

Hermiston Herald

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ABOUT TOWN



AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Mosquitoes can spread diseases like West Nile virus. Mosquitoes trapped east of Hermiston have tested positive for West Nile virus for the first time this year.

West Nile virus detected in Umatilla County

West Nile virus has been found in Umatilla County for the first time this year.

Health officials say mosquitoes trapped along Bensel Road east of Highway 395 in Hermiston tested positive for the virus. Confirmation testing is taking place at the Oregon State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory in Corvallis.

Residents can expect to see an increase in mosquito control based on the sample. Workers will use truck-mounted sprayers to apply insecticides, which is done typically after sunset when mosquitoes are most active.

West Nile is primarily a bird disease. Magpies, blue jays and crows are especially susceptible. Mosquitoes become infected by feeding on an infected bird and can spread the virus to humans, horses and other hosts when they bite.

The risk of West Nile is low, but people should take precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites.

Most people infected with West Nile do not become sick, though some may develop mild flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache and body aches. In rare cases, the virus may cause encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain. Anyone experiencing rare or unusual headaches should contact their doctor as soon as possible.

Because horses are also at risk for West Nile, health officials encourage horse owners to check with their veterinarians for vaccination.

To report dead birds or mosquito infestations, call the West Umatilla Mosquito Control District at 541-567-5201. For more information about West Nile, call Umatilla County Public Health at 541-278-5432.



FILE PHOTO

A container handler moves a shipping container to the loading area at the Port of Umatilla in April 2004.

Workshop to address shipping issues

A trade workshop sponsored by Business Oregon is happening in Hermiston tonight.

The workshop will run from 6:30-8 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center. It will be geared toward helping businesses find cost-effective ways to continue to reach international customers after container service companies Hanjin and Hapag-Lloyd pulled out of Port of Portland Terminal 6.

As part of the workshop, participants will also have the opportunity to give input on putting together a list of recommendations for the 2016 Legislature to address freight transportation problems in the state.

The Hermiston workshop is one of six planned around the state as part of an initiative announced in April by Gov. Kate Brown to invest \$300,000 in helping small businesses export goods to other countries.

It is co-sponsored by Business Oregon, Port of Portland, Oregon Department of Transportation and Oregon Department of Agriculture.

For more information, or to register, visit www.oregon-tradesolutions.com.



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City resurrects watermelon tradition



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL.

Frank Harkenrider looks through scrapbooks in his home that depict the early days of Hermiston's watermelon giveaway in Portland. Harkenrider started a 17-year tradition of taking watermelons and other locally grown ag products to downtown Portland to hand out to city staff and residents in 1991.

Portland square will again become a Hermiston farmers market where everything is free

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

Frank Harkenrider may be retired from the Hermiston City Council, but when the council resurrects an old tradition Friday by handing out free Hermiston watermelons at Pioneer Square in Portland, Harkenrider will be right there with them.

It was Harkenrider who started the tradition, after all, during his time as Hermiston's mayor. He piled watermelons in the back of a pickup truck one day in 1991 and headed to Portland to challenge Portland's then-mayor "Bud" Clark to a seed-spitting contest.

"Boy I had a lot of fun with that," Harkenrider remembered. "We got

Hermiston on the map."

For the next 17 years the tradition grew, expanding to include commercial-sized loads of not just watermelons but also potatoes and cantaloupes and onions. Harkenrider gamely admits he lost more seed-spitting contests than he won, but that wasn't really the point. The



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Frank Harkenrider looks at scrapbook photos from his days handing out watermelons in Portland to promote Hermiston. The last watermelon giveaway took place in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square in 2007. The city of Hermiston and Hermiston Chamber of Commerce are reviving the tradition Harkenrider started on Friday.

Portland media were all doing stories on Hermiston produce, he said, and the city was building valuable relationships with westside politicians.

"I'm glad they're starting that over again. It was a real good promotional thing for the city," he said.

His wife Beverly said afterward the couple usually retired to Goose Hollow, Clark's tavern, for lunch.

"We'd get on a city bus and everyone was walking down the street carrying wa-

termelons, and you could tell where they had been," she said.

She saved a record of every one of those trips to Portland, pasting photos and newspaper articles into a set of five heavy green scrapbooks that chronicle Harkenrider's 10 years as Hermiston mayor and more than 40 years as a city councilor.

A look through the scrapbooks makes it obvious how much Harkenrider loved promoting his beloved city's famous fruit. The Portland giveaway was his main event, but he gave away other watermelons too, including the time he personally delivered three to a Tri-Cities resident after she wrote him to say she believed the bland "Hermiston" melon she had purchased recently must have been an impostor labeled by an unscrupulous fruit stand owner.

Harkenrider said he never had any trouble getting local growers to donate produce, and those same growers said they were excited to see the tradition start again.

"It's a little bit of nostalgia for me," said Jack Bellinger of Bellinger Farms.

He said giving away Hermiston produce in Portland is a fun promotional tool and a great way to say thank you to the metro-area residents who have been loyal customers.

"Watermelons are a fun fruit," he said.

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Report: Police use force in only handful of arrests

Citizens filed only two complaints against agency in 2014-15 fiscal year

By **SEAN HART**
Staff Writer

From July 2014 to June 2015, the rate at which Hermiston Police Department used force during arrests was the lowest in the last five fiscal years.

POLICE

At the quarterly Public Safety Committee meeting recently, Chief Jason Edmiston said force was used during only seven of the department's 1,351 arrests, 0.52 percent,

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Saturday service planned for firefighter who died in crash

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
Staff Writer

Hermiston firefighter Jason Anteau will be remembered by colleagues and friends at 11 a.m. Saturday in a celebration of life service at the Hermiston High School commons.

Anteau died Friday night in a motorcycle crash in Pendleton.

CRASH

Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services Chief Scott Stanton said the loss is significant to the department and the many who knew and loved the 43-year-old husband and father of two.

Anteau worked for the Oregon Department of Transportation and was a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician for Hermiston since 2007, Stanton said. He was also a specialist on the city's regional hazardous materials team.

"He did a lot," Stanton said. "Whoever needed help, he was there to help. A super, super guy."

Stanton said he hoped Anteau was headed to participate in Pendleton Bike Week, the inaugural motorcycle rally that started Wednesday at the Pendleton Convention Center. Firefighting and riding motorcycles were both dear to Anteau's heart, the chief said.



Anteau

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