

## BASKETBALL:

continued from Page A1

"You never really lose it, that's for sure. I played in college and that's what I was known for, and as you get older you don't get as high off the ground as you used to, that's why I don't enter the dunk contest," he laughed.

Six competitors took the court to go for the 3-point contest, with the top two advancing to the championship. As the defending champion, Paola was the last to go of the group. The first three competitors made a combined nine 3-pointers, before Brandon Castro found a rhythm and sank 11 on 24 shots (46 percent) to set the tone. Tim Cave then followed up Castro's performance with nine 3s, which meant Paola would need to hit 10 shots to advance to the finals.

Once the clock started, Paola's experience in the event showed as the 45-year-old started out at a steady pace with his smooth jump shot as to not tire him as easily. After making two of his first seven shots, Paola found a groove and sank seven of his next eight attempts to tie him with Cave before swishing two more home to advance to the finals with 11 makes on 21 total shot attempts (52 percent).

In the finals Castro was the first to shoot and he



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

**Cardell Jones goes up for a shot as Krieg Mueller defends Sunday in the championship game of the Takin' it to the Streets elite division of the three-on-three basketball tournament.**

jumped out to a quicker pace that forced several missed shots early and resulted in just two makes out of 12 shots in the first 30 seconds. Castro rebounded a little in the latter half of his round with five makes on 12 shots to finish with seven.

Seeing that mark, Paola

said he wasn't too focused on the number as much as just finding a rhythm and shooting like he knew how.

"I'm 45 and been doing it a long time and you can tell when the kids get in the finals and they tense up a little bit," Paola said. "You just have to go out there and



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

**Keegan Crafton, of Hermiston, won Saturday's slam dunk competition during the 3-on-3 basketball tournament on Main Street.**

relax and pretend nobody is there just like you're in the gym shooting with a friend or something because when you're tensing up everything is short. It helps a lot and makes me calm down to not think too much."

And calm he was. He took the court one more time in the finals just as smooth and relaxed as he was in Round 1, sinking five 3-pointers in the first 30 seconds of the round. As time ticked down, he swished home his sixth, seventh, and eighth made shots

to clinch the title, resulting in a big cheer and numerous high-fives from the several hundred people that had gathered around to watch.

In the slam dunk contest, Hermiston native Keegan Crafton took home the championship in a rather anti-climactic competition with two dunks that garnered some big cheers from the crowd.

Crafton, a 2015 Hermiston graduate, misfired on his first attempt of the first round, but followed up with a big up-

and-under reverse dunk that drew a near-perfect score of 28 from the three judges. The only other competitor to slam home a dunk was one that went by the name 'Miguel' with a 24 score that sent him to the finals by default.

In the finals, 'Miguel' went for success over flash by throwing down a two-hand straight-on dunk that garnered a score of 25. That brought Crafton back to the court, and the crowd instantly was behind the hometown guy.

Crafton started from the left wing, tossed the ball in the air to cause a big bounce and then proceeded to grab the ball at its highest point and throw down a vicious two-hand dunk to send the crowd into a roaring cheer. The dunk received a perfect 30 score from the judges to claim the victory.

"There was no planning in that at all," Crafton said with a wide grin. "I had no idea what I was going to do, I just thought it up there on the court."

It's the second time that Crafton has won the event, after he claimed victory in 2014, and he says he loves coming back for the event each year.

"It's absolutely exhilarating," he said. "I love every minute of this."

Crafton and Paola each received Takin' it to the Streets Nike dri-fit shirts and basketball shorts for winning the events.

## FIRE:

continued from Page A1

at \$100,000.

"This is kind of ridiculous," fire board member Mike Hawman said in response to the proposed figure.

The city proposed the second and third years' rent be \$65,000, the fourth year's rent be \$30,000 and succeeding annual rent be \$1 a year after that until 2115, when the term of the lease would end.

Board members and Fire Chief Scott Stanton all conceded they need a lease agreement with the city, but there was no way they could afford the proposed 9,999,900 percent increase. The board voted to allow Chief Stanton to enter into negotiations with the city for a more affordable lease price. Stanton said he was confident they could find "middle ground for what would be fair."

Mark Morgan, Hermiston's assistant city manager, said the lease agreement is a conversation the city and the fire district have been having for a couple of years.

Under Oregon law there

is a property tax cap of \$10 per \$1,000 assessed value. With the new fire district tax rate passed by voters in the spring, increasing from \$1.25 per \$1,000 to \$1.75, the city of Hermiston will lose \$130,000 in revenue to the fire district.

"We know it would be ridiculous to charge (the fire district) \$130,000 a year (to lease the building)," Morgan said. "We're not trying to bend them over the barrel." Morgan indicated it was more of a starting point for discussion. He said there have also been conversations to spread the amount out over seven or eight years to lower the payments.

Stanton also updated the board on bond projects, including equipment replacement priorities for this year. The top priority this year is

making upgrades to Station 22 on Diagonal Road to make it suitable for 24-hour staffing. Upgrades needed include phone, speakers, computers and other information technology-related projects. Stanton said the IMESD is already working on the upgrades.

Other priorities for the year are purchasing six to eight new sets of personal protective equipment and a new Type Six fire engine. Type Six fire engines are usually built on a pickup truck frame and can better respond to areas where a traditional engine might struggle. These engines are a good fit for fighting grass fires because they can pump water while driving, where most traditional engines must be in park.

The district also wants

to purchase four new cardiac monitors and a new patient transport ambulance. Transport ambulances are usually smaller and quicker vehicles than a traditional ambulance. Decreasing response times is a priority for the new fire district.

With all the proposed updates and purchases, Stanton said the district plans to hold off spending significant money until the tax revenue is received by the district in November.

The process of hiring six full-time firefighter para-

medics will begin this fall with the goal of fully staffing the Diagonal Road station by March 1, 2017. The

next fire board meeting will be at 7 p.m. Aug. 10 at Station 23 on Westland Road.

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