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BEEREX:

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ca Todd said the idea for the event came shortly after she was hired last year. She said many area patrons suggested a beer festival because nothing like that had been offered in Hermiston before.

“We decided in December that we were going to do it, and so we’ve had about a year to plan,” she said.

Todd said the festival not

only allowed locals to try Nookies’ own beers, but try brews they might not have been able to, otherwise.

“It gives people a chance to try some fresh beer while also bringing everybody together,” she said. “We wanted to make it a community event, and hopefully that’s what we did.”

Nookies employee Kimberlie Graffunder said many people in the region still don’t know Hermiston has a brewing company, so the event served as a way to the get

word out about the different varieties available locally.

“It’s been awesome,” she said Saturday. “It really brings awareness that we’re here.”

Of the Nookies’ brews, Graffunder said the coconut vanilla bourbon porter called “Oi!” was a crowd favorite. The brew features flavors of roasted coconut, Madagascar vanilla beans that had been soaked in bourbon and a couple of different types of hops. The brewery’s newest beer, released Saturday, called “REO Speedwagon,” after

the car, was also a big hit, she said. Brewmaster Tom Torresdall concocted all of the Hermiston Brewing Company beers offered at the event, she said.

The event didn’t draw only locals, either. Laurie Harness traveled from her hometown of Plymouth, Washington, to taste the selections that Oregon had to offer. She said her favorite was a hard cider called Fireball from D’s Wicked Cider, out of the Tri-Cities. Harness said she also

enjoyed the live music by band Big Font.

“They made my day,” she said. “I’m having so much fun.”

Other local patrons said they appreciated the chance to indulge in a variety of selections, from the more traditional to the more unique. Link and Bonnie Pankratz said they both enjoyed the Pipe Canyon Scotch Ale from Laht Neppur, a brewery based out of Waitsburg, Washington, in addition to the

offerings by Hermiston Brewing Company.

Approximately 440 people attended the beer festival Saturday, which was more than Todd said she was expecting.

Of the more than 40 varieties featured at the event, D’s Wicked Cider received the people’s choice award.

Todd said she hopes the beer festival will become an annual event.

“We’ve already started on the planning for next year’s,” she said.

FINALISTS:

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One of the finalists, Beth VanderVeen, currently serves as the district director of student services and athletics in the Mukilteo School District in Everett, Washington. According to school district press release, VanderVeen has worked in education for more than 25 years and has 19 years of experience as a building administrator. In 2006, she was recognized as the Washington State High School Principal of the Year.

During the meet and greet, VanderVeen said, from what she could see during her walk-through at HHS, students were polite and goals set for the school correspond with what she would want if she were principal.

“We are all in (this) together to help kids be successful,” she said. “It is not us versus them. It is you need to have a good working relationship.”

VanderVeen said her leadership style is a mix of her personality.

“I want to be the best, have the best school, have the best students,” she said. “I can be goofy, but, at the same time, I can be a no-nonsense type of person.”

She said she is in favor of Common Core State Standards as it raises the bar for students, but she also feels that students are over-tested. She thinks it is important to differentiate the standards with the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

“I think Common Core gets lumped in with the SBAC, but I think they are two separate things,” she said. “I like the Common Core. I like what it is asking us to do.”

The other candidate, Joseph Harris, currently serves as the freshman academy administrator and athletic director at a 2,200-student high school in Cookeville, Tennessee. Harris entered the field of education in 2008 as a teacher, after earning his master’s degree in education. Since 2011, he has served as an administrator, first as a teacher and administrator before advancing to assistant principal and athletic director.

Harris said he feels students are receiving good instruction when they and the teacher are engaged in the learning.

“From what I’ve seen here, things are looking good here,” he said. “I’m excited.”

Regarding Common Core and the SBAC, Harris said there are positives in testing, as it reveals data about student populations.

“It’s not perfect,” he said. “I like data. I like to look at data ... If we don’t use the data for anything, it is pointless ... It’s a tool that we can measure what we are doing in the classroom.”

Harris said his leadership style is collaborative.

“I am very collaborative when it comes to making decisions and working through problems,” he said. “However, I like to make sure that expectations are set from the beginning ... I am not somebody that stands up there and cracks a whip. I think I’m easy to get along with.”

Overall, HHS staff members said they were pleased with both candidates.

“I think we have two qualified candidates and (Superintendent Fred Maiocco) has a tough de-

cision ahead of him,” HHS teacher Kristin Dunten said after the meet-and-greet.

HHS counselor Sharon Williams said she thought both candidates were committed to the quality

of students’ education.

“It is going to be hard to pick between the two,” she said.



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