



STAFF PHOTOS BY JADE MCDOWELL

City of Hermiston staff, elected officials and their families assemble 420 food boxes assembly line-style during their annual holiday party at the Hermiston Conference Center on Tuesday, Dec. 12.

Christmas Express to feed hungry

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

Canned corn and boxes of stuffing were practically flying into boxes at the city of Hermiston's annual office holiday party last week.

Staff, elected officials and their families lined up along a conveyor belt set up in the Hermiston Conference Center, working together assembly line-style to fill 420 boxes with food for needy families in the community. The food, along with toys for families with young children, is being distributed via Hermiston's

Christmas Express program. "Henry Ford's got nothing on these guys," said Ric Sherman as he watched on Dec. 12.

Sherman said he has been helping coordinate the food drive for Christmas Express for 37 years, but this year was the first time he had actually watched the food be packed into boxes. He said the program, administered by the Hermiston Police Department, is a shining example of Hermiston generosity.

"This is Hermiston's finest hour," he said. Police Chief Jason Edmis-

ton said the department had purchased \$4,000 worth of turkeys and \$6,200 in other food items, to be added to the 13,925 food items collected by Hermiston schools and the fresh produce donated by three local farms. The food was loaded into boxes and then shrink-wrapped onto pallets within 45 minutes. Extra food that didn't go into the boxes for about 420 specially chosen families will be donated to the Agape House to be used where the non-profit sees the most need.

Christmas Express started 48 years ago when a local

businessman had some toys he wanted to donate and asked then-police chief Bob Shannon whether he knew of anyone in town who needed them. From that grew a program that now serves hundreds of struggling families in Hermiston each year, nominated by churches and other local agencies to receive food and presents for Christmas.

Edmiston said he was born and raised in Hermiston but didn't understand the depth of the community's generosity until he became involved with Christmas Express in 2004.

Superintendent to resign at end of school year

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Stanfield School District Superintendent Shelley Liscom announced plans to resign at last Wednesday's school board meeting. She will stay through the end of the school year, serving her last day with the district June 15.

Liscom sent an email message to district staff Thursday morning informing them of her decision.

"There really is not a big story or scoop to tell — over the last few months it has become apparent that I do not share the same philosophy and beliefs as the board members," Liscom said in her brief email. She thanked teachers for allowing her to serve the community.

School board chair Scott Morris said he didn't totally expect Liscom's resignation, but he had been aware that she didn't see eye-to-eye with the board.

Morris said the board was scheduled to have an executive session on Wednesday to discuss an investigation into a complaint against Liscom, but the wrong policy number was listed on the agenda, so they postponed the executive session until this week.

At that point in the meeting, he said, Liscom handed in her resignation.

Morris said they will likely still discuss the findings of the investigation at the executive session Wednesday, just to complete it. Morris said the board will also set a timeline fairly soon for hiring Liscom's replacement.



Liscom

Hermiston School District swaps Theater Lane parcel

HERMISTON HERALD

Whenever the Hermiston School District builds its next elementary school, it will be on a new site — due to a land swap with the Hermiston Irrigation District conducted at this week's school board meeting.

The board exchanged their parcel of land, a 19.24-acre plot on East Theater Lane, with a parcel of identical size at the corner of East Theater Lane and Northeast 10th Street, formerly owned by the Irrigation District.

"The purpose was that the access to the site was much more favorable for the school district, with access to both Theater and 10th Street," said Herm-

iston School Board chair Karen Sherman. "The access to the property we held was very narrow, except from Theater Lane."

Sherman said the topography of the new site was also a little flatter, meaning less money would have to be spent to excavate the property once a school is built there.

The district will eventually have to pave all of East Theater Lane, and put in a sewer line. Hermiston Director of Operations Brad Wayland said no immediate work would be done on the property, and any work such as paving or sewer line installation would only be done as part of a school construction project.

Man stabbed, dumped from car by 'friends'

HERMISTON HERALD

A Umatilla man was treated for non-life threatening injuries Monday night after he reported an acquaintance stabbed him and threw him from a vehicle in the 800 block of North First Street, Hermiston.

Hermiston Police said they received a call around 9:45 p.m., saying a male victim had been thrown from the vehicle. When officers responded they found that the victim, Jen-

try P. Wedge of Umatilla, also had been stabbed in the abdomen. He was taken to Good Shepherd for treatment of non-life threatening injuries.

Officers arrested Alex Ortega, 25, for second-degree assault and lodged him in the Umatilla County Jail. Ortega, of Hermiston, also owned the 1996 Honda Civic where the stabbing allegedly happened.

Officers also arrested Nina J. Hodges, 22, of Hermiston, on a probation

violation, and lodged her at the Umatilla County Jail.

The vehicle was impounded and a search warrant was served Tuesday morning.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said the investigation is ongoing, and that it was an isolated and quickly contained incident.

"[It] involved three persons known to each other with what we believe was a very unique 'friendship' leading to a dispute taking

place inside a moving vehicle," Edmiston said in a press release.

Edmiston said police believe they have a confession from Ortega, and all three people involved have a history with police in the area.

Hermiston Police were assisted by the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, the Stanfield Police Department and the Oregon State Police.

22nd Annual Christmas Spirit Award Presentations

Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation is pleased to announce Kriss Dammeyer and John & Marge Walchli as the 2017 Christmas Spirit Award Recipients.



Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation is pleased to honor John & Marge Walchli as recipients of the 22nd Annual Christmas Spirit Award.

This award is given to those who exemplify the Spirit of Christmas by giving of themselves to others all throughout the year. As lifelong farmers, John & Marge truly embody the Spirit of Christmas 365 days of the year.

They are integral members of our community and seldom, if ever, does a fundraiser or request for support go unanswered, as they lend their time and talents to worthy causes and special events. Many organizations such as Agape House and Boosters Club are recipients of their quiet benevolence and philanthropy. They allow their own facilities to be used for weddings, birthday celebrations, and social gatherings that enhance the flavor and culture of our local area and provide a friendly, more comfortable community atmosphere.

It is not unusual for John & Marge to provide transportation to and from medical facilities to benefit their friends, neighbors, and associates. They give untold gifts and acts of kindness and generosity that exemplify their desire to improve the lives of those around them. They are loved and honored by all who know them.

Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation is pleased to honor Kriss Dammeyer as a recipient of the 22nd Annual Christmas Spirit Award. This award is given to one who exemplifies the Spirit of Christmas by giving of themselves to others all throughout the year.

She is the founder of Made to Thrive, a non-profit organization, whose mission is to stop the cycle of child abuse, neglect, and poverty by participating in healthy community activities. She is changing our community for the better as she advocates for the benefit of underprivileged children.

Kriss has built valuable relationships with local government agencies such as Hermiston School District, Department of Health Services, Umatilla County, and CASA, to name a few. These relationships provide an avenue of givers to meet the unseen needs of those children she serves.

She is focused on empowering families to be connected within the community. She manages volunteers to support children and their families to be involved in sports, arts and other developmental activities. She is changing lives in Hermiston.

The Foundation mission is to enhance the quality of life and general health of residents living in West Umatilla and Morrow County communities by raising funds and giving to community projects. Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation reviews funding requests and makes awards for worthwhile projects twice a year. The next deadline for submitting grant applications to the Foundation is January 31, 2018. Groups or individuals interested in making a donation or being considered for funding are encouraged to call the Foundation office at 667-3419.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season.



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