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BY THE WAY

New meters allow smarter energy use

Hermiston drivers will be seeing more **Umatilla Electric Cooperative** trucks around as workers complete projects downtown and along Northeast Fourth Street.

Starting Thursday the city will begin changing out the light poles in the downtown area, replacing the standard utility poles with decorative black versions featuring hanging flower baskets and LED lights. Crews will start east and work west toward Highway 395 and there will be times that parking spaces in front of businesses will be blocked by equipment.

UEC crews have also been performing "re-conductoring" work on Northeast Fourth Street, which involves replacing wires. The work is related to the new Hermiston East substation that was recently completed, and is in some cases blocking a lane of traffic during the day.

Starting in the next week or two and continuing until May 1, **Hermiston Energy Services** customers will also see their meters replaced, allowing them to use an app to track their electricity usage by the day, the hour or even

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Try it. You'll like it.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Chef Diwash Neupane checks on some tandoori chicken cooking in a traditional Indian tandoor oven Friday at Indian Kitchen and Steakhouse in Hermiston.

Hermiston sees increase in different types of cuisine

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston is experiencing something of a food Renaissance, with restaurants featuring the cuisines of several different countries springing up in the last few years.

A yet-to-open Italian restaurant is the latest in a string of eateries in town offering new options to diners. Last week, an Indian restaurant opened in

the old Stockman's Steakhouse, and in November, a second sushi restaurant opened up on 395 and Elm — only a year after the first one.

Gaurav Bhatia, co-owner of the new Indian Kitchen and Steakhouse, said he thinks people are eager for some different choices.

"People have been asking," he said. "People want to try new stuff. They wanted to try Chinese, Thai, Japanese — and Indian, too."

Bhatia's restaurant will feature a

rotating buffet with Indian vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes, as well as some of the American fare featured at the old Stockman's restaurant.

He said he knew the combination was unusual, but people seemed to be interested even if they were new to Indian food.

Zoe Zhou, the manager of Shiki Hibachi Sushi, the second sushi restaurant to open in Hermiston in a

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New focus on 'community'

Council changes name, policies at former conference center

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston Conference Center will now be known as the Hermiston Community Center after the city council approved a series of changes in policy and pricing at the building.

The city of Hermiston's parks and recreation department took over management of the center from the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce on Jan. 1.

During Monday's city council meeting parks and recreation director Larry Fetter said the goal of the policies adopted by the city is to "retain the original intent of the com-

munity center as a gathering space and home for diverse cultural and recreational programming." The city hopes now that the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center plus the new Maxwell Siding Event Center can take over some of the weddings and Quinceañeras previously held at the community center, the re-named Hermiston Community Center can be used to foster more community art, music and theater opportunities.

"We will evaluate programs that use the community center and see if maybe there isn't a better home for them," he said.

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STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

The Hermiston Parks and Recreation department will be changing the name and the signage at the Hermiston Community Center.

