

BY THE WAY

BTW

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Westland Road campus is expected to be finished sometime in the spring.

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Hurricanes that hit Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico earlier this year are having a ripple effect on Hermiston as work to rebuild power grids damaged by the storms causes a shortage in electrical supplies.

Hermiston Energy Services superintendent **Nate Rivera** told the city council Monday that the new decorative light poles the city had hoped to install downtown before Christmas would not come on time, and work on the new Umatilla Electric Cooperative substation on 10th Street had also been affected. The substation should come online next month.

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Free hot dogs and soda will be on tap at a grand opening celebration planned Saturday for the new **Sinclair Oil** in Hermiston, along with giveaways such as a 55-inch TV.

Formerly a 76 gas station, the business at 710 W. Hermiston Ave. made the switchover to a Sinclair last month. Store manager **Linda Lancaster** invites the public to stop by the gas station and Dino Mart from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 541-567-0202.

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The **American Red Cross** community blood drive held Oct. 16 at **Good Shepherd Medical Center** drew 52 donors and collected a total of 49

units. Volunteer **Patti Perkins** expressed appreciation to the **Hermiston Emblem Club** for running the canteen. The next drive is Monday, Nov. 20 from 12:30-6 p.m., also at Good Shepherd, 610 N.W. 11th St. Perkins said walk-ins are welcome, but it's helpful if donors schedule an appointment by calling 800-448-3543. For more information, contact Perkins at pzperchek@charter.net or 541-571-5372.

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Among those cashing in during the 14th annual **Wildhorse Resort & Casino Fall Poker Round-Up** was Hermiston resident **Phillip Ferguson**. He placed second, receiving a \$5,941 payout during the Sunday, Nov. 5 No-Limit Shoot Out. Other local finishers, the event and their payouts included: No-Limit Hold 'em Nov. 3: **Emmanuel Ayala** (34) of Hermiston, \$475; No-Limit Hold 'em Nov. 4: **Denny Edwards** (6) of Hermiston, \$3,938, and Nov. 10 (21) with \$850; and **Temo Calderon** (33) of Boardman, \$725; No-Limit Shoot Out Nov. 5: **Jimmy Schlenker** (17) of Hermiston, \$700; Turbo No-Limit Hold 'em Nov. 11: **Sergio Perez** (9) of Hermiston, \$487; **Chanty Pin** (10) of Hermiston, \$325. Vying for more than \$863,000 in payouts, the tournament drew nearly 3,900 participants from across the United States and Canada.

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TODDLER

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against adults connected to the incident.

"It goes without saying that this is an incredibly horrible incident for the involved family, and the officers who responded, the medical professionals who treated the child, and the community as a whole," the department stated. "If you own firearms, we urge you to store them in a safe

manner to prevent unauthorized access."

Centers for Disease Control estimated 77 children died from accidental gun discharges in 2015, but the Associated Press counted 141 cases that year reported in the media.

Gun locks are available for free at the Hermiston Police Department. The Project Childsafe cable locks, which look similar to a bike lock and come with two small keys, keep the gun from being fired.

Insurance sign-up period cut in half

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Local insurance agents will be hard-pressed to keep up with demand for their services this year after the federal government shortened the enrollment period for the health insurance exchanges.

"It's fast and furious," said Doug Beamer, a partner at Wheatland Financial Services in Pendleton.

The enrollment period for people to sign up or switch insurance plans runs from Nov. 1 to Dec. 15. Last year it ran twice as long, through Jan. 31. The deadline applies to anyone who buys their health insurance through the insurance marketplace set up by the Affordable Care Act.

Computer-savvy Americans can log in to health-care.gov and shop for and enroll in plans on their own. But many people prefer to consult with an insurance agent before making the decision. Tania Mulcare, an insurance agent with the ISU Stratton Agency in Hermiston, said people can help keep their appointments short by being prepared. That means creating a username and password for health-care.gov before arriving, or making sure you remember your login information from last year.

