

# Turners place high bid of \$330,033 for first student-built home

Building plans for second home submitted Monday with construction to begin in several weeks

By SEAN HART  
Staff Writer

A former Hermiston educator is set to be the first to turn the key on the first student-built home in Hermiston.

Hermiston School District Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith announced Tim and Linda Turner placed the highest bid of \$330,033 for the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilder Program's first home at the Hermiston School Board meeting Monday.

The Turners' bid was well above the \$268,500 reserve price, and Smith said Tim Turner, a former teacher for the district, had been excited to try to purchase the 2,050-square-foot home at 895 W. Angus Court.

"He and his wife have been stopping by the house consistently for the last



FILE PHOTO

Tim and Linda Turner, Hermiston, placed the high bid of \$330,033 for this house, the first student-built home from the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilder Program through the Hermiston School District.

three or four months because he's been eager and very interested in purchasing the home because he's seen the high quality that's in there, and it just meets all of his needs," Smith said.

"It's kind of neat to see him be the successful bidder."

Smith said the district is still working with the Turners to finalize the sale, but plans for the second student-built home were sub-

mitted to the city building department Monday morning. He said foundation work is planned to begin on the second home in several weeks, and by the beginning of the school year, the

students will probably be framing the walls.

In the program's second year, Smith said more core students will be involved and will spend more time at the site each day. While somewhere around 75 to 100 students, including those taking horticulture and shop classes, participated in some aspects of the first home, 12 core students spent the most time at the site, which will likely be increased to 17 this year, he said. Instead of a two-hour time period at the site each day, he said the students will also be able to spend up to three and a half hours a day working on the home.

"We wanted to start with a smaller group of students, more of an intimate group, so we could make sure we had a good understanding of what we're getting ourselves into (the first year)," he said. "... Our first home was kind

of our dip the toe in the water, learn from some of our mistakes, glean some of the successes to make sure we replicate that."

Smith said the first year of the program was "amazingly successful." He said the Oregon School Boards Association has even invited the district to present information about the program as a model for other districts to replicate at the annual convention in November.

"The kids did a great job with the learning curve for everyone building a house for the first time, but the collaboration with the homebuilder's association, the city and the district, it really was quite seamless for the first year," he said. "... It's pretty neat for a first-year program to be so successful and to have it be a model for others to emulate if they want to start a program like this for their kids."

## Boardman teen drowns in Columbia River

A Morrow County teenager drowned Friday in the Columbia River, the second drowning death in the same stretch this summer.

At 3:53 a.m., the Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a 9-1-1 call reporting Gavin Ryce Roberts, 18, of Boardman, had drowned near the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge in the McCormick Slough, according to a press release.

Roberts was a 2015 graduate of Riverside High School in Boardman.

Multiple agencies responded to the scene, including the sheriff's office, Irrigon Fire Department and EMS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Umatilla Fire Department and Washington-based Skamania County Sheriff's Office Dive Rescue Team. The agencies launched boats, and the dive rescue team recovered the body at about 11:13 a.m.

The incident is under investigation.



Roberts

## Boy alerts family to home fire; 5 escape uninjured

Family members say they got out just in time, thanks to warning from 'hero'

By GARY L. WEST  
Herald Editor

A 6-year-old Irrigon boy is being called a hero by his family for helping four other people, including two infants, escape a fire that destroyed a mobile home Friday.

"I was in the living room watching a movie, then I smelled smoke," said the boy, Joel Koertje.

He alerted his 20-year-old sister Shaughnessi Ellison and her friend, Reba Carter. Carter said she had just finished a shower and was starting to dress when

Joel told them he could smell smoke. She turned around, looked out the window and could see flames.

Ellison and Carter grabbed Joel and Ellison's two 5-month-old infants and headed out the door. Carter didn't even have time to put on a shirt, she said.

"My 6-year-old brother saved us," Ellison said. "Any later and we'd have been screwed."

Ellison said they had just got out of the house

and to the yard gate when a propane tank exploded.

"It went so quick, so quick," she said.

Ellison reported the fire after the family got safely out of the home. The fire was called in at 3:51 p.m.

The family, including their parents Cory Koertje and Kathi Hamner, had just finished moving into the three-bedroom trailer that day.

"We brought the last load in this morning," Cory Koertje said, while looking at the smoldering shell of the home. Cory Koertje and Hamner were on their way to Boardman to go to work when the fire broke out.

They were looking forward to living in the larger home with a fenced yard.

"It was perfect," Hamner said.

But she looked on the bright side.

"Everybody got out. Everything can be replaced," Hamner said.

Irrigon Fire Chief Larry Burns said at the scene it was too early to identify the cause of the fire. He said a state deputy fire marshal based out of Pendleton was en route to try to determine the cause. Seven firefighters from Irrigon responded to extinguish the blaze along with five from Boardman who responded for mutual aid. The mobile home was a total loss.



STAFF PHOTOS BY GARY L. WEST

Shaughnessi Ellison of Irrigon (right) tells Cory Koertje how she, her two children, her brother and a friend were able to escape the family's home, which burned to the ground on Friday. Koertje is holding one of Ellison's sons while they stand next to Ellison's car. Ellison said the keys to the car were still inside the home. Heat from the fire melted the plastic license plate frame on the front of the car.



A firefighter works to extinguish hot spots from a fire that destroyed a mobile home Friday in Irrigon. Five people, including two infants and a 6-year-old boy escaped shortly before the home was engulfed in flame.

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### Healthy Back Habits for Caregivers - CONCLUDED

TUESDAY, MAY 26, 3:30PM

Many adults spend a considerable portion of their week caring for aging parents, relatives, friends, or other adults. According to the results of a recent study, the stresses and strains of providing care to an ill loved one may take a considerable toll on the mental and physical health of care-givers — including their back and spine health. Learn healthy back habits to keep you safe.

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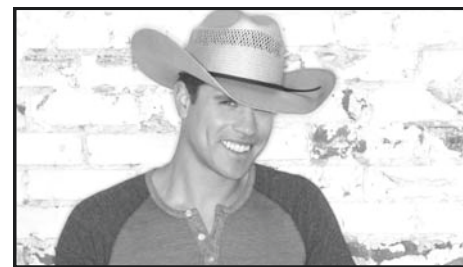
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