney said he positioned

himself near the Stanfield interchange, near the bridge that crosses the Umatilla River, and watched Mollette weave in-and-out of heavy traffic at more than 115 mph.

“I don’t believe he slowed down at all,” Cooney said.

He was going so fast Cooney couldn’t keep up and lost him.

“He was just gone,” Cooney said.

Morrow County deputies and Boardman police got involved with the interstate pursuit near Boardman. It was 9:26 a.m. Police chased the Dart past the Boardman rest stop at around 100 mph. Matlack said law enforcement attempted to put down spike strips but were unable.

At one point, Mollette called 911 and told police he wasn’t stopping and then hung up, Matlack said.

At around the same time, a woman who claimed to be Mollette’s girlfriend called police and said he was heading to Vancouver and she was afraid of him. She wanted to know if he would be booked, Matlack said.

At around 9:38 a.m., police followed Mollette into the parking lot of a Shell gas station in Arlington. Matlack said he refused to comply with police instructions. He grew “aggressive,” Matlack said, so a deputy released a police dog on Mollette.

Mollette attempted to choke the dog while it jumped on him. Officers then hit Mollette with a stun gun and promptly took him into custody, Matlack said. He remains in the local jail on preliminary bail of \$65,000.

# Utah woman sues Wildhorse powwow vendor for \$75K

East Oregonian

**PENDLETON** — A Utah woman has filed a \$75,000 lawsuit against a vendor at the 2018 Wildhorse Resort & Casino powwow claiming a sign in the vendor’s stand came loose, stuck and injured her.

Karina Pena Perez filed the lawsuit Oct. 20 in Umatilla County Circuit Court through Klamath Falls attorney Neal Metler against Barbara Shanta of Olympia, Washington.

The pleading claims Shanta displayed a sign at her stand, which detached and struck Perez in the head, knocking her to the ground. Perez suffered injuries to her face and a concussion, according to the lawsuit. She is suing for \$47,000 in noneconomic damages and \$28,000 for medical expenses.

This is the second time, however, Perez is suing Shanta for the same claim.

Perez originally filed the case in July 2020, according to state court records, and Shanta in that lawsuit submitted a letter refuting the lawsuit’s claims.

Shanta in the letter stated she is a food vendor and was selling her goods at the local

powwow, which takes place around and during the Fourth of July. An “unforeseen wind” blew through, according to the letter, and blew vendor booths and items “all over,” including her 3 feet by 2 feet banner that was on a .5 inch pipe.

She claimed Perez came to her booth the next day and asked about the booth, but she showed no signs of injuries. Shanta also stated Wildhorse management interviewed her and reassured her this was an “Act of God” because there was no control over nature.

The first lawsuit ended May 4 when Circuit Judge Robert Collins dismissed without prejudice for lack of action.

Court records also show the new lawsuit has no court dates.

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**Eternals (PG13)**  
6:00p - starts 11/4

**Last Night in Soho (R)**  
1:10p 3:00p 5:50p 8:30p

**Antlers (R)**  
12:50p 3:10p 5:30p 7:50p

**Dune (PG13)**  
1:00p 4:30p 8:00p

**No Time To Die (PG13)**  
4:20p 8:10p

**The Addams Family 2 (PG)**  
12:40p 3:40p

**Venom: Let There Be Carnage (PG13)**  
1:20p 6:00p 8:20p

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