



Hermiston Herald

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YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

HERMISTONHERALD.COM

New senior center site selected

BY SEAN HART
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston Senior Center is one step closer to having a new home after the site selection committee determined its preference for a new location.

Seven members of the 10-person group, comprised of senior center board members and others with ties to the center, ranked the 3.32-acre “Aspen Site” behind Wal-Mart, east of Northeast Fourth Street and south of Northeast Aspen Drive, as the first preference for the new center at a meeting Tuesday.

The recommendation will be given to the Hermiston City Council, which will make the final determination on the location of the new facility to be built with a \$2 million Community Development Block Grant the city received to build the center, Parks and Recreation Director Larry Fetter said.

He said the city hopes to have the new facility completed by December of 2016, when the Hermiston School District takes

SEE CENTER/A6

TODAY'S WEATHER



Sunny
High: 66° Low: 37°

OUTLOOK

- THURSDAY
Mostly sunny
High: 71° Low: 42°
- FRIDAY
Mostly sunny
High: 71° Low: 47°

A complete weather forecast is featured on page A2.



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FOR LOCAL
BREAKING NEWS

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BMCC/HAREC partnership on tap if bond passes

Precision ag facility could be built at extension center

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center could become the new site for a precision irrigated agriculture facility in the near future, but only if voters agree to support a new bond measure being proposed by Blue Mountain Community College.

Blue Mountain Community College is pursuing another bond measure on May 19's bal-

About PRECISION IRRIGATED AGRICULTURE?

Phil Hamm, station director at the Hermiston Agriculture Research and Extension Center, said precision irrigated agriculture is having the ability to control and moderate all aspects of the irrigation process, from the water output, to the amount of chemicals that are distributed, to the speed of pivots. He said, with precision irrigated agriculture, farmers can control exactly how much water or chemicals are distributed, where and the rate, which leads to greater efficiency and fewer dollars lost.

lot, but unlike the former bond measure, this one is less expensive and will offer more for taxpayers' money.

The bond being pursued in May will be for \$23 million, or 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value for 15 years. It is not a continuation of the community college's former bond,

which voters failed to approve in November 2013. The new bond is for about \$5 million less than what BMCC was asking for last time.

One of the top projects on the bond is a proposed precision irrigated agriculture facility that will also create a partnership between BMCC and Oregon State

University's HAREC. Should the bond pass in May, HAREC administrators have agreed to provide the land to BMCC for the facility at little cost in exchange for use of the building.

“With the last bond, we were looking at having to find property for the facility,” Casey White-Zollman, BMCC vice president of public relations, said. “This time, however, we have a great partnership with OSU extension service. They have agreed for us to put the center on that property for a \$1 a year lease.”

White-Zollman said having the center on that property will allow students and program par-

SEE BOND/A9

HANDS-ON TRAINING



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Hermiston High School sophomore Wyatt Paschal cares for a plant in the greenhouse of the school Tuesday morning. Paschal is one of several students in a landscaping class that are doing the landscaping for the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilder program's first student-built home.

Landscaping students get practical experience through homebuilding program

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston High School junior Emily Vandehey may not want to go into a landscaping career after she graduates from high school, but she said the skills she's learning from hands-on experience while participating in the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilder

program will last her a lifetime.

In her advanced landscaping class, Vandehey and several other students are working in partnership with the homebuilding program, and with mentor and professional landscaper Doug Bennett, of Doug Bennett Landscaping, to design and then construct a landscaping plan for the student-built home.

Vandehey said, through the class, agriculture teacher Alyssa Davies has taught students how to identify plants appropriate for types of soil and climate conditions and how to draw landscaping plans to scale. Now, the students are working with Bennett to put all of their skills to practice as they

“Twenty years later, when we drive past the house, we can say, ‘Hey, I put that there.’”

— Emily Vandehey
Landscaping student

plan for and then prepare to landscape the home.

Vandehey said the class has been especially useful for her because she plans to use what she has learned not only in her everyday life, but also in her future career as an agriculture teacher.

“It will help widen my understanding of (agriculture) opportunities in the region,” she said.

Bennett comes to the class every Wednesday to work with students for two hours at the homebuilding program site. Bennett said he and the students started by coming up with ideas of what they would like to see the landscaping plan include. He then helped narrow down their plant selections to

SEE LANDSCAPING/A6

Hermiston police chief discusses use of force

Proactive steps intended to prevent poor decisions

BY SEAN HART
HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston Police Department uses a variety of techniques to ensure accountability and prevent poor decisions by officers when they have to use force when dealing with suspects.

After Pasco, Washington, police officers shot and killed an unarmed Hispanic male in February, Hermiston's Hispanic Advisory Committee invited HPD Chief Jason Edmiston to discuss the department's use-of-force policies.

At Monday's HAC meeting, Edmiston explained that HPD is proactive in helping officers make good decisions when it comes to force. With thorough background checks on new hires, mandatory reviews of incidents when officers use force and a focus on training and wellness, he said HPD hopes to have “smarter, healthier employees” who make sound decisions.

Last year, Edmiston said, members of the department trained for about 5,900 hours, 800 of which addressed use of force. He said officers use force during less than 1 percent of arrests — about 12 out of an average 1,500 each year

SEE FORCE/A12

Hermiston Warming Station to go cool for summer

BY MAEGAN MURRAY
HERMISTON HERALD

For years, members of the homeless community have had a place to get warm at night when temperatures fell below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, but they have never had a place to go when it gets too hot during the summer — until now.

Beginning this summer, the Hermiston Warming Station organizers will have a cooling station at the building they rented at 224 E. Main St. in Hermiston.

“People have been asking us about it for a long time,” warming station board Chairperson Carol Jeffery-Hoague said this week. “There really seems to be a need for it. I've also been on different

committees who said it would be a good thing to have during the summer time.”

Jeffery-Hoague said, because the building is rented for the entire year, courtesy of CAPECO, organizers wanted to do something with the space during the summer, when few options are available for people to get out of the heat.

“We want to make sure people have a place to get enough hydration and have a place to cool off,” she said. “We'll also have a volunteer there to help people fill out the paper work.”

She said the station will be primarily for homeless residents, but others can use it if they have no

SEE COOLING/A12

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