



# Hermiston Herald

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YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

HERMISTONHERALD.COM

## Grad rates up for area schools

BY MAEGAN MURRAY  
HERMISTON HERALD

High schools across the region saw increases in their graduation rates from the class of 2013-14, but none more so than the smaller districts.

The Oregon Department of Education released its annual cohort graduation rate and dropout report this week, and many area schools experienced success that exceeded the state averages. Unlike past years, students who received modified diplomas were counted in the four-year graduation data for the first time, which likely contributed to the increases of some of the schools.

Echo School District, the smallest district in the Hermiston region, saw the largest jump of all the districts in the area. Although the high school did not have any students who received modified diplomas in the graduating in the 2013-14 graduating class, about 94.7 percent of last year's seniors graduated on time with a four-year diploma compared with the 2012-13 graduating class

SEE GRADUATION/A7

### TODAY'S WEATHER



Mostly sunny  
High: 44° Low: 32°

### OUTLOOK

- SUNDAY  
Afternoon showers  
High: 40° Low: 38°
- MONDAY  
Morning light rain  
High: 55° Low: 42°

A complete weather forecast is featured on page A2.



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**FOR LOCAL BREAKING NEWS**

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## Homeless dogs get new leash on life

BY SEAN HART  
HERMISTON HERALD

Some homeless dogs at the shelter in Hermiston will soon have a second chance to find a new home.

Humane Society of Eastern Oregon Pet Rescue Executive Director Beau Putnam announced Thursday the shelter will begin transferring some dogs that may have otherwise been euthanized to the Oregon Humane Society Second Chance Program, which places the animals up for adoption.

Putnam said Pet Rescue has

transferred smaller dogs to OHS in the past, but breed restrictions prevented some larger dogs from being accepted. He said he contacted OHS Thursday and was informed most dogs would now be accepted, and he set up a time to begin transferring dogs the same day. He said he now plans to transfer dogs on a monthly basis and possibly more often.

"Beginning early February, they're going to make a special trip for us, and they're going to take about five to 10 dogs for us," he said. "I'm totally ex-

SEE ANIMALS/A16



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Humane Society of Eastern Oregon Pet Rescue volunteer Saige Borrego, 14, Hermiston, feeds the dogs at the shelter Jan. 15. Pet Rescue announced Thursday it will begin transferring animals the shelter cannot house in February.

## A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Chinese Principal Dong Cai'an has a look at Stanfield junior Nathan Hurty's tool belt this week while visiting the first student-built home.

### Chinese administrator impressed by Hermiston homebuilding programs

BY MAEGAN MURRAY  
HERMISTON HERALD

While Chinese Principal Dong Cai'an traveled to Hermiston Thursday to see what a "large" school in the United States is like, it wasn't the size of the high school that he found most interesting.

Because Cai'an's school in China, Shaanxi Shiquan High School, enrolls about 3,000 students, about twice the size of Hermiston High School, HHS isn't a large school. Cai'an, however, was most impressed with the career and technical education programs available to the high school stu-

dents.

Cai'an said Chinese students spend their school days studying the traditional subjects of math, writing, reading and science, but that is all they do.

"They are all studying to prepare for the college entrance test," he said.

Chinese students face a good deal of pressure to do well on their college entrance exams because those who do are admitted into a good college. His school, and many others like it in China, Cai'an said, do not have the opportunities for career and technical training that they do in Hermiston. The clos-



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Chinese Principal Dong Cai'an looks at blue prints for the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilders first student-built house Thursday.

est thing they have to those types of programs, he said, are after-school clubs, but none focus on the same type of fields featured in Hermiston's.

On Thursday, Cai'an

toured the school's wood and metal shops and other career and technical classes with John Day School Board member Mike Cosgrove. At the end of their day, they visited the home

students are building through the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilders Program.

During the tour of the student home site, a couple of students were working on the siding and showing Cai'an how they were connecting the wiring, heating and air conditioning systems and generally finishing the rest of the house.

Cai'an said he thought the project was a great opportunity for students.

"This is really good," he said.

Cai'an also asked Curt Berger, the teacher overseeing the project, a number of questions. Berger explained to Cai'an the students were involved in every step of the proj-

SEE TOUR/A16

## Committee considering landscaping regulations

### Proposed ordinance would require aesthetic improvements in new developments

BY SEAN HART  
HERMISTON HERALD

To help improve the aesthetics in Hermiston, the city's Community Enhancement Committee has been reviewing proposed land-

scaping rules for new developments.

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said the committee is working on a proposed ordinance that would require certain portions of land being developed be devoted to features that would make the community more visually attractive.

Hermiston Chamber of Commerce CEO and committee member Debbie Pedro said the landscaping requirements would not require "a large footprint," but they would have a large impact

on the city.

"Any nicer aesthetics on the outside landscaping of buildings is always really nice," she said. "It just adds a touch of class to Hermiston. When you're talking about enhancing our industrial and commercial zones within the Hermiston boundaries, I think that is just a part of beautifying Hermiston. When that happens, Hermiston becomes more and more attractive to businesses and industry that are looking to move here."

Morgan said the current docu-

ment is only a draft, but the committee members have reached a consensus to recommend the guidelines, which would only apply to new businesses and multi-family residential units. Several minor details still need to be finalized, he said, before the committee solicits initial feedback from the Planning Commission.

Morgan said the Community Enhancement Committee would seek public comment before

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