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### ABOUT TOWN

## Hermiston enrollment up more than 200 students

Hermiston School District enrollment numbers continue to rise at a fast pace.

After students who did not show up for the year were removed from the rolls, the district still grew by 213 students to a total of 5,531, Deputy Superintendent Wade Smith told the school board Monday, according to a district press release.

The district expected an increase of about 100 students based on the mid-range growth forecast from a recent Portland State University Population Research Study, but this year's increase was higher than the study's high-range growth forecast.

Because of the record enrollment, the district has capped multiple classrooms in its five elementary schools and has shuttled students to other schools that can accommodate the new students, according to the release.

"The district currently uses 24 modular classrooms to accommodate recent student growth; this is four more than were being utilized prior to our last bond measure," Smith said in the release. "If we continue at this pace, we will need a total of 81 portable classrooms in the next eight years, where over 1,600 students will be housed. Although portables are appropriate for short-term enrollment surges, they are not efficient nor cost effective to address long-term community needs."

Desert View Elementary School, which was designed for 427 students, now has a population of more than 600, the release states. The PSU population study predicts in eight years the high school will grow to 2,000 students — nearly double the attendance when the last addition was completed 13 years ago — and the total district population will grow to almost 7,000, according to the release.

Smith urged the board to evaluate the recommendations from the Facility Master Planning Committee and to quickly address the multiple campus capacity concerns.

## ¡Viva Mexico! Event celebrates Mexican Independence Day

Live music, bouncy houses, a beer garden and food are all part of a Mexican Independence Day celebration at Yo Country Frozen Yogurt.

Although people sometimes confuse Cinco de Mayo as Mexico's Independence Day, the actual date is Sept. 16, 1810, which is a national holiday in Mexico that commemorates the country's independence from Spain.

The event is Wednesday from 3-10 p.m. at 1725 N. First St., Hermiston. There is no admission charge.

In addition, those who attend are encouraged to make donations of non-perishable food items, such as canned foods, peanut butter and macaroni and cheese. The food will be distributed through Agape House for the backpack program that provides weekend food items for needy students.

For more information, call 541-289-9611.

# DANCES WITH BULLS



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Bullfighter Donnie Griggs of Hermiston runs between Cody Kehr of Killdeer, North Dakota, and a bull named Mike's The Boss after Kehr was bucked off Monday during the PBR Classic on at the Happy Canyon Arena in Pendleton.

## Hermiston bullfighter returns to Round-Up

By JADE McDOWELL  
Staff Writer

Most people would see 2,000 pounds of angry, horned bull charging them as a moment gone horribly wrong, but for Donnie Griggs it's just another day at the office.

"It's a job that you enjoy," the Hermiston bullfighter said. "It's an adrenaline rush on one hand, but you've got to be calm and mellow and cool."

Griggs has been a fixture of the Pendleton Round-Up for eight years and the Farm-City Pro Rodeo for nine. Keeping rodeo bulls from trampling cowboys may not be for everyone, but for Griggs professional bullfighting was a natural progression from riding steers as a kid and bulls as a teenager.

Not just anybody can become a bullfighter. It takes special training. Would-be bullfighters have to go through a rigorous approval process by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association and be scouted out at conventions.

Griggs studied under Loyd Ketchum, generally considered one of the best bullfighters in the PRCA, and got his "big

### Cowboy lifesavers

Bullfighters Donnie Griggs and Dusty Tuckness and Round-Up barrelman Justin Rumsford will be meeting with fans and signing autographs from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 19, at the Pendleton Walmart, 2203 S.W. Court Ave., Pendleton.

break" when he was invited to team up with Ketchum during the 2002 rodeo season.

The job keeps him on his toes, even more than a decade later.

"There's never two wrecks the same," he said.

That's what happens when you're working with animals as unpredictable as rodeo bulls. Certain animals get a reputation for being a handful, but Griggs said any bull can turn on a bullfighter or a cowboy.

"You try to treat all bulls the same," he said. "There's that one bull that you've seen 50 times, and it's never hooked anyone and then one day it has a cranky day."

Most of the time everyone gets out of the way, but sometimes bull and man collide in painful ways. Griggs broke his tib-

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STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Donnie Griggs of Hermiston has been a fixture protecting cowboys for the last decade at the area's two premier rodeos, the Pendleton Round-Up and Farm-City Pro Rodeo. Griggs is back in the arena this week in Pendleton, after recovering from an injury earlier in the year.

## EOTEC event center construction in motion

By JADE McDOWELL  
Staff Writer

Construction at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center has finally gone vertical.

The metal skeleton of the pre-fabricated event center and exhibition hall can now be seen from Southeast Airport Road, providing a visible marker of things to come.

John Frew, president and CEO of project manager Frew Development Group, was on site for a visit Tuesday. He called the beginning of vertical construction an important milestone, but said there was a huge amount of ground-level work done already to prepare the site.

"There is so much under-



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Construction of the event center and exhibition hall has begun at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

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