She said people should also bring in any letters they've received about their health insurance, plus social security numbers and financial information about each member of the household needing insurance.

"Time is valuable, so anything they can do to be prepared helps," she said.

A majority of Americans receive their health insurance through their employer or the government. The rest — including those self-employed — can sign up for plans via the ACA health exchange. In most cases, depending on income level, people who sign up for health insurance via the exchange can qualify for tax credits to help cover some of their premium costs.

The enrollment period open now is the only time they can sign up for a new plan or change to a different plan for 2018 unless they have a "qualifying life event" during the year such as marriage or moving to a new state.

For those who want help navigating the system, a list of licensed health insurance agents in the area can be found online at oregonhealthcare.gov/gethelp. The website also lists community partners who will assist in the sign-up process for free.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston firefighter/paramedic Carry Munro, right, gives a chemical weapons incident training on Tuesday at the main station in Hermiston.

UCFD

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partner up with community health workers and visit the homes of people who have chronic illnesses or who have just been released from the hospital. The goal of the program is to help people manage their health issues to prevent unnecessary return trips to the hospital, thereby reducing the strain on paramedics and ambulances.

Stanton said the grant-funded program has been a positive for the community so far.

"We're seeing some amazing work being done with the paramedics in conjunction with the ConneXions program," he said.

The third major change, Stanton said, has been the

building of the drill tower at the district's Station 23 on Westland Road. The four-story tower, which was just completed, will be used by UCFD, and was built in conjunction with Blue Mountain Community College for the school's Fire Science Program. But Stanton said the facility will be a resource for fire districts and programs throughout Eastern Oregon.

"We're already in talks with County Search and Rescue about starting a rope rescue team," he said. "As a regional concept, versus just us doing it."

Blue Mountain Community College and UCFD will host a grand opening for the new fire training tower at noon on Monday, Nov. 20 at the station, at 78760 Westland Road.

The district's first pri-

ority, Stanton said, is making some capital improvements to the district, such as replacing new engines and updating fire equipment.

They also hope to secure a grant for a new app called "Pulse Point," which civilians trained in CPR can use to alert them if someone nearby has an emergency. They can then administer CPR before medics arrive, potentially saving the person's life.

"Say you're in Wal-Mart, when a cardiac arrest goes out through the dispatch system," Stanton said. "It comes up over the phone that the person is in aisle 16. You might be in aisle 10, and can initiate CPR."

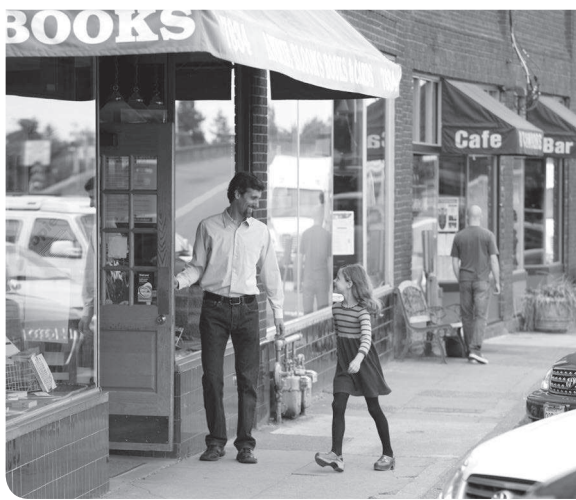
Stanton said as the district progresses, they'd like to work on getting sustainable funding for the commu-

nity paramedic program and to recruit more volunteer firefighters.

"That's an issue across the state, and across the nation," he said. "It's not new, but it is an ongoing problem."

The bond, which was designed to consolidate and improve fire and emergency medical services for the area, passed by about 61 percent, with voters approving three separate measures — one each to dissolve Hermiston and Stanfield's fire districts, and a third to form the new district and establish its funding.

The district cost Hermiston and Stanfield residents an additional \$1.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value, and was projected at election time to bring in about \$900,000.



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