

City seeks applicants for two committees

Three positions are open on the city of Hermiston Budget Committee. Budget Committee terms are three years long. The committee meets in the spring to go over the budget prepared by city staff before it comes to the City Council for approval.

The city is also looking for applicants for an open position on the Recreation Projects Fund Advisory Committee. The committee evaluates applications for transient room tax funds for recreation projects and makes recommendations to the City Council.

Preference will be given to city residents. The deadline for submitting applications for both committees is Monday, Nov. 30. Applications can be picked up and dropped off at City Hall, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

Homecare recruitment events next week

Recruitment events for homecare and personal support workers will be held in Hermiston and Pendleton next week.

The events, sponsored by the Oregon Home Care Commission, will guide potential workers through the application and enrollment process for the Oregon Home Care Commission's registry that lists "help wanted" ads for homecare or personal support workers and provides referrals to families looking for help.

Homecare workers provide in-home support for seniors and adults with physical disabilities, while personal support workers provide services in and out of the home for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illnesses.

The commission is looking for workers with good communication skills, attention to detail, flexibility, problem-solving skills, respect for others, an ability to follow directions, a passion for helping people and the ability to pass a background check.

The two Hermiston events will be 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday at the Best Western, 2255 S. Highway 395.

Pendleton's two events will be 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday at the Pendleton Center for the Arts, 214 N. Main St.

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Library offers Saturday crafts

Children in fifth grade and younger are invited to participate in the Saturday Craft Time at the Hermiston Public Library.

Through the winter months, youths can stop by the library each Saturday between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and work on a craft project, which they can take home afterwards. The library is located at 235 E. Gladys Ave. There is no charge for participation in the craft activities.

For more information, call 541-567-2882 or visit www.hermistonlibrary.us.

IMAC sets annual meeting, dinner fundraiser

The annual meeting of the Irrigon Multicultural Art Center will include a

spaghetti dinner.

Open to the public, the event is Saturday at 5:30 p.m. at the Skinny Bull Museum, located behind the Irrigon branch of the Bank of Eastern Oregon, 230 S. First St. The meal costs \$6 per person.

The group hopes to preserve the old Irrigon High School building and create a regional art venue.

For more information, call Donna at 541-922-3197 or Peggy at 541-567-3806.

Symphony announces free performance

A concert by the Willow Creek Symphony is being presented this weekend in Boardman.

Under the direction of conductor R. Lee Friese and associate conductor Ralph Werner, the symphony will perform Sunday at 4 p.m. at

the Riverside High School, 210 N.E. Boardman Ave., Boardman. There is no charge, but donations are accepted at the door. Also, a reception will follow the performance.

The program includes "Larghetto from Symphony No. 2, Op. 36" by L. Van Beethoven, "The Halls of Ivy" arranged by Ralph Matesky, "French Masters Suite" arranged by Philip Gordon and "Hot Staccato" by Roger Britten.

The Willow Creek Symphony is the preparatory orchestra of the Inland Northwest Musicians. Its members include youths and adults.

For more information about Inland Northwest Musicians, including how to join an ensemble, contact 541-289-4696, inwm@machmedia.net or visit www.inlandnorthwestmusicians.com.



EO FILE PHOTO

The Umatilla Old Town site was closed to the public since the 1960s and only recently reopened for tours.

City of Umatilla signs agreements with Army Corps of Engineers

City takes steps to add a second soccer field on Third Street

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

The city of Umatilla has taken another step toward its goal of opening the Old Town Site to the public, authorizing the mayor to sign an agreement for non-native plant removal there.

The agreement is with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which owns the land, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, which has an interest in the burial site and former Umatilla village site.

City Manager Bob Ward told the council last week that normally it would be the Army Corps of Engineers' responsibility to handle the eradica-

tion process, but the city volunteered to take the lead on vegetation management for the next five years because the Corps is "bureaucracy heavy and revenue light."

"One of the primary concerns for both the tribes and the city is invasive species, and that has been a concern of the Corps of Engineers too," Ward said.

The land was the site of the original city of Umatilla before predictions of flooding from construction of the John Day Dam forced the city to move. Before that it was a prehistoric settlement and later an Indian village and burial site.

Ward said the burial site will be the city and tribes' primary focus to start. Other areas of the old town site/Umatilla village will be more complicated because "the wildlife habitat down there people have come to enjoy is primarily invasive species."

Ward said it will take six months to a year for the vegetation management permit to be approved.

The council also authorized the mayor to sign a second agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers, in this case a renewal of a five-year lease of the Third Street soccer field property.

The city is looking to add a second soccer field there and wanted to upgrade to a longer lease before going ahead with improvements. However, Ward told the council after meeting with the Corps he felt it was better to stick with the five-year lease because a longer time frame would open the property to a right of first refusal from another government agency.

He said adding a second soccer field would also require additional parking, restrooms and an extension of the irrigation system already in place.

