

UMATILLA HIGH SCHOOL

Robotics competitors return home from Texas

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

UMATILLA — Having left Houston on Sunday, April 24, Umatilla High School students and their advisers were exhausted by the time they arrived home.

The competitors represented their school at FIRST Championship, April 20-23. They did not win honors, but they came back from their journey with joy in their hearts and memories on the forefront of their minds.

Shortly after 6 a.m. April 27, members of the Umatilla High School robotics team, Confidential, arrived in town. Their bus pulled up to the front of their school, the doors opened and sleepy students picked up their backpacks, sleeping bags and suitcases and exited the bus.

Alejandro Escovedo, junior, was among the first people off the bus.

“The trip was awesome,” he said.

Escovedo said he said he enjoyed seeing different states. Colorado and Texas were his favorites, he said. Texas was of particular interest to him, he added, because of the food.

At one restaurant, he said, he ate a sirloin steak. The best



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian
Rafael Garcia Sanchez embraces his mother and brother on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, after he and fellow Umatilla High School students returned home from competing in the FIRST Robotics World Championships in Houston.

part, though, was watching a few of his classmates engage in an eating contest, he added.

One of the eating-contest participants was Elias Gomez. A junior at Umatilla High, Gomez said he ate 55 ounces of a 72-ounce steak, with sides.

“It was hard,” he said.

He said this was the first trip to a world championship he had made with the robotics

team. It also was, according to Gomez, the farthest he had ever been from home, and he was very happy to have encountered other people from many different places. It was especially interesting, he said, to have met teenagers from other countries, including Mexico and Israel.

Another junior, Aaron Ochoa, expressed the same sentiment. It was his first year



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Rafael Garcia Sanchez embraces his mother and brother on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, after he and fellow Umatilla High School students returned home from competing in the FIRST Robotics World Championships in Houston.

in robotics, he said, and he liked meeting other students from different countries. He also said he was impressed with a jumping robot in the contest.

Rafael Garcia-Sanchez, freshman, said the trip was quite an experience.

“I got to meet a lot of people from different states, eat at Chick-fil-A, eat some Chinese food, and I want to go back,” he said.

Seeing him come off the bus, his mother, Maria D. Sanchez, rushed over to him and gave him a big hug.

“My boy is home,” she said.

There were other family

members at the arrival Tess White, who went on the trip with the team, is the mother of Heidi Sipe, Umatilla School District superintendent, who was on the trip, too. White said the competition was “incredible” and the Umatilla kids were “amazing.”

Seeing the great size of the event, and the skill of the competitors, she described herself as overwhelmed. She said that everyone there represents the top 1% of all students who are doing this sort of work. For Umatilla to be part of that select group, then, was “just wonderful,” she said.

Heidi Sipe, who was

standing at the bus with her mother and the departing students, agreed. She said Confidential was part of something special, and the team members did “really well.”

“The best thing was that they were surrounded by so many excellent people and teams,” she said. “They got a real experience, they got to see the strengths of those teams, and they learned what they can do next time.”

Key takeaways from the coach

Kyle Sipe, robotics coach, agrees with others in saying Confidential could return to Houston next year. For that to happen, though, he stated it must once again qualify for the contest. He said the team must learn from its mistakes and work to be even more competitive.

Team members spoke with different teams to see how they were organized, according to the coach. Confidential plans to follow the examples set by other teams, revisiting their organizational structure, separating members of different skills and assigning them to different parts of each build.

“There is so much learning,” he said.

CINCO DE MAYO

Celebration returns to EOTEC

Free community event is Sunday

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center again is rolling out the red carpet for the Hermiston Cinco de Mayo celebration.

After hosting the event for two years — it outgrew several previous venues — EOTEC General Manager Al Davis is thrilled to bring the festival back after pandemic restrictions put the brakes on large gatherings in 2020 and 2021.

The family-friendly event is Sunday, May 1, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. at EOTEC, 1705 E. Airport

Road, Hermiston. There is no admission charge.

“Half of it’s inside and half outside,” Davis said. “It’s contingent, depending on Hermiston weather.”

Davis said he is excited about the community stage. In addition to several Latino bands — including La Senal DeOaxaca, La Orden de Mexico and Sentencia — the stage entertainment will feature local groups.

He said time slots are available for dance groups, bands, choirs or other forms of entertainment who are interested in performing.

“We want to invite everyone,” Davis said. “They don’t have to be a Hispanic group — it’s a community celebration.”

Also, Davis said about 15-20 vendor booths have

confirmed — and there is room for more. In addition, food and beverages, including beer and wine, will be available for purchase.

While there’s no carnival this year, Davis said they will have plenty of inflatables provided by Cottage Event Rentals. In addition, he said there will be a variety of games.

The Hispanic Advisory Committee, Davis said, has provided support for the event. In addition, he said Amazon Web Services is one of the major sponsors.

“We want people to come out and have fun,” he said. “We’re really hoping to grow the event and make it a Hermiston tradition.”

For more information, call 541-289-9800 or search www.facebook.com/eotechermistonor.

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Anit-abortion group announces contest winners

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Right to Life Foundation on April 21 announced its 2022 billboard contest winners at The Yogurt Shoppe, 1803 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton. This year’s theme was “Protect life at every age.”

The K-second grade division winner was Rina Whitesell, 6. The winner for grades third-fifth was Mary Feller, 10. Evelyn Montgomery, 12, won the sixth through eighth grade division. Honorable mention was awarded to Hailey Whitesell, 14.

Feller’s poster was chosen as the overall winner and her artwork is scheduled to be on the Southgate billboard in early May. In addition, she was awarded a \$50 check. The other winners each

received a \$25 check as their prize.

The local anti-abortion group has been hosting its billboard contest since 2000. Though this year’s winners are from the Pendleton area, students in surrounding towns have participated as well. The contest is open to K-12 students and is held annually in February and March. For more information or to receive notice about next year’s contest, email PendletonRightToLifeFoundation@gmail.com.

Pendleton chamber hosts job fair

PENDLETON — Calling all job seekers, the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce is hosting a job fair.

The event is Tuesday, May 3, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate. The

chamber has coordinated with 40-plus businesses to assist those looking for work and local employers.

“We realized there needed to be a connection made between these employers and employees,” said Patti Hyatt, the chamber’s School to Careers coordinator. “A job fair seemed like the perfect answer.”

Hyatt also said with many struggling right now, the chamber decided to hold a raffle for several \$40 gas cards for those who attend. Job seekers can obtain a raffle entry from each employer booth they visit and enter it in the drawing. In addition, there will be a chance to win a grand prize, which features a flat screen TV.

For more information, contact Hyatt at School2careers@pendletonchamber.com or 541-276-7411.

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