



Hermiston Herald

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YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

HERMISTONHERALD.COM

District ready for complete break from IMESD

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
 HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston School District officials have had months to plan and feel sure the district's break from the InterMountain Education Service District will have little to no disruption of student learning or regular district operations.

The Hermiston School Board voted in January to opt out of the IMESD service offerings, citing the break would bring about \$500,000 more to the district's general fund, while also allowing it to manage its own staffing in all areas and have those staff members readily available when they are needed.

Hermiston Superintendent Fred Maiocco and Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith have said the transition away from the ESD is not related to the organization's ability to provide programming in service. Rather, Smith said the district hopes to provide equal or even better offerings since the district will have its own staff for

SEE BREAK/A16

TODAY'S WEATHER



Mainly sunny
 High: 66° Low: 34°

OUTLOOK

- SUNDAY Sunny High: 67° Low: 37°
- MONDAY Sunny High: 71° Low: 39°

A complete weather forecast is featured on page A2.



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FOR LOCAL BREAKING NEWS

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Officials reviewing TRCI inmate work crew escape

Fox had no prior incidents at the institution

BY SEAN HART
 HERMISTON HERALD

A Two Rivers Correctional Institution officials are reviewing the circumstances behind an inmate walking away from a work crew last week and remaining at large for 24 hours before he was

apprehended outside of Hermiston.

TRCI Public Information officer Sherry Isles said the institution had a previous inmate walk away from a work crew in the early 2000s, and, although it is a rare

SEE ESCAPE/A16

Major crime team continues local murder investigation

Umatilla man killed in Hermiston Wednesday

BY SEAN HART
 HERMISTON HERALD

The major crime team from Umatilla and Morrow counties continues to investigate Wednesday night's shooting death in

Hermiston.

According to information from Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston, Alonso G. Madrigal, 23, Umatilla, died from gunshot wounds in the first homicide in Hermiston in more than three years.

Edmiston said, at 9:25 p.m., officers responded to a report of

SEE MURDER/A6

TINY HOUSE, BIG IMPACT



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

From left, STEM Academy instructor Shawn Franks and Umatilla High School seniors Chris Humphrey, Cody Boggs and Kevin Jaime-Garcia look to see if the platform for the after-school program's first tiny house is level before proceeding with the next steps of the project.

Student makes connection with Mexican family roots during construction project

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
 HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla High School senior Kevin Jaime-Garcia has a history of craftsmen in his family, but that connection didn't start in the United States.

Jaime-Garcia's grandparents and great-grandparents were all craftsmen who built houses in Mexico, where Jaime-Garcia spent a good portion of his life before his family lost everything in a flood several years ago, including the tools they used to construct homes.

Jaime-Garcia said he has always wanted to go into construction and car-

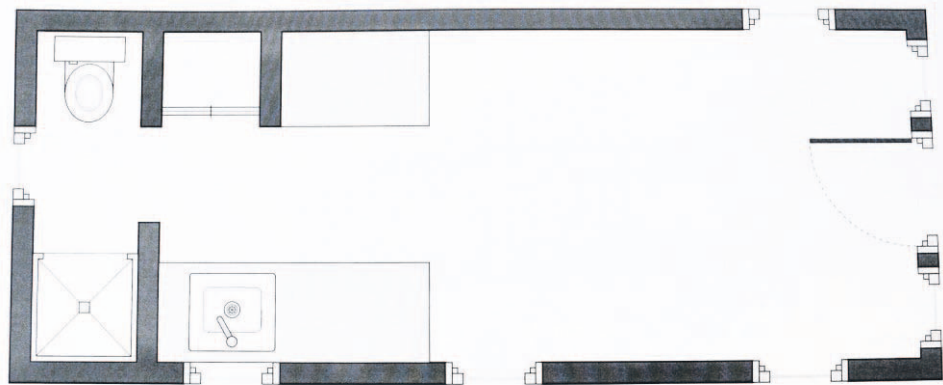


DIAGRAM BY TINYHOMEBUILDERS.COM

About six students in the Umatilla School District's STEM Academy after-school program are building a tiny house, which they will sell after it is completed to provide funds for the next house. Pictured is what the general house layout will look like on the ground floor.

ry on the family tradition. He got his chance this year through a new project offered in the Umatilla School District's after-school program. He and several other students are working to construct a tiny house on wheels. The house resembles a typical home, but it is smaller and transportable via a trailer.

