

Hermiston City Council seats youth adviser

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

HERMISTON — The Hermiston City Council at its meeting Monday, March 28, welcomed its first youth adviser.

Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith and a teacher at Hermiston High School arranged for the new youth adviser program. Twelve students were chosen to comprise this group, and up to three youth advisers would be invited to each city council and every committee meeting. They have a table right next to city councilors.

A few days earlier, Hermiston Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan explained the new advisers would be a fixture in future meetings. While they would not be allowed to vote, they would have ring-side seats to witness council proceedings and have the opportunity to speak and advise city government.

Morgan called it a learning opportunity for both government officials and the students.

Beginning with just one

As the meeting started, Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann looked out at



Elizabeth Doherty, 16, stands in front of the Hermiston City Council and city officials at the end of her first city council meeting Monday, March 28, 2022. Doherty is one of the council city's new youth advisers.

the youth advisers table and wondered aloud if the advisers had been scared away. Only one member, Elizabeth Doherty, was present. She is an active student who takes part in the FFA, Key Club and HOSA — Future Health Professionals.

Smith said attendance likely would be inconsistent because a student's life is busy. On March 28, Hermiston High School was hosting student conferences. Likely,

councilors stated, the missing advisers were tied up with their conferences or performances at the high school.

Granddaughter of a former Umatilla County commissioner, Doherty said she is familiar with the politics with the area. She knows the people and the region itself, she said, as her family has lived in the area for four generations.

Doherty, born in Arizona, was brought here when she

was only a year old to join other family members already long established here.

Now 16, she said she has taken part in many school and community activities. In the 4-H, she serves as the vice president of the Hermiston High School branch and the president of the Blue Mountain group. In addition to participating in other clubs and sports, she takes advanced placement classes — physics, language, precal-

culus and U.S. history.

And she was the recipient of the Outstanding Young Citizens Award this year at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce's 52nd Annual Distinguished Citizens Awards.

Drotzmann said she also would learn a lot about how government operates, and Doherty concurred.

"Being a youth adviser will be good for me," she said.

Objections to SHIP

The first real action of the night came in discussion of the South Hermiston Industrial Park.

A few property owners, one after the other, stood before council and objected to fees charged to them for an enhancement project that they did not feel benefited them.

The property owners claimed the "city was not honoring its part" of a deal that would reduce costs to SHIP lot owners. They called it unfair, and they called for the city to revisit past promises.

The city council and the mayor agreed with the property owners and agreed to write a new ordinance, rather than pass the one set before the council. This new ordinance will be presented at a

future meeting

Following the SHIP discussion, the rest of the meeting was relatively tranquil. The council passed a resolution to authorize issuance of pension obligation bonds. Among other business, the council agreed to establish a committee to implement a Hermiston 2040 oversight committee, and they heard the monthly financial report.

Doherty's report

Doherty said she appreciated the diversity in the council. Hermiston's councilors appear to have varied opinions, she said, but seem to work together well for the betterment of their town. She added the meeting presented topics that were difficult to understand but concepts were explained well.

"It was approachable," she said.

She also said she appreciated the community members who came to the meeting to speak, too.

"There were heated moments, but that was good," she said. "It's good that they were passionate."

By coming to the meeting, and voicing their frustrations, they were able to bring about change. This is how things should be, she said.

New Dollar General in Hermiston adds more jobs, makes donation

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Dollar General announced the opening of its store at 1206 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston.

A press release states the store intended to employ approximately six to 10 people, depending on its needs, and that employees were to be given competitive wages and benefits.

Dollar General carries household essentials, including food, cleaning supplies, paper products, over-the-counter medicines, hygiene products and baby items. Also, it sells home decor and an expanded party preparation selection.

"At Dollar General, we believe the addition of each new store provides positive economic growth for the communities we proudly serve, and the addition of our new Hermiston store highlights our commitment to deliver a pleasant shopping experience that includes great prices on quality products in a convenient location," said Dan Nieser, Dollar General's senior vice president of real estate and store devel-



A banner on the front of Dollar General, Monday, March 28, 2022, gives notice to passersby that the store is open.

opment. "We look forward to welcoming customers to our new store and hope they will enjoy shopping at our new location."

Dollar General stated its plans to donate 100 new books to a nearby elementary school to benefit students ranging from kindergarten to fifth grade.

Through the partnership with the Kellogg Company, the donation was part of a planned donation of more than 100,000 books across the country to celebrate new Dollar General store openings.

"The addition of the Hermiston store opens the opportunity for schools, nonprofit organizations and libraries within a 15-mile radius of the store to apply for Dollar General Literacy Foundation grants," the press release states. It adds, since 1993, "the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has awarded more than \$203 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 14.8 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy or continued education."

Morrow County hoping to ignite better reading with pilot program

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — The online school format often was blamed for academic backsliding during the COVID-19 pandemic, but a reading program aims to use some of those same tools to make up for lost time.

The Morrow County School District and Eastern Oregon University on Monday, March 28, announced they were partnering with Ignite! Reading to pilot a special reading program over Zoom to significantly boost reading skills in elementary school students.

