

Ag teacher earns top state award

FFA co-advisor also honored with scholarship to attend fall conference

BY SEAN HART
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston High School is one of a few in the state that offers an AgriScience program, and one of its teachers recently received the state's top honor.

Leah Smith said she was surprised to be named the AgriScience Teacher of the Year at the Oregon Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association conference recently in Dayton, Oregon.

"They start to read the biography (of the winner), and you start to think, 'Hey, that sounds a lot like my program,'" she said. "It's very exciting as you're sitting there because you don't know that that's coming. It's very rewarding to have that recognition especially in front of your peers."

Smith said about 100 of the roughly 120 ag teachers in Oregon attended the annual conference, but few of those possess the creden-

tials to teach AgriScience. To qualify, ag teachers must also be endorsed as science teachers through the state, and Smith said Hermiston is one of about five schools to offer the dual program.

For students interested in agriculture, the AgriScience program offers an ag elective credit along with a core science credit, Smith said. The roughly 200 freshmen and sophomores who choose AgriScience rotate through a year of ag biology and a year of physical science applications in agriculture instead of typical biology and physical science classes, she said.

"We work with the other science teachers to make sure we're teaching the same concepts at the same time of the year, but if we're talking about thermodynamics or the laws of gravity, we'll talk more about engines. We'll talk about tractors and some of the new technology in farming. So it's the same concepts, but it's totally ag

applied," she said. "It's just a different way to present it to the kids."

Smith said the classes focus less on traditional techniques, such as taking notes, and more on technology- and lab-based "outside of the box" methods. She said the approach has been effective, with AgriScience students posting some of the highest science scores on the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.

"In my opinion, application teaching is the way to go," she said. "If you can teach kinetic and potential energy through the idea of how it affects how much fuel you have to use driving equipment, doesn't that teach the concept 10 times



Smith



Davies



SUBMITTED PHOTO

From left, Hermiston High School AgriScience students Tanna Osmin, Emily Ponton and Lillie Wheeler work on a dissection lab last year. Their teacher Leah Smith was recently named the Oregon Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association AgriScience Teacher of the Year.

better? It gives them something to connect it to, and if kids can connect their learning to something that is real world, then they will remember it."

Smith also received the

Teacher Mentor Award at the conference after being nominated by her HHS AgriScience teaching partner and FFA co-advisor Alyssa Davies, who recently finished her second year as a

teacher. Davies was honored with the Teacher Turn of the Key award for teachers in their first five years, which included a scholarship to attend another conference this fall in New Orleans.

Extreme heat buckles sidewalks

BY JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

Blame it on the heat. Prolonged triple-digit temperatures are taking a toll on sidewalks, with concrete buckling in the heat.

It happened to Vicki Veliz in Hermiston. She thought the sidewalk in front of her home looked strange when she went to check the mail last Friday but convinced herself she was seeing things.

