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COACHED BY
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AT CLINIC

LATE ARRIVAL WOWS IN DUNK CONTEST

Local repeats
as 3-point champ

By SAM BARBEE
Staff Writer

Thane Pierson almost didn't get to dunk.

Around noon, he and his team were down the street at Nookie's Restaurant lunching on a burger, thinking the Takin' It to the Streets Dunk Contest started at 3 p.m. He heard his name called from just east of Highway 395, and hustled back to the intersection of East Main Street and Third Street to complete his dunk. He missed his original slot, but got to shove one down anyway. His score of 43 put him into the finals where he induced a roar from the crowd and sent one judge scampering with enthusiasm.

The high jumper from Washington State University, on his very first finals attempt, weaved the ball through his legs and threw it down cleanly. The five 10s from judges Abi Drotzmann, Jansen Edmiston, Jenni Hoffert, Garron Gammell and Mitch Thompson were only formalities as the crowd of a couple hundred people whooped and yelled and smiled at the athletic display given by Pierson.

"Once they said it was two guys left, I said 'I'm bringing (the between the legs),' he said. "If there was another round I was saving it."

Thompson, who coached the Irrigon boys basketball team to a state championship this past winter, said it was exciting to see a Division I athlete compete and show off a little.

"Whenever you get a Divi-



Thane Pierson of Natches, Washington, and a high jumper at Washington State University, goes between his legs in the finals of the dunk contest at the 10th Annual Takin' It to the Street three-on-three basketball tournament Saturday in Hermiston.

STAFF PHOTOS BY SAM BARBEE



A shot is blocked on Main Street on Saturday at the 10th Annual Takin' It to the Street three-on-three basketball tournament Saturday in Hermiston.

Right: Two players fight for position during a game on Main Street during the 10th annual Takin' It to the Streets three-on-three basketball tournament in Hermiston.



Far right: On Saturday at the 10th annual Takin' It to the Streets three-on-three basketball tournament, a player tries to snake his way through the defense at a Newport Park court.



Good Shepherd opens new surgical center

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

The staff at Good Shepherd Medical Center showed off its new surgery center to the public Tuesday before the facility is sterilized and prepped for use.

HEALTH

"You're not going to find a more state-of-the-art facility than what we have constructed," CEO Dennis Burke said.

He said design of the center started three years ago, and architects implemented suggestions from the hospital's surgical staff to make the design more user friendly. The new center also helps the hospital conform to the latest in-

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Watermelon festival offers family fun

By TAMMY MALGESINI
Community Editor

Watermelons take center-stage next weekend during the Irrigon Watermelon Festival.

The 32nd annual event begins Saturday, July 25, with breakfast from 6:30-9:30 a.m. at Irrigon Marina Park. The parade, which starts at 10 a.m. on Main Street, winds its way back to the marina park, which offers family fun into the evening.

"It's a great local activity for families to get together," said Angie Schneider, vendors coordinator.

And the melons aren't just for eating — several contests are planned that feature the sweet-tasting gourds. The Mayors Watermelon Seed Spitting Contest is at 2:30 p.m. Watermelon bowling and kid's seed spitting continue until the prizes run out.

With some great items donated, festival coordinator Renee Couchman is excited about the all-day raffle. Tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5. Drawings will be held throughout the day and evening. People don't have to be present to win.

Raffle prizes include a flat-screen TV, luggage, ice chests, a lawn mower, a gazebo, gift baskets, rodeo and admission tick-

EVENT

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Dude, where's your car?

Auto thefts up sharply in 2015, most vehicles unlocked with keys inside

By SEAN HART
Staff Writer

Vehicle thefts in Hermiston have significantly increased during the first half of the year, but many of the crimes could have been prevented.

Chief Jason Edmiston recently released Hermiston Police Department's crime statistics through the second quarter, and said he is particularly disappointed with auto thefts.

In the first six months of the year, 28 vehicles were reported stolen, compared to 10 from the same period last year.

The 180 percent increase in auto thefts contributed to a 9 percent increase in total crime — from 270 in 2014 to 295 this year — for the eight index categories reported to the FBI. While the total is still far below the 10-year average of 387, Edmiston said the number should be lower.

"I'm encouraged by the fact that total crime is still down 24 percent over the 10-year average, but I am honest enough to say that I don't like to see a 9 percent increase from 2014 to 2015 in total crime," he said.

Community choir crescendos with free performance

By TAMMY MALGESINI
Community Editor

With a full college schedule his freshman year at the University of Oregon, Riley Mulvihill didn't have time to participate in choir.

Home for the summer, the 2014 Hermiston High School graduate was excited about the opportunity to warm up his vocal cords with the Hermiston Community Choir.

"It really made me realize how much I missed being part of a choir," he said. "Choral singing is an amazing experience — being part of a larger whole and creating something beautiful."

Mulvihill, who sings bass, participated in last summer's inaugural group.

Directed by Josh Rist, who also teaches choir at Hermiston High School, started the group last year through a Hermiston Parks & Recreation program. The initial choir had about 30 voices.

Ranging in age from teenagers to super seniors, the group has nearly doubled in size this summer.

"We have a pretty amazing age range," Rist said.

Mulvihill, who sang under Rist at Hermiston, said the different age groups provides a unique and enjoyable experience.

"With our assortment of age groups, we get members with decades of experience as well as the passion and energy of youth," he said.

With twice-weekly rehearsals under their belt since late June, the choir will crescendo with a concert program. The free performance is Thursday at 7 p.m. in the auditorium at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St.

The program features a diversity of genres and styles, including gospel, spiritual, shaker tunes and popular songs.

Rist said the performance is somewhat dark and serious in the beginning and then moves into the encouragement and supportive stage.

"The program is uplifting, as it reflects on how we respond to loss and transition," Rist said.

For more information, call 541-667-5018.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Josh Rist leads the Hermiston Community Choir in a recent rehearsal. The group will perform a free concert Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Hermiston High School auditorium.



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