

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Improving downtown requires change in laws and owners

First, let me applaud anyone who wants to improve downtown Hermiston. Generations have tried. It can and will happen only if new landlords/owners who share that vision arrive on the scene.

The city has to step up, like most cities/towns have zoning laws where churches can be or can't. Currently, look how much valuable real estate is tied up by church-related businesses downtown.

Let's face it, current landlords are renting just to get rent without a thought of downtown improvements or the future. You're only as good as the people in charge.

The issue of lack of parking could be addressed if behind the stores would be for employees in a designated parking only — closer to stores would be consumers area only.

Lots of beautification and lack of improvements again aren't going to happen without city ordinances or landlords agreeing to them.

Some buildings don't have bathrooms for employees.

I'd love to read an article, expose if you will, exposing who the current landlords are with their pictures. Change might begin to happen if the media wasn't scared of backlash.

I hate to say it, but it just might take a lot of funerals for change to occur downtown.

DON HANSEN
HERMISTON

Be an active partner, vote yes for schools

I came to Hermiston in 1957 to teach science at the Hermiston Junior High. I had intended to stay two years. In those two years I discovered Hermiston was a safe and secure place to raise children. It was also a place where the parents and patrons placed a high value on education for their children. The district was noted for always passing their annual operating budgets. This was even more impressive when you considered the fact that Hermiston was one of the poorest school districts in the state.

Unfortunately, this low tax base produced only enough funding to make capitol improvements that met the minimum standards for school buildings. They were not expected to last. This did not deter the district from offering an educational system noted for its excellence and because of this people moved here. As the buildings became unsafe and expensive to maintain the patrons saw fit to construct buildings built to a higher standard. This was made possible because the district had an improved tax base.

As for this vote being an end-all vote, it will not be. The allure of good schools will continue to entice families to move here. In recent years Hermiston has been one of the fastest growing school districts in Oregon. Keep in mind children bring parents. Parents buy homes. This adds to the tax base. This should cause the

per capita assessment for the capitol improvements to decline going forward.

I do recognize that a growing community presents special problems. I would much prefer these problems over the problems found in a dying community. I encourage you to be an active partner in this community by voting yes for the upcoming bond election.

CARLISLE HARRISON
HERMISTON

Tearing down schools won't help

Do not tear down our schools, just add on. Schools do not make better (education) for our children, it's the teachers, smaller classes.

Why tear down? We need all the classrooms now. We rent modulars now, so don't tear down and charge us outrageous taxes on our homes.

SHIRLEY SANDS
HERMISTON

We must fund education for our kids

The Hermiston School District and the Hermiston community faces a challenge of dealing with significant growth in student enrollment, a challenge that most districts in Eastern Oregon don't have. For oth-

er school districts, their major challenge is determining how to continue to provide a quality educational experience when the funding of their general fund is reduced because of their declining enrollment. For Hermiston, the challenge is providing adequate classroom space for all of the students that enter the halls of our schools. Of these two challenges, we much prefer dealing with the challenge of growth rather than dealing with budget cuts.

The community continues to grow bringing more students in to our school system. The proposed bond will provide for improved safety for our students and also provide the classroom space to educate our students.

Please join us in voting Yes on the Hermiston School Bond in the May 16th election. The education of the youth of our community must continue to be a focus for us all and is something we must all commit to funding.

STEVE AND JANET WILLIAMS
HERMISTON

Growing city needs new schools to keep up

I came to Hermiston in July of 1991 as superintendent of the Hermiston School District. Our enrollment was just over 3,800 students and the city pop-

ulation was 11,500. Since that time, Hermiston has become one of Oregon's fastest-growing areas. Our school population now is 5,630, up 1,830 students; and the city population is 17,700, up 6,200 residents.

While superintendent for almost 10 years, we built two additional schools, Sandstone Middle School and Desert View Elementary School, creating more space for approximately 700 students. Since that time and due to aged facilities, the district has demolished and rebuilt four schools — Hermiston High School, Armand Larive Middle School, West Park Elementary and Sunset Elementary — creating a small amount of additional space. However, we are still overcrowded by approximately 800 students. Plus, the district will continue to grow at the rate of about 80-100 students per year in the future. The growth we have experienced in our city and region is generally good news, but it is also causing growing pains. It is a little like a family of nine living in a house with one bathroom and two bedrooms.

I realize that no one enjoys paying more tax-

es. However, the need for more school space is evident NOW, not to mention the 80-100 student growth we will continue to receive each year. The new bond will address this problem. The good news is, as home owners, we pay only about 48 percent of the schools' bond levy. Businesses and utilities pay 52 percent. Businesses do not create students. Residents do. So this is a pretty attractive deal for homeowners. Also, as our area continues to grow with more residents and businesses, the tax rate will be lowered each year since more people and businesses will be included to pay the bond, thus lowering individual tax bills over time.

In closing, each one of our Hermiston students gets one chance at 13 years of education in our district. A quality experience can make all the difference for their future success. Good schools with good teachers in uncrowded, quality classroom spaces are critical ingredients for achievement and success.

I strongly urge you to support the Hermiston School District bond levy.

DR. JER D. PRATTON

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Our classified ad representative, Dayle S. expressed concern about the lack of success in our ad and asked our permission to enhance the ad to garner a better response. She revamped the ad which we were very impressed with. The response to her revamped ad was dramatic and we are SO SO impressed with the unsolicited service Dayle provided.

Out of all the publications we advertise in, this was the first time an ad representative took the time to assist us with a more effective ad. Anytime we need a classified ad in the East Oregonian, we will require that Dayle is the one who places our ad. Of the six cities we advertise in, Dayle with the East Oregonian is the very best classified ad consultant we have ever worked with."

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