

WALMART:

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with new displays and cases. Smith said the deli and bakery expanded their product offerings to include smoked meats and new doughnuts. Another major renovation was the electronics department, he said, which is about 95 percent new.

"In this day and age, people want to eat, and they want their electronics, because you've got to be doing something while you're eating, right?" he said. "These were the two big investments that I would say

that Walmart put into all stores really. It's pretty cool."

Other changes include new jewelry and cosmetics departments and an expanded pet department, as well as some larger aisles. Smith said the recycling center was also updated.

He said he is excited about the remodel, and he encouraged people to see it for themselves.

"I've gotten to talk to a lot of customers, and they've been pretty excited about the changes that they're seeing," he said. "I think it's more eye appealing. It's very clean. It's really streamlined."

Hermiston Walmart

Hours: 5 a.m. to 1 a.m. daily
Location: 1350 N. First St., Hermiston

History: • The Walmart discount store opened in Hermiston on June 30, 1992, with 73,000 square feet of floor space.

• The Walmart distribution center in Hermiston opened in April 1998, employing almost 800 people.

• On April 11, 2001, the Hermiston Walmart store was expanded to 210,000 square feet and about 320 employees to be the first

Supercenter with groceries in Washington or Oregon.

• The store hosted a grand reopening June 17, 2009, after a remodel to make the shopping experience easier for customers.

• Construction began on a new remodeling project designed to make the experience 'fast, clean and friendly' the first week of September 2015 and was completed for a grand reopening Friday.

• Store manager Erik Smith said the store now employs about 380 people, and the distribution center employs about 900.



STAFF PHOTO BY SEAN HART

Hermiston Walmart Supercenter store manager Erik Smith shows the new electronics section of the recently remodeled store after a grand reopening celebration Thursday morning

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and the live auction starts at 8 p.m. Tickets for the 21-and-older event are \$35 each or \$250 for a table of eight.

People planning to attend are encouraged to purchase tickets early, as they have sold-out the last few years, said Spomer, co-chair of the event.

Proceeds from the gala event are split between the Hermiston Breakfast Kiwanis Club and the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation. Both organizations give back to the community through donations and scholarships.

Also, in the spirit of giving, a large tree sponsored by the Kiwanis Club and designed by Cathy Wamsley, will provide another donation to a nonprofit organization. The Kiwanis will match the purchase price by 50 percent, up to \$1,000, which will be given to the charity of the buyer's choice. So, Wamsley said, the gift of giving happens immediately.

Some people, Spomer said, purchase trees and donate them to area assisted living facilities. The joy of the season is spread beyond those who attend the event, Wamsley added.

The Family Day is Sunday, Dec. 6 from noon to 4 p.m. Organized by Soroptimist International of the Greater Hermiston Area, nearly 500 kids attended last year's festivities. A \$5 per family suggested donation includes all the activities.

People can participate in everything from decorating cookies, making ornaments and other holiday-themed crafts to writing letters to Santa and having photos taken with the jolly ol' elf. Also, stage entertainment helps set the holiday mood.

Soroptimist International promotes education and leadership to transform the lives of women and girls. Money raised from Family Day will go towards Live Your Dream education and training awards.

With a theme from the TV series "Paw Patrol," money raised from a special raffle tree will benefit the school-based dental health program through InterMountain Education Service District. Tickets are \$10 each. The drawing is at the close of Family Day.

Tickets for the auction/dinner can be purchased at the Hermiston Conference Center or the administrative offices at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St. Those unable to buy tickets are welcome to come for the auction to bid on items.

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