



Hermiston Herald

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BRIEFLY

Winter storm warning issued

Hermiston Herald

The National Weather Service in Pendleton has issued a winter storm warning for all of Eastern Oregon this week, forecasting "significant" snow today.

A wet Pacific storm system is expected to move through the region beginning this afternoon, bringing 4-8 inches of snow to lower elevations — including Hermiston — through the night.

Temperatures are expected to stay below freezing all week, with overnight lows in the single digits.

The weather service warns that area roadways will be covered and slick. Less-traveled side roads could become impassable.

Updated forecasts from the NWS office can be found online at <http://www.wrh.noaa.gov/pdt/>.

Harbor Freight opens Dec. 20

Hermiston's new Harbor Freight Tools will be opening its doors in time for some Christmas shopping.

The store at 1810 N 1st Street (the former Office Max location) will open Tuesday, Dec. 20. It will employ 35-40 people. Eric Smidt, president of Harbor Freight Tools, said in a written statement that the company is "thrilled" to be opening in Hermiston and had received a warm welcome to the community.

"At Harbor Freight, we're all about delivering high quality tools at ridiculously low prices," he said.

Smidt said the company does that by cutting out the "middle man" and selling tools directly from the same factories as more expensive brands. The company has also invested millions of dollars in test labs to ensure quality.

Harbor Freight Tools has more than 700 locations and Hermiston will be its 16th in Oregon. The store stocks over 7,000 different tools including automotive, air, power, shop and hand tools. Additional information can be found online at harborfreight.com.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Richard Scarlett and Wanda Hunt (as Santa and Mrs. Claus) and Helen McAfee, an elf, dance Tuesday morning to the singing of "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" by members of the Hermiston High School choir and residents of Brookdale Hermiston.

Area residents spread holiday cheer

By TAMMY MALGESINI

Community Editor

'Tis the season when the jolly ol' elf is busy preparing for his yearly jaunt around the world.

Santa's load is made a little lighter thanks to a Stanfield woman, a Hat Rock couple and a Hermiston woman. Polly Van De Brake is in her 15th year of refurbishing stuffed animals for the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express. Richard Scarlett and Wanda Hunt are donning their Santa and Mrs. Claus wardrobes to spread Christmas joy for the 11th year. And, Helen McAfee is in her second season as an elf.

While living in Oklahoma, Scarlett and Hunt, who are now both 66, were inspired to personify Santa and Mrs. Claus after watching an elderly neighbor enjoy doing it so much.

"I said, 'I just love what you do, going out and spreading cheer. When you pass, you need to will us your costume,'" Hunt recalls telling the then-octogenarian.

Hunt laughs as she recalls the woman, who is now 95, telling them to get their own costumes because she planned on living until she was 100. After the couple moved back to Eastern Oregon, their former neighbor purchased a Santa costume for \$50 at a Goodwill and mailed it to Scarlett for his birthday.

Scarlett donned the thrift store outfit that first year and Hunt wore a spectacular dress



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Polly Van De Brake of Stanfield is surrounded by a few of the 500 stuffed animals she refurbished for the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express.

See CHEER, A14

\$104M elementary school bond going to vote

By JADE MCDOWELL

Staff Writer

The power to build new schools will officially be in Hermiston voters' hands during the May 2017 election.

On Monday, the Hermiston School District board unanimously adopted a resolution placing a \$104 million capital construction bond on the ballot.

The bond money would go toward a new elementary school off Theater Lane, replacement of Rocky Heights Elementary, replacement of Highland Hills Elementary, renovations at Sandstone Middle School and an expansion of Hermiston High School that would bring its capacity from 1,600 students to 2,000.

It would add 90 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value to local property taxes,



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Juan Delgado, a grounds maintenance employee for Hermiston School District, mops up water from a floor at Hermiston High School on Thursday, Dec. 8, after a water break at the school. Because of the leak, school was dismissed early on Thursday and there were no classes at Hermiston High on Friday.

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