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Wildhorse Foundation announces grant allocations

Hermiston Herald
The Wildhorse Foundation recently announced its third quarter grants, in which \$210,896.91 was disbursed to 30 recipients — including a maximum allocation to Windy River Elementary School in Boardman.

The school will purchase new equipment and instruments as well as repair instruments for its beginning band program. This is the first grant Windy River has received from the Wildhorse Foundation.

Other local entities receiving grants include:

Hermiston Warming Station, \$8,000 for operating expenses; and Umatilla-Morrow County Head Start in Hermiston, \$10,000 to purchase a Toyota Corolla to be used by the Healthy Family home visiting staff.

The foundation manages a community benefit fund established by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The board considers quarterly grant applications in the areas of public health and safety, education, the arts, historic preservation, gambling addiction services, salmon restoration, environmental protection and cultural activities. The next application deadline is Jan. 1.

For more information, visit www.thewildhorsefoundation.com or contact Tiah DeGroff at 541-966-1628 or tiah.degroff@wildhorseresort.com.

WINTER FESTIVAL PROVIDES

Downtown fun

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

A 32 foot spruce tree draped in 5,000 LED lights is the centerpiece of Hermiston's Winter Festival downtown.

The festival kicked off last Thursday with a tree-lighting ceremony and visit from Santa Claus, but a regular light show and four more nights of live entertainment are on the calendar between now and Christmas.

Some downtown business are also featuring extended hours during the festival, including special deals for Men's Night on Dec. 15, which follows Ladies Night that took place on Dec. 1. Country musician Zac Grooms will perform from 6-8 p.m. that night at the stage next to the tree on Northeast Second Street next to the former RoeMark's building, now owned by Simmons Insurance Group.

Hermiston Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter said when the tree went up that the event, in its second year, has served as a "dress rehearsal" for the city's planned festival street.

The first phase of the festival street will cover Northeast Second Street between Gladys Avenue and Main Street, converting it into a pedestrian-friendly, curbside area with decorative brickwork, landscaping and other features. The street would feature gates to close it to traffic during activities like the Winter Festival or Eastern Oregon Arts Festival. Construction is expected to start in the summer of 2017.

