

School clinic considers adding hours

By **JENNIFER COLTON**
Staff writer

The Wellness Center at Hermiston High School continues to thrive, according to officials from Family Health Associates and the Hermiston School District, the two partners in the project.

The Hermiston School Board of Education toured the clinic during a special board meeting Monday night. Dr. Derek Earl and clinic supervisor Tiffany Fitzmorris spoke with the board about the clinic's operations. Earl said the clinic has seen a mixture of both

students and staff. "The first week or two, it was very staff dependent, but that has transitioned," he said Monday. "As time has gone on, it's been more and more students, which is great."

The clinic has seen 359 patients since the beginning of the year. The slowest day brought in one patient; the busiest had 19. Earl said the clinic is breaking even financially, and Family Health Associates is considering expanding the hours for the 2016-17 school year.

The most common issues in the clinic have been ear

infections, sinus infections, respiratory infections, well child checks, bronchitis, concussions, sore throats and croup.

Wade Smith, deputy superintendent, said the Wellness Center is an asset to the district and has been successful.

"It's been the perfect slow, methodical rollout to make sure we were prepared," Smith said.

In other business, the school board:

- Presented the Hermiston High School wrestling team members and coaches

with certificates of excellence.

- Commended Hermiston High School band director Paul Dunsmoor for receiving an inspirational teacher award from Eastern Oregon University.

- Discussed school beginning testing for the Smarter Balanced Assessment.

- Met in a closed-door, executive session to discuss labor negotiations.

The next Hermiston School Board meeting is 6:30 p.m. April 11 at the Hermiston School District Office.

Hermiston begins capital improvement plan process

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff writer

The city of Hermiston is setting its sights on the big picture this year with the creation of a five-year capital improvement plan.

The plan will outline and prioritize the capital improvement needs for the street department, water department and wastewater department.

Assistant city manager Mark Morgan told the city council on Monday that eventually the process could be expanded to include all departments, but while the city was starting from scratch it would stick to just the public works departments.

He said having all of the city's infrastructure needs centralized into one document would help staff and the council better plan for the future.

"Ultimately, whether it's the private sector or the public, investment hates uncertainty," he said.

Morgan said the de-

partment heads, working in conjunction with city engineer Anderson Perry & Associates, would be asked to contribute to a raw list of projects that would be discussed with the city council in June.

The city's infrastructure committee would then work on paring it down to a more realistic size and prioritizing the top needs. The plan would be approved by the city council sometime in the fall, then reviewed and updated once a year.

The creation of a capital improvement plan was one of the top goals identified by the city council during its goal-setting session for 2016, and Mayor David Drotzmann said he was excited to see the process started.

"This is a phenomenal step in the right direction," he said.

He said there would likely be large dollar signs attached to the final list, but looking ahead to upcoming costs would help the city budget accordingly.

Reverence for the cross

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff writer

As hundreds of Catholics prepared to celebrate Good Friday in Hermiston, Ricardo Mendoza felt a special burden to give the day his full reverence.

The 18-year-old was portraying Jesus in the Way of the Cross pageant — a role he was stepping into for the second year in a row knowing it would be emotionally and physically draining.

"I just pray and hope and ask God to give me strength to deliver his message," Mendoza said, mixing together ingredients to form a blood-red paint that would later splatter his robes and drip down his back as the men and boys dressed as Roman soldiers whipped him with ropes.

Our Lady of Angels Cath-

olic Church puts on the pageant before hundreds of parishioners every year. They move through 14 stations, starting with the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate in the church parking lot and ending with Jesus' crucifixion and burial atop the Hermiston Butte.

Mendoza said dragging the cross, made of sturdy four-by-four beams, up the Hermiston Butte is no easy task.

"Going up the hill, it's tiring, but it's also emotionally tiring because you're getting hit and yelled at and you're thinking about what Jesus went through, and you just want to sit down and cry," he said.

STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS
Ricardo Mendoza portraying Jesus.



EOTEC project manager concerned about rodeo arena timeline

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff writer

There are concerns that the rodeo arena at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center will not be finished by the July 21, 2017 deadline.

Contractors building both the barns and rodeo arena for EOTEC will be asked to complete construction of those projects by that date. The Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo are planned for August 8-12.

But Rob Drier of Frew Development Group told the EOTEC board Friday he is concerned about having construction of the rodeo arena finished on time.

In his written report to the board he noted that they had retained local firm Michaels Design to create architectural drawings, but in January he

had notified the board's executive committee that the drawings were "insufficient" and a second architect was hired to bring the drawings up to standard.

"The rodeo arena bid documents will require every respondent to agree to complete work by July 21, 2017, but unlike the barns project, there is no guarantee that we will receive any bids, that the EOTEC Board will accept any of the bids received, or that the bidders will agree to the deadline," Drier wrote. "EOTEC should also assume that any contractor submitting a bid will increase its price if they have incomplete design documents and/or an unrealistic construction timeline."

He wrote that the schedule assumes the board receives

complete, biddable design documents for approval no later than April 22 and "we urge the board and community not to assume that the construction schedule can be compressed to make up for further delay in completing and approving the design."

Additional tasks, including construction of bath-

rooms, food booths and other amenities, posed "no significant challenges" in being completed on time, Drier said.

On Friday the EOTEC board also discussed adding a part-time financial position with the cost split evenly between EOTEC and the city of Hermiston.

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Slam Dunk the Junk on April 2

UMATILLA — Umatilla residents ready to do some spring cleaning can Slam Dunk the Junk on April 2-3.

The city's community cleanup weekend will kick off at 8:30 a.m. at city hall on Saturday, April 2 as volunteers get organized into groups and spread out across the city to help clean up properties around town.

Dumpsters will also be located around the city during the weekend for people to dump items for free, including one at the Port of Umatilla offices at 505 Willamette St., one on Eighth Street behind city hall and a scrap metal dumpster at

1205 Third St.

City manager Russ Pelleberg said the event has been an enjoyable one to volunteer for in the past and helps give people incentive to clear out their yards and spruce up Umatilla's image.

"The whole idea is to get the town cleaned up," he said.

At 12:30 p.m. volunteers will be invited to take a break and enjoy a barbecue at city hall.

To sign up to be a volunteer or to request help from a volunteer crew in getting junk removed from a property, visit city hall at 700 Sixth St. or call 541-922-3226.

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