

## NORPAC

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*Herald* reported that more than 3,000 people toured the new \$9 million facility during the grand opening, where NORPAC executives praised the Hermiston Development Corporation, city of Hermiston and other partners for working together so quickly to get the infrastructure in place to allow NORPAC to locate there.

City Manager Byron

Smith said it was unfortunate to hear that one of Hermiston's large employers would be closing its doors. Hermiston Foods is the city's largest water customer at 115,047,200 gallons per year, which is more than the next nine water customers combined. However, Smith said there were so many other users on the system and that it was still a small enough percentage that the impact would be felt but would not be "huge."

## MELONS

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at this stage, looks pretty nice," Walchli said. "I expect the melons will be just as good of quality as ever."

Watermelons are an iconic crop for Hermiston, thriving in the region's sandy soils and desert climate. Once summer rolls around, the plants spend all day soaking up the hot sun, which they convert into sugar as a source of energy. Having chilly nights allows the fruit to retain all that sugary goodness.

Hermiston watermelons can be found all over the Northwest, including Portland and Seattle, and have been shipped as far as Maryland and Texas.

Given their immense popularity, it is no surprise that Scott Lukas has chosen to include watermelons as part of his research program

at Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center south of town.

Lukas, who was hired as the station horticulturist last year, is experimenting with different treatments for soil-borne Fusarium and Verticillium wilt that can infect watermelon vines, causing them to wither and die.

Most growers use chemical fumigants to keep the diseases in check. For his trial, Lukas is treating the plants with a couple of alternative products that, if successful, could be cheaper and more environmentally friendly than traditional fumigants without impacting yield, he said.

"That's the idea, trying different combinations of green chemistries to solve a common issue this region's watermelon growers face," Lukas said.

It is still too early to measure results, though Lukas is optimistic.

## BTW

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**Kenya DeLa Fuente** and **MaeAnn Stone**.

Rocky Heights: **Addison McClure**, third grade; fourth graders **Ruben Fernandez** and **Jaziel Ramirez**; and fifth graders **Dayana Ponciano** and **Claire Anderson**.

Sunset: **Gabrielle Mendoza**, **Bryanna Lopez** and **Addisen Alder**, third graders; **Johnathan Avila-Munoz**, fourth grade; and **Veera Patel**, fifth grade.

West Park: **Alexa Barreto** and **Fernando Varela Lopez**, third graders; **Selene Garibaldi**, fourth grade; and **Cristal Santos** and **Stephen Hofbauer**, fifth graders.

The program creates a high level of motivation for students, said **Kristi Smalley**, Hermiston School District elementary librarian.

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Local American Legion

members recently attended state convention the 99th annual Oregon State Convention, held June 20-24 in Florence.

Those attending include **Glenn Bradley** of Hermiston, Post 37 Commander; **Bill Runion** of Hermiston, Post Historian; **Dan Seimer** of Irrigon, member of Post 37; **Jody Frost** of Hermiston, Service Officer; **Ed Baker**, of Lexington, Heppner Post Commander; **Toni Cordell** of Pendleton, District 6 Commander; and **Andy Muller** of Mil-ton-Freewater, National Executive Committee;

The American Legion is the nation's largest veteran's service organization. It's committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in our communities, advocating patriotism and honor, and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans. The Legion helps

veterans and their families during times of need, provides scholarship opportunities and various other events to give back to their communities.

All honorably discharged veterans are invited to become active members. For more information, call 800-630-1203 or 503-685-5006 or visit [www.orlegion.org](http://www.orlegion.org).

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A pair of deputies with the **Umatilla County Sheriff's Office** were among the recent graduates with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

**Jacob Potter** and **Kash Wrightson**, along with other members of Basic Corrections Local #BCL027, participated in a graduation ceremony June 16 at the **Oregon Public Safety Academy** in Salem.

The academy is nationally recognized for its innovative training programs and

active stakeholder involvement. It implements standards for the training and certification of more than 40,000 city, tribal, county and state law enforcement officers, corrections officers, parole and probation officers, fire service personnel, telecommunicators, emergency medical dispatchers and private security providers.

**Eriks Gabliks** serves as director and **Jason Myers** of the Marion County Sheriff's Office is chairman of the board. For more information, visit [www.oregon.gov/dpsst](http://www.oregon.gov/dpsst).

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You can submit items for our weekly *By The Way* column by emailing your tips to [editor@hermistonherald.com](mailto:editor@hermistonherald.com) or share them on social media using the hashtag #HHBTW. Follow the *Hermiston Herald* on Twitter at @HermistonHerald.

### IN BRIEF

#### H&R Block to hosts open house July 11

People interested in learning more about H&R Block's Income Tax Course are invited to an open house.

There is no tuition for the classes, which provide new skills. In addition to learning to prepare taxes, people can earn additional money.

The open house event is Tuesday, July 11, from 10 a.m. to noon and 6-8 p.m. at Hermiston Plaza, 860 Highway 395, Hermiston. For

more information, call 509-579-9976.

To enroll in the Income Tax Course in Hermiston, visit [www.hrblock.com/class](http://www.hrblock.com/class) or call 800-472-5625.

#### RDO employee gets John Deere degree

Jamie Newton, a service technician at RDO Equipment Co. in Hermiston, recently earned the master service technician degree from John Deere University.



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