

Happy Thanksgiving **Hermiston Herald** Give thanks

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2015 HermistonHerald.com \$1.00



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

Hermiston Walmart Supercenter store manager Erik Smith stands in the new produce section of the recently remodeled store after a grand reopening celebration Thursday morning. The upgrades were "quite an overhaul," he said, including new flooring, fixtures, lighting and displays.

Walmart ready for holiday shopping season

Hermiston store receives 'quite an overhaul'

By **SEAN HART**
Staff Writer

A major remodeling of the Hermiston Walmart Supercenter was completed just in time for Black Friday and the holiday rush.

The store hosted grand reopening events Friday and Saturday after the 12-week project intended to make the shopping experience "fast, clean and friendly," store manager Erik Smith said.

"We're doing the right thing for the customers, trying to give them what they deserve," he said. "We don't just want to be the low-cost leader. We want people to come in here and say, 'Hey, this is a clean place. I want to bring my family in here and the kids,' and all that good stuff. So we did spend a lot of extra money on these upgrades."

Although Smith said he could not disclose the total cost of the remodel, he said the new flooring installed on the entire 185,000-square-foot sales area alone would cost \$300,000 to \$400,000. That doesn't include the expanded customer service area, the exterior paint job or the new shelving, fixtures and displays throughout the store.

"They did quite an overhaul," he said. "They replaced all the fixtures in the departments. They went as far as replacing all the freezers in the back. Everything is just brand new, which is great, so now it's up to us to, obviously, keep it the way it is."

As people walk into the store on the grocery side, new LED lighting illuminates a redesigned produce and bakery area

"We're doing the right thing for the customers, trying to give them what they deserve."

— Erik Smith
Store manager

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STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

The new produce section in the recently remodeled Hermiston Walmart Supercenter features new display cases and lighting.



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

After a recent remodel, the Hermiston Walmart Supercenter bakery now features new display tables and expanded offerings.



ABOUT TOWN

Area music students perform at festival

The Umatilla-Morrow District of the Oregon Music Teachers Association's Ensemble Festival featured nearly 100 area piano and voice students.

Held Oct. 24 in Hermiston, Mio Aioke of Eastern Oregon University was adjudicator for the event.

The local winners included:

Elementary piano: Landon Barndt, Matthew Hammond, Riley Hampton, Ruby West, Hermiston. Honorable mentions: Mimi Chen, Connie Chen, Hermiston.

Elementary voice: McKenna Bray, Echo; Marina Frasser, Stanfield; Ruby West, Hermiston.

Middle school piano: Paul Ernst, Kyle Ernst, Emma Williamson, Kaitlyn Ramirez, Hunter McDonald, Jayden Aguilera, Tyler Blake, Hermiston. Honorable mentions: Ellie Ernst, Kyle Ernst, Hermiston.

Middle school voice: Mya Hayden, Hermiston.

High school piano: Honorable mentions: Rylee Hancock, Justin Blake, Hermiston.

High school voice: Melani Purcel, Hermiston; Rylee Bray, Lexi Bray, Echo.

Teachers: Sarah Milburn, Phyllis Peterson, Hermiston; Kathy Turner, Boardman; Alaina Lemmon, Lexington; Roberta Windham, Bethany Van Cleave, Myrna Van Cleave, Pendleton.

Winning ensembles were eligible to perform at the State Ensemble Festival, held Nov. 21 at Western Oregon University in Monmouth.

Area DMV offices closed Nov. 26-27 for Thanksgiving

All Oregon DMV offices, along with other state offices, will be closed on both Thanksgiving and the Friday after Thanksgiving, Nov. 26 and 27, according to a release from the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Customer wait times tend to be longer on the days just before and after holidays and weekends, so DMV urges customers to do business by mail or online, if possible. If you do have to visit a DMV office, department officials suggest you go before Wednesday, Nov. 25, or after Monday, Nov. 30.

Tree festival spreads spirit of giving

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
Community Editor

A festive two-day event features dazzling and beautifully decorated trees during the Hermiston Festival of Trees.

People can bid on 11 large trees, which come with a bounty of gifts, as well as 13 small trees and 11 themed baskets. Also, a silent auction includes 14 wreaths and 12 stockings. The Family Day offers a variety of activities, and the trees remain for viewing.

"It's really popular," said John Spomer of the Hermiston Breakfast Kiwanis Club. "It has become a Christmas kick-off event."

The festival's gala event begins with tree viewing and wine tasting Saturday, Dec. 5, at 6 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The dinner (prime rib or salmon by Simply Catering) is at 7 p.m.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

A family visits with Santa Claus during a past Family Day during the Festival of Trees at the Hermiston Conference Center. This year's dinner and auction is Saturday, Dec. 5, and the family activities are Sunday, Dec. 6.

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