



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY HERMISTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Hermiston High School FFA veterinary science team took first place during the state competition Nov. 18 at HHS, and will compete at next year's National FFA Convention & Expo. Team members are, from left: Isel Tejada Urenda, Adriann Stewart, Kennidy Baker, Dylan Westfall and Jenna Wallace.

Hermiston vet science team wins state competition

By **GEORGE PLAVEN**
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston FFA veterinary science team — composed of senior Dylan Westfall, juniors Adriann Stewart and Isel Tejada Urenda, and sophomores Kennidy Baker and Jenna Wallace — took first place out of 21 schools that competed Saturday, Nov. 18 in state competition, hosted by HHS.

Westfall also claimed the top individual score in the state, on what was his 18th birthday. Baker and Wallace each had top-10 scores, at sixth and eighth, respectively. All five members will now put their skills to the test at the 91st National FFA Convention & Expo, Oct. 24-27, 2018 in Indianapolis.

Leah Smith, Hermiston FFA advisor, said she was not surprised to see her students win, but knew it wouldn't be easy.

"Vet science is definitely one of the most difficult career development events we prepare for," Smith said. "They put in countless hours (of preparation)."

There are six parts to the vet science event, each of which requires extensive memorization and quick thinking. The first section consists of hands-on demonstrations for handling and clinical procedures, such as giving a shot or applying a muzzle. Out of 45 possibilities, the students are given four tasks to perform in front of the judges.

From there, individuals must take a 50-ques-

tion multiple choice test, a 10-question math exam, written exam and identification exam which includes different animal breeds, equipment and parasites. Finally, the team comes together for a 10-15 minute presentation, complete with props. For its presentation, the Hermiston team focused on the Veterinary Feed Directive, a set of regulations under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for use of antibiotics in animal feed.

Wallace said the team spent weeks practicing every day at the school until 9 p.m.

"It's a lot of preparation," she said. "You just have to remember that, if you push through, it will probably make you a better person."

The victory was especially sweet, Tejada Urenda said, since the team was actually robbed of the chance to participate in last year's event, which was held in Sutherlin though icy roads kept Hermiston from making the five-hour drive.

"We were excited for the chance to compete," Tejada Urenda said. "It was just really exciting to see all the hard work and dedication pay off."

The Hermiston FFA agriculture sales team also competed at the state contest Nov. 18, placing eighth out of 20 schools. Team members included Wallace, along with Deven Hofbauer, Blake Betz and Joseph Knight. Individually out of 83 students, Wallace placed fourth overall.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

An empty storefront has replaced Crazy Mikes Video on West Highland Avenue in Hermiston.

Small businesses face big hurdles to survive

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Cyndie Traner heard a lot of words of support for her business over the years, but words don't pay the bills.

That's what she told people who came into the C&R Mercantile in Hermiston for the vintage shop's going out of business sale last week.

"People come in once a year and say, 'See, I support your business,' but you're not showing me with your actions," she said. "Actions speak louder than words."

It's a theme she said she has heard from other friends who have closed their small businesses over the years — people want the business to stick around as an option, but they don't spend money there often enough to keep the doors open.

Eventually, some business owners like Traner decide they're done.

"I lost a lot of time with my husband," she said. "I lost a lot of money building something for my community that I could have been building up my own home. I just got tired of doing so much for so little in return."

According to the federal Small Business Administration, about a third of businesses fail within the first two years and only half make it past five. Those odds are what have helped inspire "shop local" and pro-small business movements like Small Business Saturday, which encourages people to shop at a small business the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

Traner can name a lot of businesses that have come and gone in the last few years around Hermiston — home decor shop Indulge, florist Bloomz, barbecue restaurant Sharon's Sweet Treats and Catering, clothing shop Bare Necessities, craft store Defining Details, UFO Gaming, Crazy Mike's Video and steakhouses Stockman's and Stet's, to name a few.

Often those spaces don't stay empty for long, however, as a new group of entrepreneurs decide to take a gamble on opening their dream business. UFO Gaming has been replaced by McLeod's Bargain Bin, Defining Details is now Two96 Main and the former

Indulge space has been taken over by N2N Integrations.

Susan Bower of Eastern Oregon Business Source said as new entrepreneurs decide to take the plunge, they face common challenges but they also share ways to help mitigate those challenges.

One of the biggest problems for new small businesses is having enough capital to get started and then ride through the rocky times. Passion is an important ingredient to success, but Bower said banks and potential investors are also going to want to see a plausible, concrete plan for financial success before they are willing to extend a line of credit.

"Having a business plan is critical, and following that plan is essential," she said.

There are resources available to teach would-be entrepreneurs those types of skills, including the small business development center at Blue Mountain Community College and workshops by the chamber of commerce.

Business owners also need to have enough money in savings so their business

won't sink in the first few months as they start from scratch and attempt to build a customer base.

"You need some kind of support to get through the low times," Bower said. "As a business owner you're the last one to get paid, if you even get paid."

Bower said entrepreneurs also need trusted advisors, including an accountant and an attorney, and some sort of bookkeeping software to keep their financial information organized. She said many business owners feel like they don't have the money for those things up front, but she said it's some of the "best money you can spend early on" to make sure the store or restaurant gets off on the right foot and doesn't stumble into roadblocks that could devastate the business.

Other problems that can sink a small business are hiring the wrong employees, not marketing enough, poor customer service/product quality, not thinking outside the box or being pushed out by competition from other stores or changes in consumer habits.

County to add stop signs to Feedville/Edwards intersection

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
STAFF WRITER

Stanfield residents pushing to make a dangerous crossroads safer got what they wanted. Umatilla County Board of Commissioners voted 3-0 at their meeting Wednesday, Nov. 22, in Pendleton to change the intersection of Feedville and Edwards roads into a four-way stop.

Heidi Carver and Angie Connell of Stanfield said they would be watching to make sure the county made good on its word.

Carver's husband, Dustin Scott, suffered serious injuries in a crash at the intersection in September 2016 when another driver blew through the stop sign at South Edwards. The crash also seriously injured a passenger in that car and killed its driver. And the crash there in early November

seriously injured two teenage girls.

"I just feel if that intersection was a four-way stop," Carver told the board, "you would decrease drastically the number of accidents that are there."

County Public Works Director Tom Fellows said

the traffic at the intersection is "relatively low," with about 1,200 vehicles using it a day. He explained the county operates under the federal "Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices," which sets standards for traffic signs and the like, and the two stops there now exceed

the standard for the road's traffic.

Speeding, however, is a problem though the intersection. Fellows said the county a few years ago found 16 percent of drivers go too fast to stop there. After he presented options, the commission voted to add the signs.

VenuWorks to run EOTEC starting 2018

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center board has approved a deal for VenuWorks to run the facility starting Jan. 1, 2018.

The venue management company will get \$9,000 a month plus a commission on the sale of naming rights and other sponsorships.

The board voted unanimously last week to authorize board chair Byron Smith to sign the five year contract negotiated with VenuWorks after some final

tweaks to language.

For its base management fee, which will be in addition to payroll costs for a general manager and operations staff, VenuWorks will provide financial administration, event booking, marketing, sales and event production assistance.

VenuWorks expects that the city and county will have to provide extra subsidies the first year but will be back to \$75,000 annual contributions by year three.



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