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INSIDE

CORN MAZE FUN



FILE PHOTO

Brent Tyhuis, son of organizers Bob and Gina Tyhuis, runs through cornstalks before the opening of the 2016 Echo Corn Maze. This year's Echo Corn Maze & Pumpkin Patch is open for the season.

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
COMMUNITY EDITOR

Growing up in and around the agriculture industry, Bob and Gina Tyhuis enjoy sharing their love for the outdoors with others.

For the second year in the row, the Echo transplants have revived fall fun with the Echo Corn Maze & Pumpkin Patch. The attraction opens this week with two miles of winding pathways cut through an 8-acre cornfield near downtown Echo at 100 N. Dupont St.

Regular hours are Wednesdays from 3-9 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Oct. 26-27 from 3-9 p.m. A decision will be made as the date gets closer if the attraction will be open on Halloween. The Field of Screams, which offers a haunted experience, is available Saturday, Oct. 21, Friday, Oct. 27, and Saturday, Oct. 28, from 7-9 p.m.

Gina Tyhuis is particularly looking forward to the frightful fun. This summer's warm weather contributed to extraordinary growth by the cornstalks, which tower at 12-13 feet, she said.

"I haunted for the first time last year," Tyhuis said. "It's fun to see people smile and have a good time."

The \$10 wristband includes wandering through the corn maze, the corn crib (like a big sand box, only with kernels of corn), a mini maze, straw bale maze and a tunnel maze (for wee ones). Additional activities, including the zipline and kiddie carts are \$2 per ride. The Field of Screams is \$12, which includes the regular maze. The event also offers limited concessions.

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3 MINUTES WITH
MEET THE MANAGER OF THE RECENTLY REMODELED LA PALMA RESTAURANT.
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SOLD

THE THIRD STUDENT-BUILT HOME IN HERMISTON HAS BEEN SOLD.
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OPEN HOUSE

HISTORIC CHURCH WELCOMES VISITORS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MORE THAN 20 YEARS.
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THE REAL DEAL

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR REAL NEWS, GET A REAL NEWSPAPER.
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BY THE WAY

Reading challenge pays off in pizza

Hermiston Senior Center officers Irene Miller, president, and Virginia Beebe, vice-president, were recently thrilled to accept a \$180 donation from Jan Ross and Neila Wallace of the Greater Hermiston Area Republican Women's Group. Judy Fordice, the senior center's secretary, said the money will go into the center's new building fund and will be used to assist in purchasing new kitchen equipment.

A Children's Reading Challenge will pay off in pizza. Kids can earn a free mini pizza from Papa Murphy's just by reading (or having someone read to them) books during the month of October. For more information, stop by the Hermiston Public Library or call 541-567-2882.

Kricket Nicholson dons her jacket, helmet and black leather chaps, and then straps her United Way gym bag to the rear rack of her motorcycle as she gears up for the annual United Way of Umatilla and Morrow Counties fundraising campaign. Joe Zoske, United Way board member, said

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Board moves graduation to Kennewick

Hermiston Class of 2018 will graduate in Washington state

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

After three months of discussion, research and community surveys, the Hermiston School Board made its decision Monday night: Hermiston High School's Class of 2018 will celebrate commencement at the Toyota Center in Kennewick, Washington.

The board voted 6-1 to move the ceremony across the river in June 2018, and will revisit local options afterward.

Board member Jason Middleton was the lone "no" vote.

"This has been a long process," said board chair Karen Sherman. "But we know (the decision) is the best we can do for students and families."

The decision was a contentious one, as many Hermiston residents and even board members raised concerns about moving the ceremony out of the city and across state lines.

The decision caps a months-long process by district and high school administrators to find a place to house the growing graduating classes, after last year's record class reduced the number of guest tickets to five. This year, administrators estimated they would only be able to allow four tickets

per student. District officials said Monday they also had growing concerns about the safety of the current venue, the Hermiston High School gymnasium, due to the large crowds.

The Toyota Center seats more than 5,000 people, and will eliminate the need for tickets. According to numbers published by the district, holding graduation at the Toyota Center would cost about \$6,500, while holding it in the gym would cost about \$11,000.

At September's meeting, the board was about to make a final decision when Middleton made a counter-motion, requesting that more data be collected and the issue be looked at in greater detail. That motion won out, and the district conducted another round

of surveys, this time focusing on responses from Hermiston High School seniors and their parents.

Though many comments reflected residents' hesitation, the majority still appeared to be in favor of the move — at least temporarily.

The most popular option in early surveys, the rodeo arena at Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, was ruled out last month due to what district officials said was a lack of infrastructure and staffing at EOTEC Interim EOTEC manager Nate Rivera EOTEC would like to be able to host events like graduation in the future, but it was not currently feasible.

The Toyota Center ceremony will likely be held on Thursday, June 7, at 7 p.m.



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