

Hermiston Herald

VOLUME 109 • NUMBER 17



JESSICA KELLER
EDITOR
jkeller@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4533



MAEGAN MURRAY
REPORTER
mmurray@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4532



SEAN HART
REPORTER
smhart@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4534



SAM BARBEE
SPORTS REPORTER
sbarbee@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4542



JEANNE JEWETT
MULTI-MEDIA CONSULTANT
jjewett@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4531



KIM LA PLANT
OFFICE COORDINATOR
klaplant@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4530



STEPHANIE BURKENBINE
MULTI-MEDIA CONSULTANT
sburkenbine@hermistonherald.com
541-564-4538

To contact the Hermiston Herald for news, advertising or subscription information:

- call 541-567-6457
- e-mail info@hermistonherald.com
- stop by our offices at 333 E. Main St.
- visit us online at: www.hermistonherald.com

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Delivered by carrier and mail Wednesdays and Saturdays
Inside Umatilla/Morrow counties.....\$42.65
Outside Umatilla/Morrow counties.....\$53.90

The Hermiston Herald (USPS 242220, ISSN 8750-4782) is published twice weekly at Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR 97838, (541) 567-6457, FAX (541) 567-1764. Periodical postage paid at Hermiston, OR. Postmaster, send address changes to Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main St., Hermiston, OR 97838.

A member of the EO Media Group Copyright ©2015



Printed on recycled newsprint



Preparing for the future

Thumbs up to the Hermiston School District for doing its due diligence when investigating the options for alleviating space issues anticipated next school year.

The school district really did not leave any rock unturned before recommending the School Board lease an existing 24,000-square-foot building, formerly El Gran Chaparral grocery store, near the corner of Orchard Avenue and Northwest 11th Street, for no more than \$1.05 per square foot per month, which amounts to about \$300,000 per year from the general fund. The building will house about 70 to 80 district employees, from technology services employees to counselors, currently spread throughout the district at different facilities. Moving them into one, centralized location not only makes sense from an efficiency standpoint,



JESSICA KELLER
HERMISTON HERALD
Editor

it also frees up space in some of the existing district buildings to accommodate students.

At Monday's School Board meeting, Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith said it bothered him that district employees are using classroom space while the district is erecting modulars to house students. That is an understandable sentiment.

Leasing the building from Double H LLC for administrators and support staff also makes sense from a financial and practical standpoint, too. As Smith pointed out, when researching different leasing possibilities in Hermiston and before being approached by Double H LLC representatives, district officials learned they would likely have to lease several buildings to

suit the district's needs as there were few to no facilities the size suitable to accommodating everybody who needed to move. As well, leasing costs on those buildings were much higher than \$1.05 per square foot. Purchasing more modular units was also cost prohibitive. The district would have needed to purchase four more modular units to suit its needs at a cost of more than \$1 million. As it is, the district only has \$150,000 remaining in its fund for purchasing modular units.

While people should be encouraged that the school district found a solution to its space needs next year, they should not put the matter out of their minds because it does not directly impact them. The School Board's decision to lease the former grocery store is only a temporary solution to its space limitations. As Smith reiterated to the School Board Monday,

future discussions about needing additional space to accommodate students are on the horizon.

And modulars will only take the school district so far before they become impractical. First, according to Smith, the cost of one modular could pay the salaries of two teachers for one year. Second, a district full of modulars is not the image Hermiston should be comfortable with presenting to the rest of the state.

If demonstrating a need is necessary to getting a bond passed, then, the way things are headed right now, the school district is well on its way to putting the final touches on its arguments. At some point in the not-so-distant future, a school bond will be necessary, and that's something that will affect all Hermiston residents.

— Jessica Keller is the editor of the Hermiston Herald. She can be reached at jkeller@hermistonherald.com

Trust me

It is either feast or famine here at OTB. Some weeks require power tools to dig down to the level of a column, and other times there is a surfeit of riches.

It's buffet time! This week, let's talk about "trust." The instigation for this particular column is that happy event many of our citizenry engage in — renewal of a driver's license.

Most folks remember their first license. Mine was a bright pink piece of heavy card stock from the State of Pennsylvania. Obtaining that involved going down to the State Police Barracks in Wyoming, Pennsylvania, to obtain a learner's permit. At the barracks I was subjected to an eye test and a written test and had to produce my birth certificate to confirm my age. Then — several months later — I returned for the physical driving test and was issued my "Cinderella License," so called because it was invalid from midnight to five, unless you were employed — though what sort of work a 16-year-old would be doing after midnight was the subject of much conversation. A year later, after parental approval, I was issued the tannish "Senior License," and I was off on the highways and byways.

Renewal of that license involved sending money to Harrisburg, along with any change of address that might have occurred. That was it.

Let's fast forward to 2015 and my renewal notification that's just arrived and the trust that the State of Oregon shows me. What used to be "send us a check and tell us where you live" has now morphed into a 10-part operation. Some of it — "send us a check" and "tell us where you live" is familiar, except that I'm now required to bring proof of my changed address and cannot be trusted to indicate any address change on the application. In fairness, two of the items — commercial driver license and veteran designation — are not requirements for a basic license, unless you are a CDL (which has a nice subset of other requirements) or a veteran who wants that designated on his license. I suppose one could also argue that the more extensive driver's license application (Form 735-173) is not really a sign of distrust.

But here's where things



THOMAS CREASING
OFF THE BENCH
Herald columnist

really go off the rails: Valid proof of your identity and date of birth.

