



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY DENISE MEDLOCK

This house on Newport Avenue has become a December landmark.

LIGHTS:

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"I was scared the whole time, but he was fine," she said.

Reasor said new and improved technology, including LED bulbs that rarely burn out and strings that aren't blacked out completely by a single burn-out, makes maintenance easier than it used to be.

Christmas decorations are always evolving and new trends pop up every season. Icicle-style lights have replaced single strands as the preferred decoration for the eaves of many homes. Inflatable figures have gained in popularity in recent years. And newer decorations springing up around Herm-

iston include glowing white snowflakes that hang from the eaves and a projector that covers a house in green and red points of light at the press of a button without having to hang a single strand.

Denise Medlock has been building up a collection of inflatables and lights too. Her house at 629 Newport Avenue has been a December landmark for years.

"Every single year I add to it," she said.

She said elements like the PVC pipe archway that lines the walkway and the net of lights blanketing the roof and sides of the house were created by hand. It takes from the day after Halloween to the day after Thanksgiving to put together, but it's worth it, she said.

"I do it all for the kids,"

she said. "When they go underneath the arch you should see their eyes light up."

Medlock said she encourages parents to let their children get out of the car, walk through the tunnel of lights and come to the door for a free candy cane.

It's fun being creative, she said, and she's already working on an idea for a flying Santa and sleigh next year. She also puts together a lighted Halloween display in October, although this year she was disappointed that heavy rains kept most trick-or-treaters away.

Medlock said she plans to light up the Christmas display from 5-9 p.m. seven days a week except in bad weather.

Families looking for one of the area's most prominent

displays may have trouble finding it this year, but it hasn't disappeared completely.

For years David and Terri Pichuskie ran a light display at their home in Stanfield that was choreographed to music broadcast over the radio. After Terri died of cancer in 2014, David put up the display last year in honor of his late wife, but this year he worked on a similar display for the SAGE Center in Boardman instead.

The agriculture-themed display at 101 Olson Road in Boardman is set to music broadcast on 106.9 FM. Canned goods for CAPECO can be dropped off in marked containers in front of the museum. The show runs from 4:30-9 p.m. through Jan. 1.

OSAA:

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competitive. After starting 5-0, including a win over new league rival Umatilla in Umatilla, the Knights finished fourth in a tough CBC that sent two teams to the 2A semifinals. In boys basketball, Irrigon has developed into a 2A power, winning last year's state title after finishing second the year before.

"Our school is not reacting negatively at all," Sheller said. "We see it as a positive challenge. We feel our school culture and our school athletics is on the upswing. We're not gonna have a victim mentality. We're viewing it as a very positive move. If the numbers want us to be in 3A, we're gonna be in 3A."

For Hermiston, the attitude is largely the same. In joining the IMC — in football only, it should be noted — the Bulldogs join Sum-

mit, Redmond, Bend, Ridgeview and Mountain View. Summit, led by junior quarterback John Bledsoe, son of Drew who runs the offense, went 12-1 this season and won the 5A state championship, including a 63-14 win over Pendleton the Round-up Grounds this season.

"It's great. We're not gonna hurt with our colley ranking anymore," Hermiston football coach David Faaeteete joked. "We're excited for the new challenge moving forward. It only makes sense. Even though we're a little closer to Portland than we are to Bend, but it's not a big deal. The OSAA makes the decisions."

"It'll be an exciting season. We're looking at it as a challenge. Let's face it: the CRC wasn't respected much around the state because it was a four-team league. The top two teams get playoff births, and there looking at us like 'Why are you here?'"

Now in the relatively

large eight-team special district, that merit cannot be questioned. As an added bonus, the IMC has boasted some of the best 5A teams in recent memory. Summit, obviously, joins Hermiston as the last two 5A champs. Ridgeview won the 4A title in 2013 and Mountain View was the 2011 5A champion.


"Those are great schools," Faaeteete said. "They've got storied tradition. It'll be fun to play and matchup with them this year."

A staple of Hermiston's football schedules in recent years has been the heavy and difficult non-conference slate. That is most likely going to change with the league portion of the slate

taking up most of if not all of the nine regular season games allowed. This, along with the financial burden of getting to the center of the state for league games, likely eliminates the recent matchups of Coeur d'Alene and Lewiston, two Idaho powers which Hermiston has shared recent home-and-home series with.

Faaeteete, though, isn't worried about the financial burden. It wasn't so long ago that Hermiston was a full-time member of the IMC.

"I know its gonna be a little harder financially because of the travel," he said. "It's just the cost of logistics. But the community's great in terms of supporting its athletics."



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Drought and water hot topics at Farm Fair

Farm Fair seminars focus on making most of limited moisture

By **GEORGE PAVEN**
Staff Writer

With drought weighing heavy on the minds of Eastern Oregon farmers, the seminars at the Hermiston Farm Fair last week included plenty of talk about how to deal with the limited moisture.

Not only does the hot, dry weather impact the plants themselves, but it can also have an effect on managing weeds and maintaining healthy soils. Presentations on reduced tillage, cover crops and herbicide treatments gave farmers a glimpse at ways they can potentially improve their operations.

Silvia Rondon, one of

several event organizers with Oregon State University, said she expected 500-550 people attended the three-day Farm Fair, which ran through Friday afternoon at the Hermiston Conference Center.

Despite snow and ice Wednesday, Rondon said they had a full house for the opening seminars on potato production. Thursday switched gears to more dry-land crops like wheat and canola, along with a general session that highlighted issues in water quality and increased irrigation.

Stewart Wuest, soil scientist with the Columbia Plateau Conservation Research Center in Pendleton — part of the federal Agricultural Research Service — provided an update on their experiments with reduced-till farming, which he is optimistic will help growers keep more water in the soil while cutting down on erosion.

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