For 10 weeks, students from EOU's College of Education will meet virtually with elementary school students from Boardman, Irrigon and Heppner for intensive, 15-minute tutoring sessions focused on reading.

"We are very excited to partner with both EOU and Ignite! Reading to maximize the benefits of this program for our students," Erin Stocker, Morrow County's executive director of elementary education and human resources said in a statement. "Coming out of COVID and navigating through a much-needed (English language arts) adoption year, we were searching for innovative ways to better support our students. Based on the science of reading, Ignite's targeted, evidence-based approach will be a great fit for the next generation of students and teachers."

Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said Morrow County was allowed to reopen sooner than most other districts in the area, so students didn't take as large a hit academically. But the district was interested in improving reading at the elementary level, "COVID



The College of Education at Eastern Oregon University, La Grande, and the Morrow County School District on Monday, March 28, 2022, announced they are partnering on a program to use Zoom to boost reading skills with elementary school students in Boardman, Irrigon and Heppner.

or no COVID," he said.

Based on a previous pilot program Ignite ran at an elementary school in Oakland, California, Ignite is expecting strong results. In Oakland, students made three weeks worth of progress for every week they were in the program. And 93% of Latino students passed their first monitoring assessment, a relevant fact in a district that's more than half Latino.

Ronda Fritz, an associate professor of education at EOU, said she would've counted herself among the skeptics about Zoom tutoring three years ago. But that was before she took a sabbatical year and spent part of it tutoring two girls online.

"(I) really found out I could make great gains with these kids in a fairly short amount of time," she said. "You really could have knocked me over with a feather. There's no way you would have told me that was what would work."

Fritz said one of the main benefits EOU derives from Ignite is its potential as a teaching tool for its own students. There was some concern students studying education weren't prepared to teach reading after graduating, and since all Ignite sessions are recorded, Fritz said staff and students could

go over recordings to determine how to better improve the tutoring experience.

Jessica Sliwerski, the founder of Ignite, said the program works because it provides rigorous one-on-one instruction from a tutor who is completely focused on them during the 15-minute session.

"The kids love it and the 15 minutes flies by really quickly," she said. "They're super excited to come back the next day and get that support. But also they leave their session and they go back into their regular classroom setting and they bring these new competencies with them, which then gives them the confidence to tackle work that in the past, they might have been like, 'Forget it, I can't do this. It's too hard.' And now they're persisting."

Once the 10-week pilot program ends, Sliwerski said Ignite wants to further integrate itself into EOU's teaching program and embark on a year-long partnership with Morrow County.

As with many things in education, Fritz said Ignite's future in Eastern Oregon depends on funding.

"It always comes down to the almighty dollar, doesn't it?" she said.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Fire erupts at A-1 Industrial in Hermiston

HERMISTON — A-1 Industrial Hose and Supply in Hermiston caught fire Tuesday morning, March 29.

Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 in a news release reported its fire crews responded at 6:48 a.m. to 5 Campbell Drive in the South Hermiston Industrial Park, the location of A-1 Industrial.

The first units on the scene, the district reported, found a "medium-sized commercial building with heavy fire involvement."

A fire district battalion established command at the scene and requested additional resources. Fire departments from Pendleton, Boardman and Echo responded.

Approximately 30 firefighters were on the scene working to extinguish the blaze.

Community health foundation awards \$99,065 in grants

HERMISTON — The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation in a recent news release reported it is donating almost \$100,000 in grants



Smoke blackens the sky Tuesday morning, March 29, 2022, from a fire at A-1 Industrial Hose and Supply in Hermiston.

this spring to organizations in Morrow County and west Umatilla County.

The Arc of Umatilla County is receiving funds for activity nights, camps and other disability awareness events.

Boardman Parks and Recreation, the city of Hermiston, the Oregon East Symphony and the Seventh-day Adventist Church are among the 11 entities and organizations the foundation provided with grants totaling \$99,065.

Grant money covers a wide variety of projects, including teen counseling services, concert production, an officer wellness program, even a drone for Umatilla County Search and Rescue.

Grant funding is made possible by planned giving and community support, the release states.

Liz Marvin, Foundation executive director, in the release states residents consistently give to the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation.

"The next grant cycle will close the end of July," she continued, "and we encourage nonprofit organizations to apply for funding."

To apply for a grant awarded this fall, submit applications by July 31 online at www.gshealth.org/gschf-grant-application or by mail via application that may be downloaded and printed at www.gshealth.org/awards. For more information, call 541-667-3419.

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Morbis (PG13)	4:20p 6:20p 7:00p 8:50p 9:30p
extra 1:30p show 4/1-4/3	
The Lost City (PG13)	4:10p 6:40p 9:10p
extra 1:40p show 4/1-4/3	
The Batman (PG13)	4:40 8:30p
extra 12:50p show 4/1-4/3	
Uncharted (PG13)	3:40p 6:30p 9:20p
extra 1:00p show 4/1-4/3	
Dog (PG13)	3:50p
extra 1:10p show 4/1-4/3	

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