

COMMUNITY

Area school districts encourage students to read

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

Schools across the nation celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday this week through Read Across America Week, and many, including those in Hermiston, Stanfield, Umatilla and Echo, used the opportunity to inspire in students a love for reading.

Students at all elementary schools in the region could be seen wearing their Cat in the Hat red and white striped hats and reading a Dr. Seuss book or two to express their love of the classic tales, while also exploring other genres of books.

In Hermiston, four of the five elementary schools held events, from themed dress-up days to scheduled reading times to activities after school, where students got to read a book with their families while also participating in a variety of arts and crafts. The other Hermiston elementary school, Desert View Elementary School, will celebrate Read Across America Week beginning Monday.

Rocky Heights Elementary teacher Holly Moss said celebrating the week is important because reading is the avenue for success.

"Finding ways to celebrate the love of reading is



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Kindergarten student Tyler Bampbell recites a passage from *Cat in the Hat* Thursday afternoon during a Dr. Seuss-themed assembly at Echo School for Read Across America Week as first-grader Emily Rose watches and Echo teacher Brytni Owen holds a book.

important," she said. "Read Across America is exciting because the students are introduced to authors and stories they might not choose on their own, like Dr. Seuss. Hopefully, this will motivate them to continue reading long after their elementary school days are over."

In Stanfield and Echo, each elementary school held school-wide assemblies, where they completed a variety of Dr. Seuss-themed activities ranging from the reading of tongue twisters

to acting out skits inspired by their favorite books. In Echo, students paraded Dr. Seuss-themed floats through the gym and participated in a read-off contest.

At Stanfield Elementary School, students got a visit from Cat in the Hat, himself, during their school-wide assembly Thursday. Students also ate a helping of green eggs and ham for lunch on Monday and celebrated a drop-everything-and-read day. The library had a variety of activities

to suit every grade level throughout the week.

"Reading is and can be fun," librarian Susan Dicks said. "It's all about promoting the fun and different types of books (Dr. Seuss) has."

At McNary Heights Elementary School in Umatilla, students had a variety of dress-up days, and then on Thursday, had a Dr. Seuss parade, where they also modeled miniature floats after their favorite Dr. Seuss books.



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Cat in the Hat made a special guest appearance during the Stanfield Elementary School assembly celebrating Read Across America Week Thursday afternoon.



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Echo Elementary School students dance to a Dr. Seuss song Thursday during an assembly for Read Across America Week.

Stanfield, developer hope to strike a deal on road extension

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

The city of Stanfield and a housing developer hope to come to an agreement on how to finance the extension of a road in Stanfield so 12 new houses can be built on the north end of town.

Timothy Hophan, owner of Silver Ridge Homes, was well on his way to constructing the first phase of housing in the city, but the project stalled when he realized how much it was going to cost to extend Maimie Street. Stanfield City Manager Blair Larsen said Hophan originally budgeted the road extension to cost about \$80,000, but, upon further research, he found the road would cost about \$180,000.

Larsen said the city and Hophan had a previous arrangement where, in exchange for extending

the street, Silver Ridge Homes would receive 12 system development charge credits. SDCs are a latecomer's fee developers pay to reimburse the city for existing infrastructure. Larsen said a portion of the fees also go toward future infrastructure that will serve the new development.

If the city were to require Hophan to extend the road for his housing development, Hophan would have to abandon the project, Larsen told the City Council Tuesday.

Larsen said, as a possible way to keep the project on track, he and Hophan have been discussing setting up an account for Hophan with the city so, for every house the developer builds, a portion of the funds that would normally go to SDCs would be set aside in a trust to be used for the road extension.

city needs to hold Silver Ridge Homes to a time frame to ensure the city isn't wasting its resources. He said he also thinks if the developer could dedicate more money than just the cost of the SDC per house built, which runs at \$5,400, that would benefit the city. He said that would also reduce the amount of SDC waivers Silver Ridge Homes would receive from the city.

Larsen said that is a possibility he can explore. "If his normal operations would involve spending an additional \$42,000, or \$3,000 per lot, on road access, then perhaps we can include something like that where he would put in a larger amount like \$7,000 or \$7,500," Larsen said. "It would make it accrue faster and it would be less SDCs that the city would lose."

Mayor Thomas McCann said he feels the city should pursue the idea because Stanfield needs more housing.

"My opinion is I think it is worth the continued negotiation," he said.

Councilman Jason Sperr said he supports the idea, but he thinks the

Larsen said the road extension isn't absolutely necessary right now, but it would be eventually.

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