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INSIDE

FIESTA



Sergio Barreto of Umatilla takes his horse through the paces during the dancing horse competition at Saturday's Hermiston Cinco de Mayo celebration at Butte Park.

STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Festival expands to two days to celebrate Cinco de Mayo on seis y siete de Mayo

By PHIL WRIGHT and JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writers

Another Cinco de Mayo celebration is in the books, and organizer Clara Beas Fitzgerald is calling it Hermiston's most successful one yet. "I think it went amazingly well," she said.

Beas Fitzgerald said it is hard to know exactly how many people were in Butte Park over the two-day event, but it was definitely in the thousands — more than the city could have possibly fit into its former location along Second Street in front of City Hall.

The celebration's parade and opening ceremonies on Saturday were graced by the presence of Francisco Maass Peña, Mexico's consul general for Oregon. Saturday he donned the sash noting he was the parade's grand marshal and led the parade on its short route down Elm Avenue.

Jose Garcia, chair of Hermiston's Hispanic Advisory Committee, and Beas Fitzgerald walked beside Peña as he led the parade to Butte Park. Hermiston Mayor Dave Drotzmann, Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan and county commissioners Bill Elfering and George Murdock also helped kick off the celebration.

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STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Tony Estrada chows down during the watermelon eating contest at Saturday's Hermiston Cinco de Mayo festival at Butte Park. The Hermiston man placed second in the contest.



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY

Three sisters, Ina, Elsa and Kalista Lemus, watch the Hermiston Cinco de Mayo parade Saturday afternoon across from Butte Park. Ina was dressed up for her first communion.



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Ivan Cardenas of Hermiston, center, eyes the competition in the watermelon eating contest as Fiesta Foods dairy manager Baltazar Villanueva, far left, counts down the start of the event during Saturday's Hermiston Cinco de Mayo festival at Butte Park.

THREE MINUTES WITH...
MEET LELA LOFTUS OF HERMISTON DRUG IN THIS WEEK'S PROFILE.
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WORTH THE WAIT

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO TAKE YOUR SPECIAL SOMEONE TO THE PROM, JUST ASK THIS YEAR'S KING AND QUEEN OF THE HERMISTON PROM.
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'ODD' CASTING

HERMISTON GRAD RILEY MULVIHILL TAKES TO THE STAGE IN NEIL SIMON PLAY THIS WEEKEND.
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CHEESE SMUGGLING

COMMUNITY EDITOR TAMMY MALGESINI PROVIDES DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF HOW NOT TO PACK FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL.
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BRIEFLY

It's Teacher Appreciation Week in Hermiston

The Hermiston School District declared May 8 through 12 as Teacher Appreciation Week at Monday's school board meeting.

The board encouraged students, parents and community members to thank teachers for their dedication to their jobs.

"Each of us can look back in our lives to see the influence of teachers who shaped and molded us," said Superintendent Fred Maiocco. "Please take time to recognize their incredible work."

The Hermiston School District has about 314 licensed staff members, including classroom teachers, specialists, instructional coaches and librarians.

See TRAINING, A16

Army, scientists train at Umatilla Army Depot

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
Staff Writer

Hundreds of military personnel descended on the Umatilla Army Depot this weekend to participate in a training most hope they'll never have to use. The exercise, called "Dragon Fire," involves troops from several CBRNE (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives) battalions, all of whom are trying to learn how to decontaminate an area that may be threatened by weapons of mass de-

struction.

"If called upon, we have to be able to identify and understand a nation's WMD infrastructure, disable it and render it inoperable to some extent," said Col. Christopher Cox. "Umatilla is on a former chemical weapons site. Should we need to go somewhere, that provides us the maximum realism. You can't replicate that anywhere in the U.S."

The exercise took months to plan. About 350 troops started the

10-day exercise in Yakima, Washington, then they deployed to Satsop, Washington, the site of a never-completed nuclear power plant in western Washington. At Satsop, the troops were provided scenarios that mimicked potential chemical or nuclear target situations they might encounter. Troops had to collect information at the site, some of which sent them to the Umatilla Army Depot. There, they had to confirm or deny what they found at other sites.

In several of the bunkers at Umatilla that used to store chemical weapons, decoy targets were set up. Troops had to navigate their way through, analyzing what they saw and determining whether they needed to come back, or send the information to higher authorities.

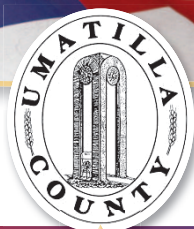
Along with troops from various U.S. Army facilities, including Fort Bliss in Texas and Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland, about



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