



# Hermiston Herald

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YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

HERMISTONHERALD.COM

## BMCC bond includes funds for fire tower

Hermiston or Pendleton facility would better train students and local firefighters

BY SEAN HART  
HERMISTON HERALD

If the Blue Mountain Community College bond passes in May, fire sciences students and area firefighters would benefit from a new fire training tower.

BMCC President Cam Preus said, in addition to a precision irrigated agriculture facility in Hermiston and other projects, the bond proposal appropriates funds for the training tower under instructional equipment.

"We have a million dollars earmarked for equipment, and in that is \$300,000-plus for a fire tower," she said. "This would train firefighters (and) first responders from The Dalles to Baker, so it's

SEE FUNDS/A7

## TODAY'S WEATHER



Sunny with wind  
High: 67° Low: 42°

## OUTLOOK

- SUNDAY  
Mix of sun and clouds  
High: 70° Low: 42°
- MONDAY  
Mostly sunny  
High: 73° Low: 46°

A complete weather forecast is featured on page A2.



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FOR LOCAL BREAKING NEWS

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## EOTEC rebidding event center design, construction

Previously selected bid canceled after complaint by another bidder

BY SEAN HART  
HERMISTON HERALD

Construction companies will have the chance to bid again on a major structure for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center after another bidder filed a formal complaint about how the bids were scored.

Knerr Construction of Hermiston was one of three companies that bid to design and build the event center, and after G2 Construction, Kennewick, was selected for the job in February, Knerr complained that the bid scoring was handled improperly.

"One of the bidders disagreed with how the bids were scored based on the various categories, and we simply decided, along with Frew Development, that our best course was to re-bid the project," EOTEC Authority Board Chair Ed Brookshier said after Fri-

day's meeting. "There was some uncertainty about certain elements of the specifications, which arguably could have led to how you address some of the aspects of the request for proposals, which went into the scoring system. So we, hopefully, clarified those ambiguities and are reissuing proposals now."

Brookshier said the first bid selection was canceled, and the specifications of the project and scoring were clarified in a new request for bids.

John Frew, CEO of Frew Development Group,

which is managing the EOTEC project, said Knerr Construction was fair to question whether the bidders clearly understood the instructions.

After clarifying the scoring methodology, he said, a new request for bids was issued March 19. The bids are due at noon April 16, and FDG will deliver a recommendation to the board at its April 24 meeting.

Frew said the scope of the event center was also modified, and the budget for the building was reduced from \$2.8 million to

\$2.7 million.

Despite the setback, Frew said the project is still on schedule for completion by May 2016, and he hopes it will even be finished early. Construction on the site near the Hermiston airport is currently on hold during a mandatory notice and comment period to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, but Frew said Barton Laser Leveling should be able to resume work on the site grading and utilities April 13.

SEE EOTEC/A18

## GENTLER EXERCISE



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Hermiston resident Steven Potter completes a tai ji quan form with the rest of his classmates during the Tai Ji Quan Movement for Better Balance class Thursday at the Hermiston Senior Center.

## Tai ji quan classes improve health of elderly residents

BY MAEGAN MURRAY  
HERMISTON HERALD

When Hermiston resident Mary Solomon first starting taking tai chi classes a couple of years ago at Good Shepherd Medical Center, the goal was to improve her joint health. But after she had a knee replacement last spring, she was looking for a gentler exercise.

So when she and friend

Mickey Morris, who had taken tai chi with her at Good Shepherd, heard about a class offering a different form of tai chi, known as Tai Ji Quan Movement for Better Balance, they both decided to sign up. The results from the class, Solomon said, have been incredible.

"After my knee surgery, I went through therapy first," she said. "Now, I'm doing the tai ji quan in order to keep it up. Before, it did a lot of good for my joints. Now, it has been really great for my knee."

The class, although very similar to tai chi, features exercises aimed toward the

elderly. Though the forms are very similar, most of them focus on developing muscles in the body for balance and for basic functions such as being able to stand up from a chair.

"We do a modified form of tai chi," Helena Wolfe, class instructor and health promotion coordinator at CAPECO Area Agency on Aging, said during a class Thursday afternoon. "We do a lot of things that challenge balance. The forms and exercises we do help to strengthen the core muscles, legs and arms."

Wolfe said the goal of

SEE TAI JI QUAN/A8



MAEGAN MURRAY PHOTO

Umatilla resident Mickey Morris, right, performs a mirroring exercise Thursday with fellow participant Donna Okay during the Tai Ji Quan Movement for Better Balance class at the Hermiston Senior Center.

## Education a focus of Hermiston community garden this year

BY MAEGAN MURRAY  
HERMISTON HERALD

Oregon State University master gardeners have always had a hand in the Hermiston Community Garden, but the goal this year is to use them more to educate residents about how they, too, can use gardening to grow their own produce and eat healthier.

While planting for the community garden doesn't start until after Easter, Chelle Hankinson, community garden coordinator and USDA manager at Umatilla-Morrow Head Start, said organizers want to prepare their participants before they dig in the dirt. The garden will have a

clean-up day from 9 a.m. to noon April 11, which will be followed by a garden planning workshop beginning at 5 p.m. on April 13, which marks the second of two workshops scheduled.

"One of our goals this year was to include some more education and to capitalize on our master gardeners that have become an everyday thing at the garden," Hankinson said. "We're partnering with them this year to give classes to community members, regardless if they have a stake in the community garden or not."

Hankinson said one of the things that will be different about the garden this year is that plot

SEE GARDEN/A18

## Spring cleaning events to spruce up towns

Various events allowing people to get rid of items for free

BY SEAN HART  
HERMISTON HERALD

Local events will allow people to clean up their houses and yards and dispose of many items for free in April.

Sanitary Disposal and the cities of Hermiston and Umatilla are hosting separate spring cleaning events to make it easy for people to spruce up the community.

Wednesday through April 7, loads

up to 2.5 cubic yards with a maximum weight of 454.4 pounds will be free when the Sanitary Disposal transfer station offers a \$13.50 discount per load of acceptable solid waste, excluding tires.

General Manager Mike Jewett said Sanitary Disposal has offered the discount since it opened the transfer station, situated about two miles north of Hermiston on the west side of Highway 395.

"We have pressure from our communities to do some sort of clean-up," he said. "This is just our way of saying thank you and advertising the transfer station for further use."

The event always takes place

SEE CLEANING/A7

Hermiston Herald \$1.00



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