

Hermiston senior center to move downtown

Hermiston's new senior center will be located downtown after the city council voted Monday night to change its preferred location.

The council had originally voted to locate the planned \$2 million Harkenrider Center on Northeast Fourth Street behind Wal-Mart. But when the owners of the property declined a \$200,000 offer for the land. City staff asked the council to approve Plan B to build the center behind the Hermiston Public Library.

The site would span the parking lot behind the library, the current stretch of Ridgeway Avenue that loops around behind the library, as well as a one-acre parcel of Hermiston School District property where Armand Larive Middle School once stood.

Perry Hawkins, a senior center volunteer who serves on the advisory board for the project, took the city to task during the public testimony portion of Monday's meeting.

Hawkins accused the city of taking over the project and forcing the seniors to accept the building layout, location and Harkenrider name. He said the Ridgeway site wouldn't allow for expansion and that the process had been hijacked by downtown businesses. He also accused

Mayor David Drotzmann of ignoring input from the seniors during a meeting about the move.

Drotzmann denied the accusation, saying the message he received from the seniors was that the Harkenrider name was acceptable. The move, he said, was necessary because the land the senior center is on was sold to the school district as part of a deal to build a new fair and rodeo grounds. When a private fundraising effort by the seniors to build a new center came up short, the city stepped in to help obtain the money needed for a new facility.

After his turn at the microphone, Hawkins took his seat in the back row of the council chambers, but as public testimony continued he repeated to those around him that Drotzmann was a liar. The mayor insisted that Hawkins stop calling him that, and Hawkins insisted it was true. Drotzmann tried to bring the meeting back to order but Hawkins continued his rant and Drotzmann told him to quiet down or leave.

Hawkins said he was done listening to the "bombastic" talk from Drotzmann and stood up, continuing to exchange words with the mayor as he left the building. It wasn't the first time

residents involved with the senior center have expressed concerns with the city's involvement in the project or its plans for future use.

The \$2 million Community Development Block Grant the city obtained on behalf of the senior center board requires the building be used solely for activities for senior citizens for the first five years. But after that, the city plans to use parts of the building for classes and other events.

In February during a public forum at the senior center, attendees expressed concerns that seniors' needs were being pushed aside in favor of the city's vision for a multi-use community center.

On Monday Virginia Beebe reiterated some of those points, stating that seniors aren't interested in a multi-purpose building but just need a comfortable place to socialize and share a meal. She didn't list any specific issues with the Ridgeway site.

Willard Fordice, a member of the senior center who drives the bus for other members, did take issue with the Ridgeway site, saying there was no room for expansion and that parking and access would be difficult downtown.

Those concerns are what led the advisory board and

council to originally choose the Aspen site on Fourth Street, where the 3.23 acres would have allowed for more expansion and parking than the two acres behind the library. The third choice would be to renovate the former Goodwill building on Hermiston Avenue.

Two members of the senior center advisory committee with ties to downtown spoke in favor of the new site on Ridgeway Avenue. Mary Corp, who owns Kay & Cs Art and Collectibles on Main Street, and Sally Anderson-Hansell, a Hermiston lawyer, agreed that it was the best available option now that the Aspen site had fallen through.

They had previously advocated for the Ridgeway site when the council made its initial decision in April, arguing that placing the building downtown, visible from Highway 395, would help revitalize Main Street. At that time they presented the council with a petition from downtown business owners but failed to convince a majority of the council to name the Ridgeway site as their first choice.

On Monday the council voted 5-0 in favor of pursuing the Ridgeway site, with Jackie Myers, Lori Davis and Clara Beas Fitzgerald absent.

Trailer fire displaces couple

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

A fire at the Stage Gulch RV Park in Stanfield destroyed one RV and damaged two others Monday evening.

Dean Marcum of the Stanfield Fire District said personnel on duty received a report of an explosion at the park at 8:10 p.m. and arrived shortly thereafter to find a fully engulfed RV.

The trailers on either side sustained significant damage, he said, but were probably still "livable."

