COMMUNITY

y seeking input on public art

By JADE MCDOWELL Staff Writer

The city of Hermiston is jumping into the art world.

Consultant Rebecca Couch of Moscow, Idaho, is writing a public art plan overseen by the city's Community Enhancement Committee. The public will have opportunities to comment on elements of the plan in May, and a finalized plan is slated to come before the city council for approval in July.

Couch said her visits to Hermiston have revealed plentiful opportunities for adding more art to the public square.

"They don't have a lot of art currently, and they have a lot of public buildings that I would describe as blank slates," she said.

Hermiston does have some public art pieces, such as the clock tower and water fountain installation at McKenzie Park, but it lacks Main Street murals and other displays typical of a city its size.

While many people think of public art as statues and murals, Couch said a public art plan can help a city think outside the box with things like decorative trash cans and benches, metal etchings attached to buildings, colorful vinyl wraps around the utility boxes on street corners, decorative signage or artistically sculpted bicycle racks.

Couch said she has also spoken with the Communi-

ty Enhancement Committee about an "outdoor rotating gallery" that would install permanent plinths that could then host local artists' sculptures temporarily.

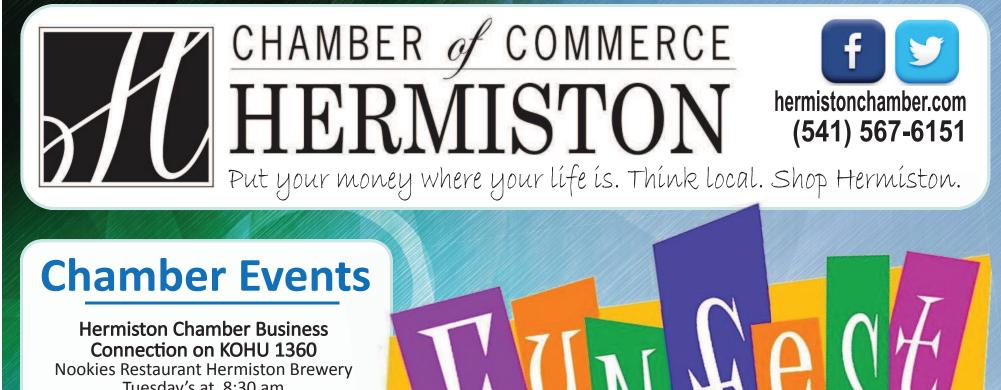
Whatever does make it into the final plan approved by the city council, Couch said the plan will be general suggestions about locations in town ripe for public art and the mediums that will best fit there.

Art would be installed as funding came available through grants and other means.

Because tastes in art tend to vary so widely (one person's "modern" is another person's "tacky"), public art projects can draw controversy.

Pendleton learned that when disagreement erupted over the proper location for a bronze statue of former Pendleton High School football coach Don Requa, and citizens in Hermiston complained so much over the design painted on the side of the water tower that it sparked an entire rebranding process for the city.

Citizens who want to comment on possible locations for public art can come to the Eastern Oregon Arts Festival reception from 6-8 p.m. on May 6 on Northeast Second Street in front of city hall, the festival from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 7 in front of city hall and during the Saturday Market at McKenzie Park in mid-May.



Monday, May 9th 3:00 pm **Conference** Center

Tuesday, May 10th 7:30 am **Conference Center**

Tuesday, May 10th 10:00am **Conference Center**

Tuesday, May 10th 11:00 am **Conference Center**

Conference Center

Tuesday, May 24th 11:45 am



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