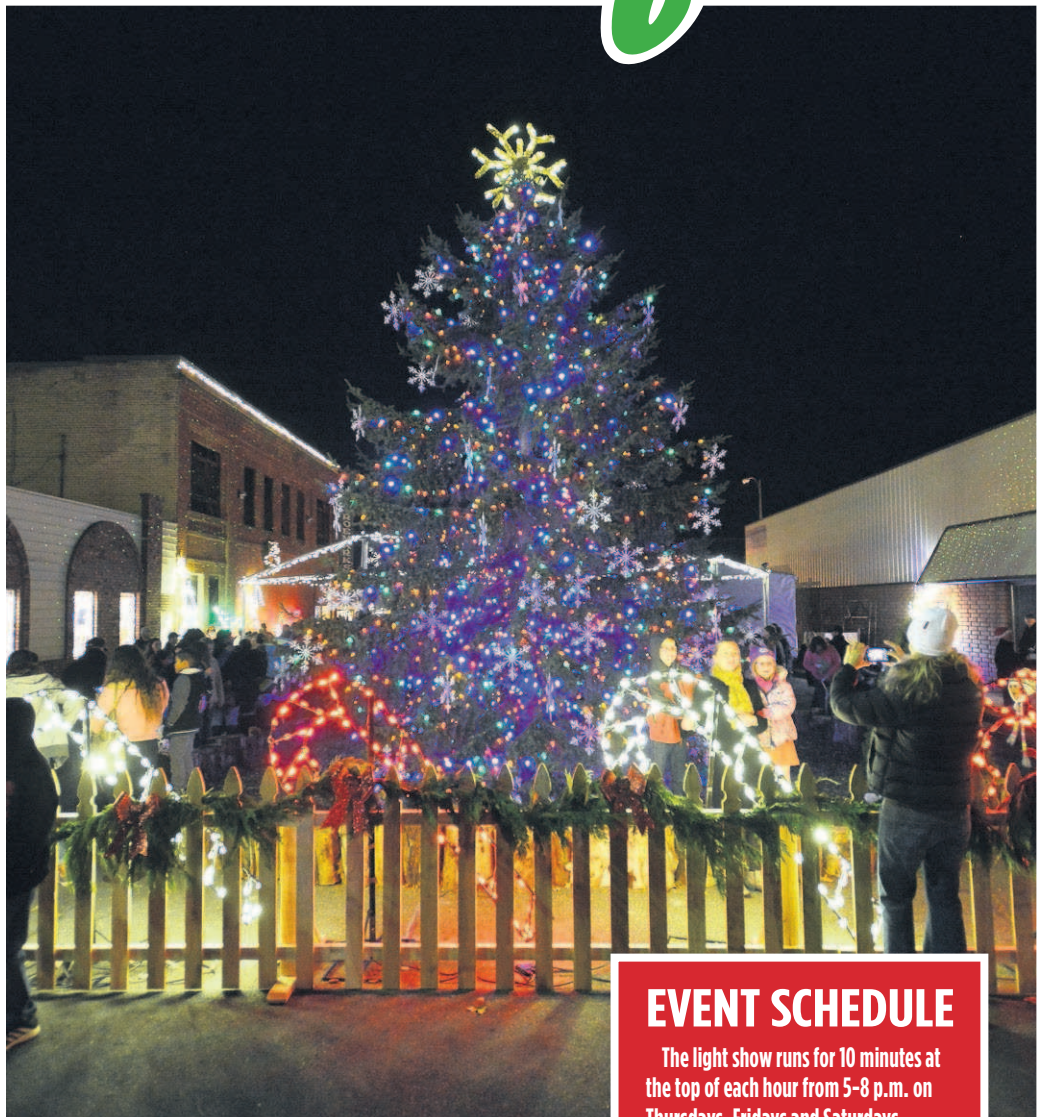
During last Thursday's tree lighting event, hundreds of people flocked downtown to enjoy the business deals, food vendors, cookie decorating booth, fire and a performance by Hermiston-grown band BBPD.

"Isn't this a great event?" Mayor David Drotzmann asked the crowd to cheer. "How awesome is this?"

He said the city was excited to bring life and vitality to the downtown area during the holiday season. The Parks and Recreation Department put up a tree and light show last year, but after its inaugural run, Drotzmann said, they listened to feedback that it needed to be more impressive.

"This year we made sure to put more lights," he said.

The festival area, located on the corner of Main Street and Southeast Second Street, will feature a light show and live music each Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening starting at 5 p.m. until Christmas.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Five thousand LED Christmas lights illuminate the 32-foot tall spruce tree that is the centerpiece of the Winter Festival in Hermiston.

EVENT SCHEDULE

The light show runs for 10 minutes at the top of each hour from 5-8 p.m. on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.
Dec. 9 Hermiston Jazz Band and Choir 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Dec. 15 Zac Grooms 6-8 p.m. and Men's Night downtown
Dec. 16 Severe Family 6-8 p.m.
Dec. 23 6-8 p.m. To Be Announced



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

People gather around a fire pit to warm their hands Thursday during the Winter Festival in Hermiston.

See **LIGHTS, A7**

Farm Fair expands in 43rd year



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Juan Salamanca, left, and Antonio Echeverria, both of Hermiston, look at the front bucket on a Case tractor Wednesday at the Hermiston Farm Fair.

More space at EOTEC means more seminars, vendors

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
Staff Writer

The 43rd annual Hermiston Farm Fair debuted last week at its new home at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center with a series of lectures on potato research in the Columbia Basin. And despite setting out more than 200 chairs in two meeting rooms, space was still limited to standing-room only.

It is a testament to how much the event and trade show has grown over the decades.

See **FAIR, A7**



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