Marcum said the man and woman who lived in the fully engulfed trailer escaped, but the woman had second degree burns on her arm that were treated on scene. The occupants from all three trailers were put up in a hotel for the night and Marcum said they were put in touch with the Red Cross. Marcum didn't identify any of the residents.

The cause of the fire is under investigation by Hermiston/Stanfield fire marshal Tom Bohm, but Marcum said the suspected cause was a gas leak.

Darlene Mosqueda, who lives across the street, said she was home Monday night when she heard a loud explosion and looked out to see her neighbor standing in the doorway of her burning RV before turning back inside, presumably to get her husband.

"I called 9-1-1," Mosqueda said. "I kept telling them that they were still in the house. I couldn't see either one of them."

After they exited the RV, Mosqueda told them the dispatcher said to move everyone away. She said she was afraid the fire would spread, because it was bringing up memories of two years ago when her own family's trailer burned down at Vista Court in Hermiston a week before Christmas.

"I was yelling at everyone to move their cars because I was afraid the gas tanks would catch on fire and the whole trailer park would go up," she said.

Mosqueda said she didn't know the couple's name, or of any efforts being made to set up an account or donation drop-off for the couple.

2015:

continued from Page A1

viewed most often online. So, here are the stories that were the most read on our website in 2015.

1 and 2). The top 2 most read stories this year were both related to a Hermiston School District teacher and coach who was placed on administrative leave while he was being investigated by the Teachers Standards and Practices Board. Jake McElligott, a middle school teacher, lost his job as coach of the Hermiston boys basketball team in August. The most-read story of the year on HermistonHerald.com was the story announcing that he was on leave and would no longer be the basketball coach. The second-most read followed a couple of days later, with background from a police report the Morrow County Sheriff's Department did when McElligott was teaching and coaching in Irrigon, which appear to have been the trigger for the state investigation. Both stories have been viewed about 9,000 times each online.

3). On a lighter note, the next story on our list was about the city of Hermiston's holiday festivities, which included cutting a hole in the

asphalt of Northeast Second Street near City Hall and "planting" a tree in the middle of the street. The novelty of the city's temporary tree stand amused readers and drew nearly 9,000 people to the story online.

4). A police pursuit that began in Morrow County ended on the outskirts of Hermiston, but not before the driver, who was wanted on outstanding warrants, posted a video to Facebook that she shot while deputies were trying to get her to pull over and stop. The edited version of the video (to remove the profanity) was viewed more than 4,300 times and the story was read on HermistonHerald.com more than 8,600 times.

5). One of the tragic stories of the sweltering-hot early summer was about 2015 Riverside High School graduate Gavin Roberts, who was the second drowning victim of

the summer on the Columbia River in Morrow County. The initial story had more than 6,220 views.

6). A Hermiston High School student's senior pictures propelled him to Internet fame after he posted them to the social media sharing site Twitter with a simple note: "So I took my senior pictures at 7-Eleven". To date, that post has been reposted more than 38,000 times and liked more than 63,600 times. Not bad for a guy who goes to school in a town with 17,000 people. His story got featured on various websites, including the Hermiston Herald's, of course. Our story was not quite as popular as Stefano Peiris' photos though. It was read about 4,500 times.

7). A homicide that still remains unsolved from March comes in at No. 7. Alonso Madrigal, 23, of Umatilla was

shot and killed near the 11th Street Market, not far from Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston. It was the first homicide in Hermiston since January of 2012, but the third shooting in the area of the year. In January another young man from Umatilla was shot during a fight at the Foxwood Apartments, also on 11th Street. In February another young man in his early 20s was shot in Umatilla. The story about the March shooting received more than 4,200 views.

8). The follow up to a crime just this month, this one the arrest of a suspect in the

armed robbery of the Center Market in Stanfield, has already been read more than 3,900 times, to earn the eighth spot on our list.

9). In April, the death of a first grade teacher at McNary Heights Elementary School in a car crash shook the communities of Umatilla, where she worked, and Hermiston, where she lived. Elisabet Flores died in a weekend car crash when her car ran off the Westland Road and hit a chain-link fence. The top rail of the fence struck Flores, who later died at Good Shepherd Medical Center. Her husband and 13-year-old

son were also in the car, but weren't injured in the crash. The story was read 3,627 times.