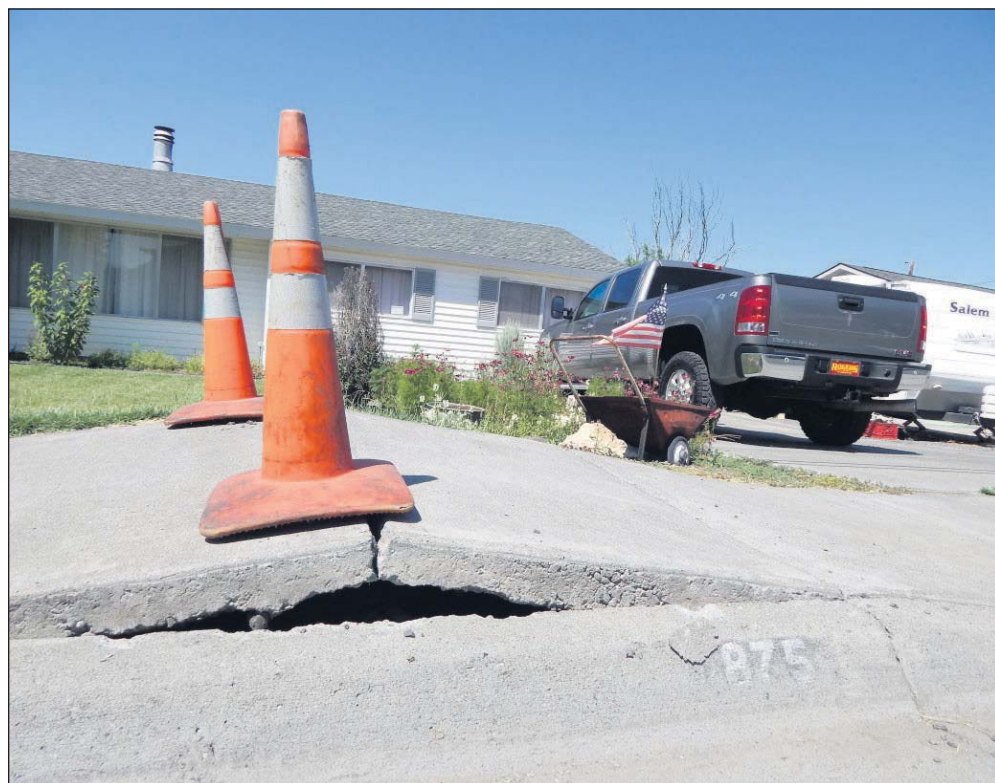
The next day, however, two squares of sidewalk had raised themselves into an upside-down V.

Veliz posted a picture on Facebook asking what might have caused it and got 89 responses ranging from the serious (earthquakes and sink holes) to the humorous ("And I thought I had a gopher problem!").

Some suggested she call the city, but when she did she found out city code states that adjacent property owners are responsible for maintaining sidewalks.

"I found out I had to take care of it and I didn't know it was my responsibility," she said.

Street Superintendent Ron Sivey did come and look at it for her, however, and offered a few do-it-yourself strategies to try cooling down and shrinking the concrete so it could be pushed back into place when the heat wave



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

Hot weather caused Vicky Veliz's sidewalk to buckle outside her Hermiston home.

breaks. He also lent Veliz a couple of orange cones to warn pedestrians of the ridge in the sidewalk.

Her next door neighbor's sidewalk has the same problem.

The phenomenon is called thermal expansion, which happens when concrete expands in hot weather. Sidewalks are supposed to have "expansion joints" that create a gap to account for the expansion, but sometimes they can get overwhelmed in a prolonged heat wave.

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said he

hadn't heard about anyone else calling in to the city about the problem. He said the city doesn't have a hand in sidewalk maintenance, but if there was

a situation where there was widespread damage across town it was possible the city would help organize property owners to help bring down costs.



PHOTO BY KRISTI SMALLEY

Arc member Jillian Smalley, left, and event chair Debbie Herrera, right, pose with raffle winner Betty Lewter, center, who won a fundraising raffle and will get a one-week stay in a timeshare in McCall, Idaho, for her donation to The Arc of Umatilla County.

Supporter of The Arc of Umatilla County gets one week stay in Idaho, organization gets donations

The Arc of Umatilla County has announced that Betty Lewter, who works at Health Options, is the winner of a weekend in McCall, as part of a raffle held to support the organization.

Local resident Joe Farretta donated a week in his McCall, Idaho, timeshare as a fundraiser for The Arc of Umatilla County.

The organization is trying to raise money for a new boiler and to support other programs.

The Arc supports individuals with intellectual and developmental dis-

abilities in the local community.

The drawing, which was held July 1, raised \$675 for the organization.

Event chair Debbie Herrera informed Betty Lewter that she had the winning ticket.

"It couldn't have happened to a better person! Betty has been such a great supporter of The Arc," Herrera said. "She collects raffle prizes for the Epilepsy Walk each June and is constantly purchasing raffle tickets and attending fundraising dinners at The Arc."

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The Ione 4th of July Celebration Committee would like to thank the following for their support:

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Thank you to all those businesses and individuals who helped sponsor:
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