

Herald Business

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Stanfield farmer wins yield contests for corn, wheat

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
Staff Writer

A Stanfield mint grower recently won top honors at two separate contests designed to boost wheat and corn yields.

Dan Mills, of Mills Mint Farm, took first place in Oregon as well as nationwide at the first National Wheat Yield Contest in the irrigated spring wheat category. The contest was organized by the National Wheat Foundation, based in Washington, D.C.



Dan Mills

One week later, it was announced that Mills also took first place for Oregon at the National Corn Growers Association's Corn Yield Contest in the irrigated division.

Though Mills grows primarily spearmint and peppermint on the family's 3,000-acre farm, he said they use both wheat and corn as rotational crops. Mills credited the region's environment,

as well as advances in precision irrigation technology, for his wins.

"With our climate and our soil, we produce some of the highest yields in the country," Mills said.

Mills yield nearly 320 bushels per acre of corn using a variety developed by DuPont Pioneer. As for wheat, Mills used a variety by WestBred, owned by Monsanto, which yielded an average of 146.5 bushels per acre. The average yield for irrigated wheat in Oregon in 2013 was approximately 102 bushels per acre, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

In addition to the natural growing environment, Mills said he works with IRZ Consulting in Hermiston to use real-time soil moisture monitors, which helps the farm to irrigate using exactly the right amount of water.

"We've tried to use new technology, and our yields have gotten better and better," he said.

More than 170 farmers participated in the National Wheat Yield Contest, which included categories for spring, winter, irrigated and dryland wheat. The winners are determined based on yield increase over county averages.

The National Corn Yield Contest has divisions for irrigated, non-irrigated and no-till or strip-tilled corn. There were 343 state titles awarded this year, including Mills.

Mills said the contests do provide a benchmark to shoot for future yields.

"I would suspect a lot of growers in this area have comparable yields," he said. "It's mostly about testing varieties to see where you're at."

Healthy Families rides away with Wildhorse grant

Hermiston Herald

Nearly 100 Healthy Families home visits a week will include safe rides — thanks to a grant from the Wildhorse Foundation.

The Umatilla Morrow Head Start Inc. program received \$10,000 to purchase a new vehicle, which will be used to better serve high risk families and children in the area.

Maureen McGrath, executive director, said the home visits are part of the program's comprehensive effort to better equip families for their most important role in life — parenthood.

"We all know that children don't come with a handbook, and these home visits prepare parents in a way that sets children on a positive course for growth and development," said di-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY KERRY TASSIE

The Healthy Families program of Umatilla Morrow Head Start Inc. received a Wildhorse Foundation grant, which was used to purchase a vehicle to provide home visits.

rector Erin Richards, who leads many of the parent education and support initiatives for Head Start.

The positive ripple effect of Wildhorse's contribution to Head Start didn't end

there. When Rogers Toyota of Hermiston was contacted by Head Start to make a purchase, they offered a vehicle significantly below listing price to ensure the highest return on the investment, McGrath said. This is a wonderful example, she said, of two successful and generous local entities giving back to help the communities they serve.

"Our community is so generous when it comes to supporting children and families and UMCHS is truly honored to have such altruistic partners," McGrath said.

For more information on how to access services, partner with or make a donation to Head Start programs, contact Samantha Shaw at sshaw@umchs.org, 541-564-6878 or visit www.umchs.org.

Nookie's celebrates new catering facility

A grand-opening and ribbon-cutting event is planned for a new catering facility at Hermiston Brewing Co./Nookie's Restaurant.

The public is invited to help celebrate Friday at noon at 125 N. First St., Hermiston.

For more information, call 541-289-7414.

Boardman to celebrate community

A night of food, fun and casino games is featured during the Boardman Chamber of Commerce Community Awards Banquet.

The Greek-style event is Friday, Feb. 10 at 6 p.m. at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Center, 2 Marine

Drive, Boardman. Tickets are \$35 each.

For more information or to reserve a ticket, contact 541-481-3014, kymberli@boardmanchamber.org or stop by the chamber office at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman.

STUDENT OF THE WEEK



Justin Maret

UMATILLA HIGH SCHOOL

Justin is a leader on the football field and basketball court, as well as within the school. He serves on the ASB team and is a member of the robotics team, as well as other clubs. Justin is always polite and considerate. He is well liked by staff and students. He shows integrity in all that he does. Justin pushes himself by taking challenging courses and is ranked in the top 20% of his class.

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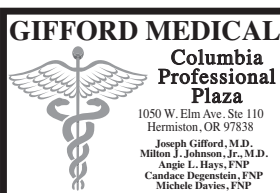
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