



ENERGY SERVICES RECOMMENDS NEW SUBSTATION



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Electrical equipment at a substation near the Umatilla Electric Cooperative office on West Elm Avenue helps supply power to Umatilla Electric and Hermiston Energy Service. HES wants to build a new substation in the city to improve the reliability of electrical service and reduce downtime when power outages occur.

NEW FACILITY COULD IMPROVE POWER RELIABILITY IN THE CITY

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

Hermiston Energy Services is recommending a rate increase and bond refinance to pay for projects that should decrease the number of power outages in Hermiston.

HES superintendent Nate Rivera told the city council Monday night that the city's electric utility was in need of several upgrades, including a new substation and smart meters.

After two power outages so far this month, city councilors were inclined to agree.

"I think people are willing to pay for less outages," John Kirwan said.

The first major project would be a new substation called Hermiston East, which would cover territory east of Highway 395 that is currently covered by the Butte and Feedville substations. The project would include a new transformer and new feeders, taking the load off of some of Hermiston's other feeders that are at more than 90 percent capacity during peak load times.

Rivera said the new substation would reduce outages and would also free up capacity for people to be switched from one substation to another while crews were working to restore power.

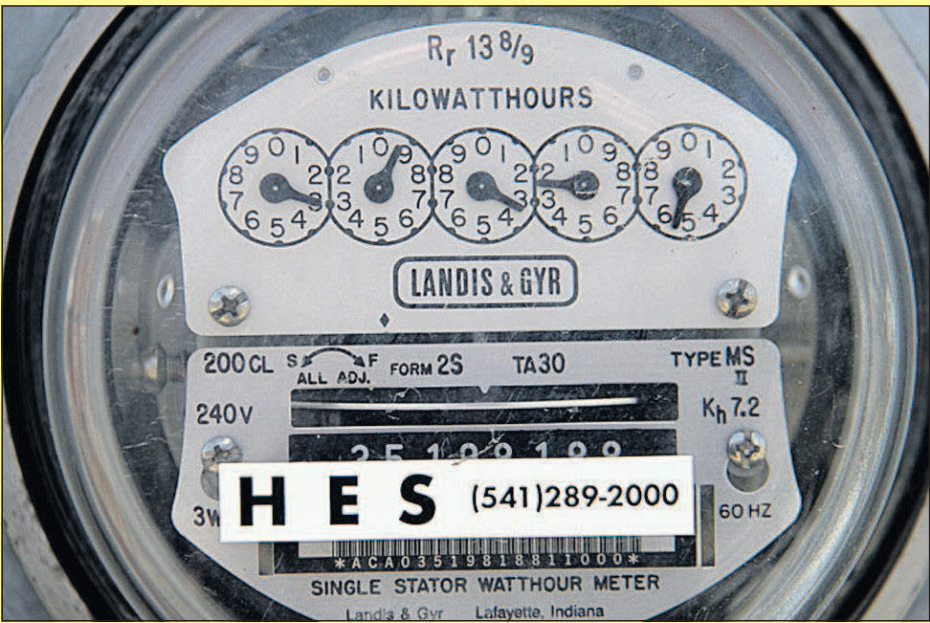
"This would minimize the size of the outage and get people back up faster," he said.

The project would cost an estimated \$985,000 and be completed during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Rivera also recommended other maintenance projects, including pole replacements, a switch to LED street lights, sectionalizing the system to reduce the spread of outages and a more proactive tree trimming program.

"Typically the outages we see are wind and tree related, so the more aggressive we can be about that, the better," Rivera said.

He also recommended the adoption

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STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

An analog electrical meter measures power use on a local business for Hermiston Energy Services. HES wants to add new smart meters that will show when power outages occur and can also show utility customers when their peak power usage times occur.



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Electrical equipment is stored on the Umatilla Electric Cooperative yard on West Elm Avenue in Hermiston.



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Electrical lines lead into and out of the substation on Elm Avenue near the intersection with Northwest 7th Street in Hermiston. Hermiston Energy Services wants to add a new substation in the city.

Survey indicates 63 percent support for school bond

A survey by Hermiston School District indicates a majority of residents are in support of the district going out for a \$104 million bond next year.

The survey showed 63 percent of respondents rated the bond idea favorably after being told that it would include substantial security upgrades and reduce overcrowding in schools. More than half of them voted in at least three of the four past elections.

The results also showed that most community members agreed that the most urgent priorities for the district were replacement of Rocky Heights and Highland Hills elementary schools, construction of an additional elementary school and expansion of Hermiston High School.

When asked to choose between a \$104 million package or an \$84 million one that would not replace Highland Hills, 37 percent preferred the \$104 million bond while 26 percent preferred the \$84 million. The rest preferred no bond or another option.

Dr. Fred Maiocco, superintendent, said in a statement that the district would continue to share more about the district's challenges with growing enrollment throughout the summer and fall.

"This initial survey result is very favorable and indicates the community recognizes the challenges that come with student enrollment growth," he said.

Hermiston's second student-built home up for sale

Hermiston's second student-built home is up for sale.

The home was built by Hermiston, Umatilla and Stanfield high school students — mentored by local industry professionals — as part of the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilders Program.

It is being shown by Natalie Turner of Universal Realty. Appointments for viewing can be scheduled by contacting Turner at 541-922-8861.

The 2,295-square-foot house is known as Fieldstone #2 and is located on the West Angus Court cul-de-sac behind Armand Larive Middle School. It includes three bedrooms and two bathrooms, plus an office/den that could be converted into a fourth bedroom. It exceeds Energy Trust of Oregon standards for energy efficiency.

For a full list of the house's amenities, visit hermiston.k12.or.us. Members of the public who are curious about the home but not necessarily interested in purchasing it are invited to an open house June 3 from 1-6 p.m. where the student builders will be available for questions.

Smoke causes motorcycle crashes on I-82



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

Motorcycle debris lie scattered across the road in the aftermath of a crash on Interstate 82 Monday morning.

By JADE McDOWELL
and PHIL WRIGHT
STAFF WRITERS

A large, fast-moving brush fire swept across the Umatilla Chemical Depot west of Hermiston Monday morning, burning two buildings and causing a multi-vehicle wreck on Interstate 82 that injured four people and closed the freeway.

Fire departments from around the region responded and worked into the afternoon to knock down the fire, which burned over the top of the hundreds of cement igloos that once held munitions. Two buildings also were destroyed in the blaze.

Smoke from the fire limited visibility, causing a crash involving four motorcycles, a Mini Cooper, an SUV and

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