

Hermiston Herald

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Illnesses and weather push blood shortage to critical level • PAGE A6

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Hermiston wrestlers best Hood River in hard-won matchup • PAGE A12

BY THE WAY

HPD Facebook post shows off humor

Hermiston Police Department's recently-expanded use of social media has been prompting some extra attention for the department lately. A recent post on Facebook was shared more than 250 times. "Have you been ripped off by your drug dealer? Are you running out of space to store stolen property? Have you done something horrible, and feel like you should tell somebody? The Hermiston Police Department, in business since 1907, may have the solution for your problem," the post read, before offering up variety of services including "trained operators" answering calls 24/7, house calls and free evening and weekend service. The department has leveraged the increased attention on Facebook to call attention to more serious matters, including unsolved robberies, resources for victims of sexual assault and advice about deterring car thieves.

... **Highland Hills Elementary School** students were using portable toilets, bottled water and hand sanitizer Monday after a rusted pipe sprang a leak outside the school. Water was turned off during the afternoon so that city crews could fix the problem, and by 3 p.m. the leak had been fixed.

See BTW, A18

HERMISTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

GRAD RATES LAG (10 POINTS BEHIND STATE AVERAGE)

AS NEIGHBORS' GROW

Umatilla increases rate by 10 percent, touts follow through from principal

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

The 2017 graduation rates are in, and Hermiston's are showing room for improvement. Hermiston School District's graduation rate of 65.8 percent — a slight up-tick from the previous year — is more than 10 points below the statewide graduation rate of 76.6 percent, according to figures released by the Oregon Department of Education on Thursday. The figure is derived from the percentage of students who receive a diploma four years after they begin high school.

Stanfield, Echo and Umatilla were all above the state average, with a 10 point jump for Umatilla over its 2015-2016 rates.

Hermiston School District

Hermiston's rates have been lower than the state average for the last few years, and this year was the lowest rate in Umatilla County. Overall, their rate is the 21st worst in the state.

Hermiston administrators acknowledged that the rates are not where they had hoped.

"I would love to at least hit the state average next year," said Hermiston High School Principal Tom Spoo. "And that would be a huge jump. The state average has been steadily climbing."

See **GRAD rates**, A18



STAFF PHOTO BY KATHY ANEY
Members of the 2017 Hermiston High School graduating class celebrate at the end of Saturday's graduation ceremony.

"I would love to at least hit the state average next year. And that would be a huge jump. The state average has been steadily climbing."

TOM SPOO | Hermiston High School Principal

Festival street construction begins Thursday

Street will be closed until Memorial Day, altered to host outdoor events

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

The street in front of Hermiston City Hall will close Thursday and not re-open until Memorial Day as contractors transform it into a festival street designed to host events.

Moreno & Nelson Construction of Walla Walla will begin work on Northeast Second Street between Main Street and Gladys Avenue this week. An ad-hoc committee of business owners helped create the street's design, which was then finalized by city engineers Anderson Perry & Associates.



CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

See **STREET**, A18

This concept image shows the proposed Hermiston festival street improvement project.



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