

## Holiday Inn Express coming to town

**STAFF REPORT**

A four-story Holiday Inn Express will become the tallest building in Hermiston when it's built downtown next year.

The hotel at the northwest corner of Highway 395 and West Hermiston Avenue will have 93 rooms, including 18 suites, an indoor pool, spa and fitness center

and is expected to open July 1, 2016.

According to a study by the city, the 434 hotel rooms currently in town averaged 69.6 percent occupancy in 2014, an increase of almost 1.5 percent from the year before. High-end hotels averaged 76.9 percent occupancy, an increase of 6.5 percent from 2013.

Hotels can run out of vacancy during peak travel times, said Mark Morgan,

Hermiston assistant city manager. That includes during regional sports and community events, but it can also occur any given day of the week.

"The interesting thing about the Hermiston market is that hotels are more full during the week," he said. "Our big driver is business travel stays."

Morgan also said the bump to the urban renewal fund will be substantial — \$75,000 annually if the

property is assessed at a conservative \$5 million — which would help jump start the long list of downtown projects the city is planning.

But the biggest boost could be to existing and new businesses downtown, Morgan said, which will benefit from a nearby hotel. He said even conservative estimates have about 50 people staying in the hotel each night.

"This is a catalyst-type investment," he said.

The Holiday Inn Express will employ 25 full-time workers once it opens, according to a press release from its management company, and will be designed in the company's newest style, which premiered in Salt Lake City earlier this year. The new style was created to appeal to millennial travelers and features a more open lobby with high-top tables and

barstool chairs. Sycan B Corp. will develop the hotel and Inn-Sight Hotel Management Group, based in Springfield, will manage it.

A dispute over the property was resolved in January after the city divided up ownership of the gravel West Ridgeway Avenue between the hotel property and Sallee Properties, the neighbor to the north.

## Hermiston Auto Parts moving into former PGG store

By JADE McDOWELL  
Staff Writer

Hermiston's former Pendleton Grain Growers retail store is getting a new occupant this week as Hermiston Auto Parts is relocating to the larger space.

The move will mean twice as much room for the NAPA retailer, owner Kevin Cleaver said, as well as a more visible location than the store's current spot at 292 W. Hermiston Ave.

"The biggest advantage is probably going to be the location," he said.

Cleaver and his wife, Georgia, have owned the store, which was established in the 1960s, since 1994. He said the store has outgrown its original location, which is why he became interested in the building at 200 S. First Place after PGG closed its retail store there in the fall.

Cleaver said having twice as much space will mean more inventory.

"We'll have stuff we've never carried before," he said.

The store currently has seven employees, but Cleaver said he will probably hire three more people after the expansion.

The plan is for NAPA's Portland distribution center to bring "as many people as they can" to help move in-



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Kevin Cleaver (right), owner of Hermiston Auto Parts, watches as inventory is moved into the new store location Monday on South First Place next to Bi-Mart. The store is moving to the new location and expects to be open for business this week.

**RELOCATION**

ventory on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday while the store remains open at its current location, then transition to being open at the new location on Thursday, or earlier if possible, while the rest of the inventory is moved over.

John Randall, general manager of NAPA Portland, called the new store site a "Cadillac" location.

"It will be a good move," Randall said.

Over the weekend the outside of the store was repainted. New shelves are being installed inside, and eventually the store will get new signage

marking it as Hermiston Auto Parts.

Cleaver said he hasn't set a date yet but plans to have a grand opening celebration for the community after they get settled in at their new location.

Cleaver said Hermiston Auto Parts is leasing the location for now, because there is a Department of Environmental Quality hold on the property due to underground tanks at the location for the former PGG fueling station that was located on the property. However, he does intend to buy the building once the DEQ issues are resolved.

— Gary L. West contributed to this report.

## Hermiston History: 25 years ago, 'other' PGG store was being built

A photo and story on the front page of the July 17, 1990, edition of the Hermiston Herald featured an update on how construction was progressing on a new building. The building was built specifically for a Pendleton Grain Growers retail store, but that building is now home to Bi-Mart, which has been at that location since 1999.

