

Hermiston Herald

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ABOUT TOWN

Hermiston taxi company out of service

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff writer

A year after the Hermiston City Council voted to open up taxi service in the city to competition, Hermiston is down to one taxi company again.

The phone number for Hermiston Transit Services was disconnected about a month ago, and a message returned via the company's Facebook page confirmed they are no longer in service.

Umatilla Cab Company, the other service picking up riders in Hermiston since the city did away with Hermiston Transit's exclusive franchise, has seen its call volume shoot up in the last few weeks, owner Sundi Marquez said.

"It's a little bit overwhelming," she said.

The company is working on adding more drivers and cars to its six-person staff to handle the increased client load, but Marquez said hiring qualified drivers and putting them through the city's background check process takes time. People in the meantime might have to wait longer than they're used to for a cab.

"We appreciate the patience while we iron out the wrinkles," she said.

She said calling ahead to arrange rides instead of saying "I have a doctor's appointment in 15 minutes" helps. She also said contrary to rumor, Hermiston Transit has not combined with Umatilla Cab Company, so she doesn't have any answers for the people who have called to ask why Hermiston Transit's dispatch line no longer works.

Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said Hermiston Transit Services still has a license from the city to operate, so if the business is no longer taking calls, it is a decision on their end.

In October, however, the city revoked Hermiston Transit's contract for the senior and disabled ride program. The program allows senior and disabled residents to purchase one-way ride tickets for \$2 apiece, which cab companies can redeem at city hall for \$6.15.

City staff at the time said Hermiston Transit broke the contract by giving a client a ride in a vehicle without proper insurance, while the cab company's staff contended the ride was a personal favor and no ticket changed hands.

Morgan said after that incident, Hermiston Transit continued to offer long-time senior and disabled clients a \$2 ride on its own dime, which caused a "significant" drop in the amount of money the city was spending to subsidize the senior and disabled ride program, still running through Umatilla Cab Company.

Taxi companies in larger cities are increasingly seeing competition from ride-sharing companies such as Uber, which uses an app to connect people needing rides with nearby drivers willing to use their own car to pick someone up in exchange for payment.

celebrando la cultura

HERMISTON CINCO DE MAYO



STAFF PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLTON

Children walk in the Hermiston Cinco de Mayo parade, Sunday in Hermiston.

HERMISTON EVENT CELEBRATES LATINO CULTURE

By JENNIFER COLTON
Staff Writer

On paper, Hermiston's population is 37 percent Hispanic, and the actual numbers could be higher. Many of those residents have called Hermiston home for two or three generations, and celebrations like Cinco de Mayo keep their history and culture alive.

"This is a very symbolic event for our community," said organizer Eddie de la Cruz. "This is an event that has gotten bigger and better every year, and we feel very privileged to have the support of the community."

Cinco de Mayo, officially on Thursday, May 5, recognizes the day the Mexican Army, outnumbered and with limited technology, defeated the French Army in 1862. Sunday, Hermiston's celebration of the holiday included a parade through downtown, a carnival, vendors, food and live entertainment across from Hermiston City Hall.

Held for almost two decades at

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STAFF PHOTO BY JENNIFER COLTON

A mariachi band plays while horses — and their riders — compete in the caballo bailando competition Sunday in front of Hermiston City Hall.

Boardman plans sizzling Cinco de Mayo event

By TAMMY MALGESINI
Community Editor

The weather is heating up and organizers of the Boardman Cinco de Mayo festival are getting ready to serve up a sizzling time this weekend.

Music, food and fun are featured during the event, which is Saturday from 4-10 p.m. at Boardman Marina Park, located off Marine Drive. Sponsored by the Morrow County Unified Recreation District, there is no admission charge for the festival.

Maria Richards, one of the event organizers, said the celebration is a little



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Folkloric dancers provide a colorful display during the 2015 Boardman Cinco de Mayo festival. This year's event is Saturday from 4-10 p.m. at Boardman Marina Park.

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