Well, that'd be my driver's license, right? That's the document that works pretty much everywhere else in the state. Apparently, however, a State of Oregon-issued ID is not sufficient ID for me to present to the State of Oregon. I guess it's defective somehow. Instead of the obvious "show us your driver's license," you go to oregondmv.com for a list of "acceptable documents." Despite the ODL having my name, address, picture and date of birth right there on it, it's not acceptable, even though I've been in the Oregon DMV computer system as a resident here for the past 20+ years.

Presuming there's some overwhelming social concern to stop the scourge of "those people" obtaining Oregon driver's licenses that requires me to produce, say, a passport — I did that the LAST time I renewed my license. Yet for some reason it is essential that I bring back the ID to get the ID that is not acceptable as ID for the ID I got last time. Got that? Yeah. Me neither.

There are serious trust problems with a system that won't accept its own issued ID as proof of what the ID is supposed to prove, and requires continued presentation of the same documents to renew the ID that the documents procured last time. That's bureaucratic pettifoggery, which is the opposite of trust. I'm told that I should trust the State — but why should I trust a group that seems unable or unwilling to trust me — and is unable to trust its own documents?

Next time, one of my favorite column types — editor taunting!

But that's just the opinion of an untrustable — if that's really a word — guy. Share your more trustworthy opinions in response with letters to the editor or by email to hermistonherald@offthebench.com. Names of the terminally shy will be withheld on request.

— Thomas Creasing is a Hermiston resident, municipal court judge and Herald columnist

Municipal Court judge should be elected

Editor,
I would like to respond to Mayor Drotzmann's commentary about Hermiston charter's being carefully drafted. The public should know that the authors of the charter were based upon a Portland-based company who knows very little about our city, its history and its culture besides what the mayor and city manager have provided.

It is funny that these two people have less time living in Hermiston combined than my older children, but, yet, they can speak volumes about my hometown of 50 years. Let's take the elephant and consume it bite for bite.

The mayor and manager have one issue that is a burr in their saddle. They want to have the City Council pick who would be our municipal judge. As you all know well, this has been the citizens' constitutional right since the beginning. The mayor, manager and one vocal councilman have stated favor for this. I have been at the City Council and have heard it directly.

The mayor states in the article that the change in the charter is an attempt to align Hermiston with the rest of the state. Does the data from the League of Oregon Cities say that this is the best way to go? They did not say, but as citizens, it is for us to make that determination, not people who do not live here. Just because we are one of the last five in the state doesn't make us wrong. In addition, this can leave the door wide open

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

to cronyism, and I feel that they already have a friend in mind for the position. The mayor states that the city will have more control over budgeting and management. I think the public will have more control over the position and remove them by the next election.

Let's look at past appointments of the City Council. We just got past an ugly scene with our past chief of police. He was arrogant and abusive to his officers, and we lost many good people because of him. What did the city do? Nothing for eight years. Then they started an investigation. What was the result? A hefty severance package for a badly appointed police chief.

Let's look at the City Council's next appointment. The council appointed Mr. Anderson. What in his time on City Council did Mr. Anderson do? Well, he consistently went and wrote articles about Mr. Primmer and Mr. Kirwan when they were running for City Council and set a bad taste on the council with his statements against the candidates. In many, he stated illegal actions against Mr. Primmer especially. In addition, while on City Council, he was an attorney for several persons who sued the city. Ask how much the city paid out in legal fees and judgments with these two appointees?

The city was hapless in their past managements of these appointed positions and should not be given complete control and take away our constitutional rights to vote the judge in. When few people get great power, corruption is not far behind. What a slippery slope this would create. Just

think if the city of Hermiston controls its judge, and then three county commissioners would like to appoint our circuit judges, and then the state will want to control who we have for our state circuit judges. It will be too late then, and socialism has ruined our democracy.

The final point of the mayor's comments is that the mayor and council's most important task is to oversee the funds of the city. I'm sure the \$30,000 crappy paint job on our water tower was money well spent, wasn't it, Mr. Mayor?

The city charter is over 60 years in age and has suited us well until recently. The charter needed to be changed so Mr. Drotzmann does not have to keep running every two years. I can see that, as it would be an inconvenience for him and financially more appealing. Yet, past mayors have lived within these guidelines. But I can live with a four-year term. You see Hermiston has been so wrong all these years, and we need the mayor, manager, City Council and a Portland consulting company to make it all right. Yes, Big Brother is right, and all is well, comrades. Don't take the bait. Vote for your judge, and do not let anyone take that away from you, ever.

PERRY W. HAWKINS
HERMISTON

— Editor's Note: In the city charter measure on which residents will vote in May, the Municipal Court Judge position will remain an elected position. In a separate amendment, voters will decide on whether the Judge should be appointed by the City Council.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

STATE

District 29: Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Umatilla Co., 900 Court St. N.E., S-423, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1729. 101 S.W. Third St., Pendleton, OR 97801 (541) 278-1396. E-mail: ssen.billhansell@state.or.us.

District 30: Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day; 900 Court St. N.E., S-223 Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1950. 750 W. Main, John Day, OR 97845, (541) 575-2321. E-mail: ferrili.sen@state.or.us.

R-Pendleton; 900 Court St. N.E., H-480, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-1458. 2126 N.W. 21st., Pendleton, OR 97801, (541) 276-2707. E-mail: rep.bobjenon@state.or.us.

District 57: Rep. Greg Smith, R-Morrow, 900 Court St. N.E., H-280, Salem, OR 97301, 503-986-

District 58: Rep. Bob Jensen,

Letters Policy

The Hermiston Herald welcomes original letters for publication on public issues and public policies. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Phone numbers will not be published. Letters may be mailed to the Hermiston Herald, 333 E. Main, Hermiston, OR, 97838; or emailed to editor@hermistonherald.com