



ABOUT TOWN

Riders challenge bulls Saturday

Some of the rankst bulls will be matched up against some of the best cowboys in the Pacific Northwest this weekend during The Coastal Farm & Ranch Challenge of Champions Tour.

Presented by Bonney's Ag & Auto Repair, catch the action Saturday at 7 p.m. at the Umatilla County Fairgrounds, 515 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Tickets are \$14 in advance or \$18 at the gate. Children under 5 are admitted free. The gates open at 5:30 p.m.

Nearly three dozen bull riders will compete for cash and prizes. Riders include PBR, NFR and top circuit qualifiers, as well as collegiate and high school finalists.

Also, the public is invited to meet some of the cowboys with a live bull Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bonney's Ag & Auto, 81600 Highway 395 North, Hermiston. Also, free hot dogs and test drives are offered from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information or to buy tickets, visit www.ctbullriding.com. Tickets are also available in Hermiston at Bonney's, Tom's Country, Midway Tavern and Northwest Farm Supply.

Garbage rates going up in Hermiston

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

Hermiston residents will see their garbage rates go up in July after the Hermiston City Council approved a rate increase Monday.

The 7.81 percent increase will mean a \$1.25 per month increase for the typical 90-gallon cart service for residents.

Sanitary Disposal Inc. is a private company that handles garbage service for the city. Because it has an exclusive franchise with the city, the company comes to the city council for approval of rate increases.

Mike Jewett, owner of Sanitary Disposal, told the council that the company's last rate increase was in January 2013 and had been meant to last for two years. Now Department of Environmental Quality fees are going up by 58 cents per ton, minimum wage is set to increase significantly and inflation continues to push up costs.

"All these have great effect on our company," he said.

Mark Morgan, assistant city manager, said the rate increase received a thorough vetting from the city's solid waste subcommittee and Sanitary Disposal agreed to a slightly lower increase plus an independent third-party review of rates in the future. He also said the increase included a .5 percent increase in the company's franchise fee it pays to the city. The approximately \$10,000 generated by the increase will be put toward nuisance abatement and city clean-up events.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Construction is completed on the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center's first building, which opens to the public Friday, May 13.

BIG STEP FOR EOTEC

PUBLIC CAN TOUR THE EVENT BUILDING ON FRIDAY DURING OPEN HOUSE

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

Decades after the idea of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center first took shape, the project will hit a major milestone Friday when its first building opens to the public.

"It's a huge step," said Byron Smith, EOTEC board president.

The step is one of many in a journey that started as early as the 1960s, when city leaders first discussed the idea of moving the Umatilla County fairgrounds to the outskirts of the city of Hermiston. In 1984 the city purchased 75 acres of land south of the Hermiston Municipal Airport with that purpose in mind.

In 2012 the idea became a reality. In March of that year, Hermiston and Umatilla County signed an intergovernmental agreement forming the EOTEC authority. In April the Hermiston School District purchased the fairgrounds in the center of town, adding \$3 million to the \$7.4 million in state lottery funds to get the project rolling. And that August the city of Hermiston transferred the land on Airport Way to the EOTEC authority.

In December 2014, after two years of planning and design work, a groundbreaking ceremony heralded the official start to construction.

Now the first component of EOTEC — a 25,500 square-foot exhibitor and event center — is complete, opening to the public on Friday, May 13. When the entire project is finished in 2017 it will be set up to host fairs, rodeos, equestrian events, concerts, conventions, trade shows and more.

"This gives us another facility that can be a tremendous regional attrac-



HERALD FILE PHOTO

Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center officials, including the late Chester Prior, then vice chairman of the EOTC board, and then-Chairman Ed Brookshier listen as Frew Development Group owner John Frew speaks during the December 2014 groundbreaking ceremony for EOTEC, which will be open its first building to the public for the first time on Friday.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

See EOTEC, A14 The event center building at EOTEC will get its public unveiling with ceremonies on Friday, May 13.

Debit card numbers stolen

Police receive reports of money withdrawn

By JENNIFER COLTON
Staff Writer

About a dozen local residents have reported debit card fraud this week in Hermiston, according to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston.

In many cases, a Hermiston resident's debit card number has been used to withdraw money from an ATM in Portland, Clackamas or Lake Oswego. Edmiston said HPD has not seen evidence of a physical card has been stolen.

The recent fraud cases are not limited to one financial institution: Fraud has been reported by users of at least four different banks or credit unions.

"We are seeing some fraud in the Hermiston area. It's not limited to Hermiston, and it's not limited to Banner Bank," said Kelly McPhee, communications manager for Banner Bank. "Because it's so early, there's a lot of details we don't have. We know it did not originate from the bank, but we are working with local law enforcement. We are doing everything we can on our end, behind the scenes."

McPhee recommends fraud victims — or any customers concerned they might have been a victim of fraud — contact the bank as soon as they find a fraudulent charge.

"Immediately pick up the phone and call us. Notify us. We can get into the account and take a look at it, we can go through the most recent transactions and start that

conversation. We'll determine if we need to freeze that debit card number and issue you a new card," McPhee said.

Most banks provide provisional credit while the fraud is investigated. Edmiston also recommends checking a bank account and contacting the bank immediately if there is any suspicious activity.

"Where the majority of the criminal activity (actual transaction of money) is outside our service area, our department is taking information reports," Edmiston said, adding people can minimize their risks by keeping personal information personal and reporting suspicious activity as soon as possible. "People just need to be vigilant of their account information and report immediately to their bank if something is amiss."