

# Hermiston Herald

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## GETTING THE STORY

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## BRIEFLY

## Hermiston chamber seeks award nominations

The 47th Annual Distinguished Citizens Awards Banquet is just around the corner in Hermiston.

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for man and woman of the year, Community Service Merit and Fire Service awards. The nominations are due by Monday, Jan. 2. Nomination and criteria forms are available at the chamber office, 415 S. Highway 395, or at [www.hermistonchamber.com](http://www.hermistonchamber.com).

Others awards that will be presented include the Altrusan Outstanding Young Citizen Award, Hermiston School District educators and administrator of the year; and the Hermiston Rotary Club will present the business of the year.

The banquet is Wednesday, Feb. 1 at 6 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be ordered at [www.hermistonchamber.com](http://www.hermistonchamber.com) or by calling 541-567-6151.

# Cheer

Pancakes with Santa serves up holiday



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Erya Blankenship, 4, gestures and makes faces to get Vanessa Ambriz and Kellie Zepeda to smile while her mother, Xiaofeng Chen, takes a photo Saturday during Pancakes with Santa at the Hermiston Conference Center.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Justin, 5, and Ryan, 10, wait while their mother, Tiffany Rettkowski, says goodbye to friends Saturday during Pancakes with Santa at the Hermiston Conference Center.

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
Community Editor

**D**espite temperatures dipping into single digits and below, the Hermiston Conference Center spread warmth and holiday cheer during Saturday's Pancakes with Santa.

New to town, Karen and Russell Seaton enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with others in the community. The couple, who moved to Hermiston from Eugene this past summer, said it was a great family event.

Presented by Hermiston Parks & Recreation, Pancakes with Santa, which pre-sold 150 tickets, is in its second year. Doug Barak, past president of the Hermiston Noon Kiwanis Club, said the service group is always looking for opportunities to serve kids in the community. More than a dozen Kiwanians took a break from selling Christmas trees outside the conference center to help coordinate activities.

"It's a fun event and creates some great memories," Barak said.

The Seatons agreed. They especially liked the focus on kids and families being together. Reserved tables of eight were arranged around the room. Key Club members — a student-run service program sponsored by the Kiwanis — from Hermiston and Umatilla high schools offered coffee and orange juice, and cleared tables to make space for kids to enjoy craft activities.

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## Community Fellowship Dinner

In the spirit of giving, the public is invited to a free holiday meal on Christmas Day.

The last Community Fellowship Dinner of the season is Sunday from 12:30-3:30 p.m. at the Hermiston Senior Center, 435 W. Orchard Ave., located on the former Umatilla County Fairgrounds. In addition to the on-site meal, delivery service and to-go meals can

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## Snow days push back Hermiston graduation, last day of school

Hermiston High School's 2017 graduation date will be moved back a week in order to accommodate snow days.

Commencement ceremonies will now be on June 10 instead of June 3, giving Hermiston School District room to make up day for snow days Friday, Dec. 9, Thursday, Dec. 15, and Friday, Dec. 16, and for up to two additional days as needed.

If no more school days are canceled due to inclement weather, students' last day will be Friday, June 9, and teachers' last day will be Monday, June 10.

According to a news release, seniors would not meet state standards for the "instructional hour minimum" before graduation

without the added days.

"We understand that changing the graduation date and extending the school year is challenging for everyone involved," Superintendent Fred Maiocco said in a statement. "However, we believe this decision is in the best interest of our entire community. We remain hopeful that with six months advance notification everyone will be able to respond flexibly to this difficult situation."

The district did not leave any room for make-up days in the 2016-2017 calendar and the Oregon Department of Education no longer gives an allowance for inclement weather in meeting minimum instructional hour requirements for students.



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Snow covers the base of the Hermiston butte on Tuesday, Dec. 20. Snowfall so far in December has led Hermiston School District to cancel three days of school and push back graduation by a week in June.



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