Jaime-Garcia said he is excited he is learning the trade that has been a

tradition in his family for generations.

"This is something my whole family has done for years," he said. "It gives me something to relate back to them."

Jaime-Garcia and UHS seniors Cody Boggs and Chris Humphrey are the three regular students working on the project.

Boggs and Humphrey are also a part of the Columbia Basin Student

Homebuilders program in Hermiston.

In the last couple of weeks, students and adviser Shawn Franks have spent hours constructing the base, which sits on a custom-made trailer by Iron Eagle. The students then spent another few hours squaring up the base of the house on risers to ensure it was level for

SEE HOUSE/A16

Council to consider HES electricity rate increase

Average residential customer would pay \$11 more each month

BY SEAN HART
 HERMISTON HERALD

If the Hermiston City Council approves recommendations from Hermiston Energy Services Superintendent Nate Rivera, HES customers will soon see an increase in their electric bill.

At the regular meeting Monday, council members will consider an ordinance that would increase HES power costs beginning in May to keep up with rising wholesale costs.

According to information from Rivera, residential customers currently pay a \$6.50 fee each month and \$.0633 per kilowatt hour, so an average customer who uses 1,500 kilowatt hours pays a monthly total of \$101.45. Rivera's recommendation increases the monthly fee to \$10.50 and the rate to \$.068, so a customer would pay \$112.50 per month for the same service.

"The primary factor in the proposed rates have been increases in wholesale electricity prices," Rivera said in a press release. "Over the last six years, Bonneville Power Administration have increased the cost of wholesale power by about 23 percent to Hermiston Energy Services and other public utilities throughout the Northwest. HES's wholesale power costs comprise over 50 percent of its total operating costs."

In a presentation at the last City Council meeting,

SEE RATES/A2

Umatilla capping franchise fees to encourage growth

Revenue reduction could be offset by new development

BY SEAN HART
 HERMISTON HERALD

To make the city of Umatilla more attractive to large-scale electricity users, city officials are cutting the amount of revenue the city receives from franchise fees.

At the regular meeting Tuesday, council members unanimously approved an ordinance to reduce the franchise fee charged to the Umatilla Electric Cooperative for use of city right-of-way from 5 percent to 3.5 percent and to impose an annual fee cap of \$500,000.

Before the vote, City Manager Bob Ward said the previous agreement, which would have expired next year, was "significantly out of date by current stan-

dards," and the 3.5 percent fee matches the rate in an agreement with the city's other power provider, Pacific Power. He said, by reducing the rate and, thus, the cost of business, Umatilla would be more "business friendly" to operations that use a large amount of electricity, such as the Amazon data centers currently serviced by UEC.

"Amazon, when they were doing their research on coming into Umatilla, overlooked the notion of

franchise fees as a cost factor for their decision to come in here," he said. "... Five percent doesn't seem like a whole lot, but there is a whole lot of electricity being consumed out there by Amazon, so they were concerned about that."

Ward said Amazon representatives suggested the \$500,000 figure as an annual total limit collected by UEC from all of its customers.

Amazon is finishing the build-out of a second data

center with potential plans to build at least a third, Ward said, but the company could choose to expand elsewhere to avoid the fees, such as the Port of Morrow, where Amazon also has facilities.

"Amazon hasn't necessarily been pressuring us, but Amazon has made it clear that there are other places that they can go," he said. "I wouldn't consider this to be necessarily a concession

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