PGG moved to another building across the parking lot where it would remain until it closed last September. But now, this week, a new business is moving in to the last home of PGG in Hermiston.

What follows is the text of the story from July 1990, 25 years ago this week.

The new 34,000-square-foot Pendleton Grain Growers hardware and feed store will be completed sometime in early October according to Hermiston Manager Nathan Crowther.

"The construction company is right on schedule," said Crowther and has been the last four or five weeks. "That's why we're so confi-

dent that the store will open on schedule."

The building is going up on PGG's property west of (South) First Place and construction is well under way.

The new store had been planned for more than a year prior to the start of construction. Hermiston City Council agreed to vacate Southeast Second Street to make room for the new store and adequate off-street parking.

PGG will tear down the existing hardware store on the west side of First Place. That site will become part of the new store's parking lot. The feed and seed store on the east side of North First Place also will be torn down.

Haskins Construction of Spokane is the general contractor for the job and the sub contractors are from Umatilla County.

The Hermiston PGG store, in what is now the Bi-Mart building, opened on Oct. 8, 1990, and a ribbon cutting for the new facility was held on Nov. 16, 1990. PGG shuttered its retail

store in September 2014, as part of a major restructuring when no buyers could be found for the Hermiston store or three other retail locations in Pendleton, Milton-Freewater and Athena.

But the building didn't stay closed for long. This week, Hermiston Auto Parts is moving inventory into the new location and plans to open for business at its new location on or before Thursday.

**Hermiston History**

Hermiston History will be a regular feature in the Hermiston Herald. If you have something to share about the history of the greater Hermiston area, send your submission to editor@hermistonherald.com with "Hermiston History" in the subject line. If you have a question about the area's history you would like the Herald staff to look into, you can send your questions to the same email address with "Hermiston History question" in the subject line.

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Chamber to host networking event at Ashley Manor**

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce will host a Network Hermiston event at 5:30 p.m. today at Ashley Manor Care Center, 1355 Manzanita Place, Hermis-

ton. The business is celebrating with a family block party that will include food, music, games and prizes.

For more information about the event, contact the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce at 541-567-6151.

**Network Hermiston event planned at Umatilla Electric**

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce will host a Network Hermiston event at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 21, at Umatilla Electric Cooperative, 750 W. Elm

Ave., Hermiston. UEC has remodeled its Hermiston offices, and the Network Hermiston events celebrate businesses in the greater Hermiston area and their commitment to the region.

For more information about the events, contact the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce at 541-567-6151.

**Good Shepherd to cut ribbon on expansion July 21**

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce will host a grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony for upgrades at Good Shepherd Medical Center. The event will be held at

5 p.m., Tuesday, July 21, at the hospital, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston.

The event will provide an opportunity to see the new addition and expansion of the surgery suite with a 15-bed day surgery center.

For more information about the event, contact the chamber, 541-567-6151.

## Work begins on Don Horneck Memorial Building

By JADE McDOWELL  
Staff Writer

The Hermiston Agricultural Research & Extension Center broke ground on a new building Wednesday,

July 8, that will be named in memory of the center's former agronomist professor Don Horneck.

"All of us here still miss Don," HAREC director Phil Hamm said. "Don will always be missed for who he was and what he did for the experiment station."

Plans for the building were in the works before Horneck died in the fall of 2014.

The building also will include an agronomy lab, insect-rearing facilities,

a tissue culture room and various pieces of research equipment, including special super-cold freezers for RNA and DNA samples that will be equipped with a back-up natural gas generator for when the power goes out.

The \$300,000 building was paid for by public and private donations. Hamm said about a third of the money came from private sources, including many local growers.

"We've gotten tremen-

dous support," he said.

Hamm said it was a mark of how important the station's research is to the region that the Washington Potato Commission made a donation, only its second donation to an entity outside of Washington (HAREC also received the commission's first donation outside of Washington).

Horneck's wife, Vicki, attended the groundbreaking ceremony along with several other rep-

resentatives of the Horneck family. She said the family was very proud of the work her husband had done at the extension center and was touched by the tribute. She said her husband had been very excited about the new building when it was in the planning stages.

"He was talking about the building and what was going to be in it and how great it was going to be," she said.

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