

# Hermiston Herald

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\$1.00



INSIDE

GREAT  
GRADUATION  
SITE

# DEBATE



FILE PHOTO



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STAFF PHOTO E.J. HARRIS



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY MITCH LEWIS.

Clockwise from top left: 1) Hermiston High School has held graduation in the high school's gym in past years. 2) Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann greets visitors during ceremonies to open Kennison Field in 2013. 3) The Toyota Center in Kennewick is one of four options Hermiston School District is considering for graduation. 4) Rodeo announcer Randy Corley watches Brady Nicholes of Hoysville, Utah, ride Duck Butter in saddle bronc riding at the new Farm-City Pro Rodeo Arena in Hermiston. The new arena is one of the venues school officials are considering for a graduation location.

## Hermiston School District board weighs pros, cons and costs of different graduation venues

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
STAFF WRITER

Community members have chosen the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center as their top choice for a high school graduation venue, but Hermiston School District is still weighing its options.

At a school board work session Monday, director of operations Brad Wayland presented the board with the

results of a community survey as well as the pros, cons and price tags associated with each of four options for future graduation sites. The school board will likely put the decision to a vote at its next meeting.

"Whatever the choice is, we need to get that information out so that plans can be made," board chair Karen Sherman said.

### Hermiston High School gym

About 54 percent of community members said they are "very dissatisfied" with the district's current practice of holding graduation in the Hermiston High School gym, which only holds 2,200 people including graduates and staff.

Hermiston's growing student population has limited each student to five

tickets for friends and family, and Wayland said there was a good chance that number would be reduced to four this school year. The venue also presents safety and visibility issues with so many people packed inside the gym, and has limited accommodations for guests with disabilities.

On the positive side, the indoor gym does not require a back-up location in case of inclement weather, the district has full control over the venue in the weeks leading up to the event, and the school is a source of community pride.

Wayland said the district spent about \$11,883 on graduation in 2016, including audio/visual rentals and upgrades, staff time for set-up, decorations, and an array of preparations the district

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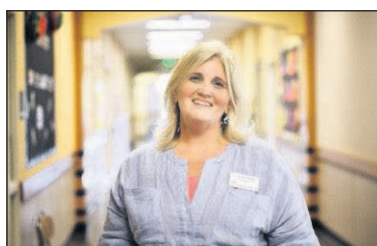
## Even staff must adjust to changing schools

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston's first day of school continued a tradition of enrolling plenty of new students on the first day, but some of the "new kids" this year are on the staff.

Laura Jacobsma, principal of Desert View Elementary School, had her first day of school in Hermiston School District Monday, as did Christie Petersen, who joined the district as principal of Sunset Elementary School.

After popping in and out of classrooms all day, Jacobsma wrapped up with a short assembly to introduce herself and all of the school's teachers to a gym full of children wiggly with first-day energy.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

**Sunset Elementary School principal Christie Petersen has a background in English as a Second Language and literacy development.**

"I am so excited to be here today, and so excited to have you all with me," she told the students. "We have been preparing ourselves all summer to have you back in school so it's a really ex-

citing time."

Afterward, as she got ready to help direct the year's first bus-and-parent pick-up, she said she felt the first day had gone well.

"There's been lots of excitement and smiles," she said.

After the first day it's hard to tell where enrollment numbers will settle, as the school's staff were handling last-minute registrations all day but also taking note of students who hadn't shown up for the start of the school year. Jacobsma, who came to the district from Eugene, said she's still learning about Hermiston School District and its students, but there are many similarities between all school districts. So far, she's just

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**THREE MINUTES WITH**  
MEET TABITHA MENDENHALL,  
OWNER OF UNIQUE HAIR SALON  
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**SOCCER OPENERS**  
HERMISTON SQUADS GET 2  
WINS IN SEASON-OPENING  
DOUBLE HEADER.  
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**BIGHAUS ON HARKIE**

FORMER HERALD SPORTS EDITOR  
BILL BIGHAUS REMEMBERS  
FORMER MAYOR, SPORTS FAN.  
PAGE A6

**CANINE KIDS**

COMMUNITY EDITOR TAMMY  
MALGESINI'S FAMILY LIFE HAS  
GONE TO THE DOGS.  
PAGE A6

**BY THE WAY**

## Column inspires social media group site on Facebook

We now have a group page on Facebook to go along with our weekly feature that runs in this space and we would invite you all to join us there. The group is called "By The Way, Hermiston" and is a place to share comments questions and interact with the Hermiston Herald staff on, well, whatever is on your mind. So, check it out, it's free to join and participate in, or start, discussions on topics of interest to the greater Hermiston community.

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**Craig Engbretson, Don Obrist, Craig Lockwood and Randy Henderson** recently pitched in to help with a beautification project at **Big River Golf Course** in Umatilla. The foursome installed railroad ties along the first and ninth holes. **Megan Olsen**, general manager, expressed appreciation for the men's efforts, saying it looks "fantastic."

Also, Olsen said the 2017 Thursday Night League is officially in the books and congratulations are in order to **Josh Browning** and **Pat Kerrigan**, who placed first. Other top teams were **Mike Webb** and **Gunner Olsen**; **Mike Frink** and **Keith Mor-**

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## Office closed for holiday

The offices for the Hermiston Herald and East Oregonian, 333 E. Main Street, Hermiston, will be closed on Monday, Sept. 4, for the Labor Day holiday.

In general, if you need news or advertising scheduled for the Sept. 6 issue of the Hermiston Herald, please contact our staff before 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 31.

The advertising deadlines for the Sept. 6 edition of the East Oregonian are also moved up to 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 1.



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