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BY THE WAY

If you're wondering what to do with your old Christmas tree, you can drop it off at **Butte Park** during the month of January. Look for signage on the south end of the park, and don't forget to remove all decorations first, as the trees will be fed through a woodchipper and used as a weed barrier around trees and other landscaping in parks.

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A pair of **Umatilla School District** students are featured in "The Promise of Oregon" public education support campaign

Jordan Lucky Pifer, who attends Clara Brownell Middle School, and **Maria Moreno**, a Umatilla High School student, are part of the statewide public education support campaign, which officially debuted in November 2014. It aims to create public support to help meet the state's 40-40-20 goals and increase student achievement and graduation rates.

Pifer was among five students across the state who were featured the week of Dec. 18 for the campaign who completed the sentence beginning with, "I am the Promise of Oregon because..." He expressed interest in becoming a veterinarian and helping people's animals. Also, a Dec. 12 spot features Moreno, who wants to study history. To view photos and information about the students

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Moving forward



Phil Hamm, director of the Hermiston experiment station, speaks at the grand opening of the Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center in the HAREC campus in Hermiston, one of BMCC's top accomplishments for the year.

FILE PHOTO



FILE PHOTO

Completion of construction of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center was one of the city of Hermiston's top 2017 accomplishments.

HERMISTON HERALD

2017 was a busy year full of transitions for many Hermiston organizations, but their work is not done yet. As the new year begins, a city, community college, nonprofit, school district and chamber of commerce reflect on what they accomplished in 2017 and how they will keep the momentum going in 2018.

City of Hermiston

The city of Hermiston's top accomplishment in 2017 was finishing construction on the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center and help-



FILE PHOTO

Hermiston residents Joleen Pruett and her mother, Sharon Ekenstam, cut fresh lavender during the 2017 Lavendar Festival, one of Agape House's top accomplishments for 2017.

ing successfully host the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo there, according to City Manager Byron Smith.

"I think those are big accomplishments," he said.

Starting construction on the Harkenrider Center, which will be home to Hermiston's senior center, along with winning a grant for new playground equipment for Sunset Park were two other important accomplishments Smith named.

As for the coming year, Smith said finishing the Harkenrider Center and opening it for use by the city's seniors will likely be one of the city's top accomplishments for 2018. He said the city is also looking forward

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First New Year's baby takes his time arriving

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Jose Phillip Escobedo may have been Umatilla County's first baby of the new year, but he took a long time getting here.

"I was not expecting a New Year's baby. I was expecting a tax break baby," his mother Jennifer Escobedo said.

Escobedo's water broke Friday morning, but little "Joey" didn't arrive until 4:30 a.m. Monday. He showed up a healthy 7 pounds, 4 ounces and 21 and a half inches.

"I'm excited he's out," his father Jose Escobedo said. "I'm excited they're both healthy and I'll be even more excited when they get to come home."

The baby is Jose and Jennifer's first. They moved from Stanfield to Umatilla in September after buying a house in anticipation of his arrival.

Jennifer said she and Jose had bought a bottle of Martinelli's sparkling cider to toast the start of 2018 and discussed how they wanted to spend New Year's Eve together, not knowing they would be ringing in the new year in the maternity ward of Good Shepherd Medical Center.

"The bottle is still in the fridge," she said.

Although Jennifer's water broke on Friday, she didn't begin going into labor — a phenomenon known as premature rupture of membranes, or PROM. The longer labor is delayed after PROM, the greater the chance of infection for the mother or baby, so Jennifer was induced. She said the hospital staff was very considerate in starting the "least intrusive" medications first and working up, but even after the final dose of Pitocin Joey was still being shy.

"For some reason he didn't want to descend,



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

Baby Jose Phillip Escobedo, also known as Joey, is pictured with his parents Jose and Jennifer Escobedo at Good Shepherd Medical Center a few hours after Joey was born.

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