10). In July, the early morning execution of a search warrant on East Hurlburt Avenue in Hermiston by the Oregon State Police SWAT team drew a lot of attention and questions in the neighborhood, but didn't net the felon police were looking for in the drug raid. However, Jose Edgar Salvador Cervantes was contacted during a traffic stop several hours later and arrested. The story was viewed more than 3,470 times.

Providing the Most Advanced Digital Hearing Technology
A family run business for over 50 Years







Ruud's HEARING AID SERVICE

541-276-3155
1-800-678-3155
29 SW Dorion Pendleton
236 E Newport Hermiston
www.ruhearing.com

Keep a level head in an up-and-down market.

Amid recent market volatility, we've seen some upswings and downturns. But when the market reacts one way, it doesn't mean you should, too. The actions you take today can significantly impact your financial future. So before you alter your investment strategy, schedule a financial review. We can help you stay focused despite the market's recent disappointments and find opportunities for the long term.

Call today to schedule your financial review.

 Bob Blanc 304 S Main St Pendleton, OR 97801 541-276-6257	 Mac H Levy 244 SW Dorion Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 541-278-1600	 Ben Buchert 348 SW First St. Pendleton, OR 97801 541-278-1200
 Pam Stocker 245 E Main Suite B Hermiston, OR 97838 541-564-9734	 Kacie Levy, CFP® 204 E Main St. Hermiston, OR 97838 541-567-0390	 Casey Hunt 304 S Main St Pendleton, OR 97801 541-276-6257

www.edwardjones.com
Member SIPC

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

TOYOTATHON IS ON!

0% APR for 60 Mos. on 9 Models

'16 Corolla, '16 Camry Gas, '16 Camry Hybrid, '15 Prius Liftback, '15 Prius C, '15 Avalon Gas, '15 Avalon Hybrid, '15 Sienna, '15 RAV4

2015 RAV4
2015 SIENNA
2015 COROLLA
2016 TUNDRA

OR

Up to \$3000 Cash Back

OR

Special Leases!

TOYOTA Let's Go Places

ROGERS OF HERMISTON

Every new Toyota comes with **ToyotaCare** No Cost Service & Roadside*

ToyotaOfHermiston.com
(541) 567-6461 or 800-522-2308
Mon-Fri 8:30a-6:30p • Sat 9:00a-6:00p • Sun 10:30a - 5:30p

0% APR for 60 months available to eligible customers who finance a new, unused, or unlicensed 2016 Corolla, 2016 Camry, 2016 Camry Hybrid, 2015 Prius Liftback, 2015 Prius C, 2015 Avalon Gas, 2015 Avalon Hybrid, 2015 Sienna and 2015 RAV4 from Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc. (TMS) and Toyota Financial Services (TFS) 12/1/15 - 1/4/16. Offer may or may not include a dealer documentation fee. Vehicle ID numbers available upon request. Specific vehicles are subject to availability. You must take retail delivery from dealer stock. Special APR may not be combined with any other Customer Cash Rebates, Bonus Cash Rebates, or Lease Offers. Finance programs available on credit approval. Not all buyers will qualify for financing from Toyota Financial Services through participating dealers. Monthly payment for every \$1,000 financed is 0% - 60 months = \$16.67. See your Toyota dealer for actual pricing, annual percentage rate (APR), monthly payment, and other terms and special offers. Pricing and terms of any finance or lease transaction will be agreed upon by you and your dealer. Special offers are subject to change or termination at any time. Up to \$3,000 Customer Cash Back available on a New 2015 Avalon 12/1/15 - 1/4/16. Cannot be combined and is subject to availability. Offer may or may not include a dealer documentation fee. Cash back from Toyota Motor Sales USA, Inc. Varies by region. Does not include College Grad or Military Rebate. ToyotaCare covers normal factory scheduled service. Plan is 2 years or 25K miles, whichever comes first. The new vehicle cannot be part of a rental or commercial fleet, or a livery/taxi vehicle. See participating Toyota dealer for plan details. Valid only in the continental U.S. and Alaska. Roadside assistance does not include parts and fluids, except emergency fuel delivery.