



Hermiston Herald

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2015

YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER

HERMISTONHERALD.COM

Umatilla teacher dies in car crash

EAST OREGONIAN

Umatilla School District is in mourning this week after a first-grade teacher at McNary Heights Elementary School was killed in a single-vehicle car crash over the weekend.

Elisabet Flores, 39, was driving with her husband, Sergio Murguía, and 13-year-old son on Westland Road south of Hermiston at about 10 p.m. Saturday when she drove off the roadway and crashed into a chain link fence near the Hermiston rural fire station.

Sheriff Terry Rowan said the top rail of the fence penetrated the 2005 Nissan Altima and critically injured Flores. The passengers were unharmed, but Flores was transported to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, where she was pronounced dead.

He said the cause of the crash is still under investigation but it doesn't look like drugs or alcohol were a factor.

Flores taught first grade

SEE CRASH/A2

TODAY'S WEATHER



Sunny
High: 62° Low: 34°

OUTLOOK

- THURSDAY
Sunny
High: 70° Low: 39°
- FRIDAY
Sunny
High: 77° Low: 47°

A complete weather forecast is featured on page A2.



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FOR LOCAL BREAKING NEWS

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High school graduation to stay indoors

Board opts not to move ceremonies to Kennison Field

BY JESSICA KELLER
HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston High School graduation ceremonies will continue to take place in the gym rather than an outdoor ceremony at Kennison Field.

The Hermiston School Board took no action Monday on a petition by parents to move the ceremony to the stadium.

Parents had requested a venue change through the administration but, Superintendent Fred Maiocco

decided not to change the venue.

Maiocco said the School Board could overturn his decision to keep the graduation ceremonies in the Hermiston High School gymnasium, but the matter died after no School Board member made a motion to change the location.

Hermiston High School parent Tracy Gammell started the petition, which garnered more than 900 signatures prior to Monday's meeting, to ask the school district to move the ceremonies to allow for more family members to attend.

"Limiting guests to six per student makes it difficult, rather impossible, for many students' families to share in the ceremony,"

SEE GRADUATION/A5



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Hermiston High School students participate in a graduation ceremony in the high school gym in this file photo. Graduation ceremonies will remain indoors in the gym as the School Board decided not to act on a petition to move the ceremony to Kennison Field.

SPECIAL KIND OF MENTOR



JESSICA KELLER PHOTO

Armand Larive Middle School physical education assistant Michele Bergstrom, center, laughs with P.E. instructor Todd Sprong and eighth-grader Matilynn Byrd during class Tuesday. After 25 years working in various roles in the school district, she is retiring at the end of this school year.

Bergstrom reflects on 25 years in district, recent recognition

BY JESSICA KELLER
HERMISTON HERALD

In the first 25 years she has worked for the school district, Michele Bergstrom never received an award. This year, her last before she retires, she has received two.

Bergstrom, the assistant

physical education teacher at Armand Larive Middle School, was named one of the Hermiston School District's classified employees of the year. This week she also learned she is one of the recipients of the InterMountain Education Service District's Crystal Apple Awards for

Hermiston.

While she was pleased to receive the classified employee of the year distinction, the Crystal Apple Award means a lot.

"That was totally unexpected," she said. "That's kind of a special award. It means, over the last 20-something years, they

recognize what I've been doing."

When Hermiston School District Superintendent Fred Maiocco presented her with flowers and congratulated her Monday, Bergstrom said she could hardly believe it.

"I see the teachers and how excited they are to get it, and when I heard I got it, I was like, 'Are you

sure?'" she said. "I guess all the hard work has paid off."

Bergstrom said she started working in the school district because her children were in school. She never expected it to turn into a 25-year career. She hated school as a student. She was first hired in the school district as a sub-

SEE BERGSTROM/A10

Teatro Milagro hosting free drama events

Bilingual workshop, play on tap this week in Hermiston

BY SEAN HART
HERMISTON HERALD

Whether you speak English, Spanish or both, a bilingual play and workshop this week in Hermiston offers dramatic entertainment.

The theater group Teatro Milagro and the Desert Arts Council will present a free community potluck and workshop today, followed by a free production of "Searching for Aztlan" Friday.

Teatro Milagro Marketing As-

Free bilingual drama events

- Community workshop and potluck, 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. today in the Lanham Room at Hermiston Public Library, 235 E. Gladys Ave.
- "Searching for Aztlan," 7 p.m. Friday in the auditorium at Armand Larive Middle School, 1497 S.W. Ninth St., Hermiston. Both events are free, but space is limited. Call 541-561-1332 to reserve a spot for either event.

Assistant Vicente Guzman-Orozco said the events are open to anyone.

"A lot of our touring plays are

SEE WORKSHOP/A2

Conference center fate remains uncertain

City extends contract through 2016 to allow further deliberations

BY SEAN HART
HERMISTON HERALD

Although the fate of the Hermiston Conference Center has not been determined, operations will continue as normal through at least the end of next year.

At their Monday meeting, Hermiston City Council unanimously agreed to extend the current contract with the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce to operate the facility through 2016 to provide reassurance to the cham-



SEAN HART PHOTO

Hermiston Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan presents information about the Hermiston Conference Center to the City Council at the regular meeting Monday.

ber and event organizers that the city will fund the center while a long-term plan can be developed.

At issue is whether the city will continue to subsidize the confer-

SEE CENTER/A10

Hermiston Herald \$1.00



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