¿Habla español? City manager proposes raise for bilingual staff

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

City Manager Byron Smith would like to see bilingual city staff get a two percent pay raise.

The move would mirror a change implemented in 2014 that gave city police officers who speak Spanish a two percent raise in recognition of the extra work often required of them when another officer needs a translator.

Smith suggested the incentive be extended to all staff during a Monday work session with the City Council to introduce proposed amendments to the city's employee handbook.

Staff currently considered bilingual would be grandfathered in, he said, while new hires or those learning Spanish would have to take an aptitude test. The incentive would apply to any non-English language spoken by at least 10 percent of the city's population.

Other suggested policies mostly revolved around benefits, including a proposal to cut the amount of compensation time a staffer can accumulate from 240 hours to 120.

"We've been having some challenges from a budget standpoint to plan for when that is going to be cashed out," Smith said.

He said he was also concerned about the amount of vacation time the city gives. Currently staff can earn up to five and a half weeks a year, but Smith suggested putting a cap of four weeks on future employees.

Councilors pushed back on the idea, saying that time away from the job was important for wellness. Doug Smith, who worked for the city as a police officer in the past, said that vacation time helped him continue to work for Hermiston and he suspected it helped keep other people

working for the city too.

"I was getting that five and a half weeks a year and that was huge for me," he said.

Byron Smith said the five and a half weeks for longtime employees, when combined with paid holidays and sick leave, meant some employees were taking two months out of the year off and it sometimes made it difficult to get things done.

Some councilors also disagreed with Smith's suggestion to cap sick leave — which is accumulated at a rate of 10 hours per month — at 2,080 hours.



Byron Smith

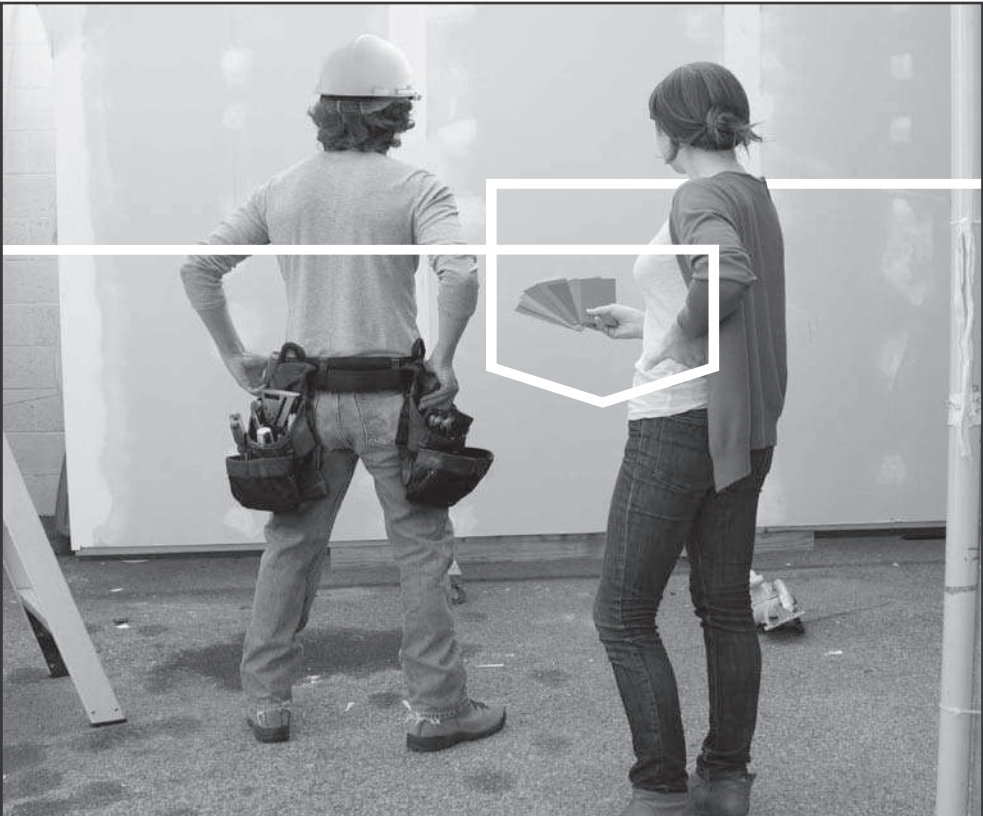
"If something really bad happens I think a year off is sufficient," Smith said.

He agreed to research what comparable cities were offering for paid vacation and sick leave and come back to the council with his findings.

Other proposed changes to the employee handbook included revising definitions of a part-time and full-time employee to match the Affordable Care Act and setting a policy that all city employees will be paid on the fifth and 20th of each month, regardless of whether they use direct deposit.

Corrections

It is the policy of the *Hermiston Herald* to correct errors as soon as they are discovered. Incorrect information will be corrected on Page 2A. Errors committed on the Opinion page will be corrected on that page. Corrections also are noted in the online versions of our stories. Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533.



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