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A large crop of Republicans vie for an opportunity to challenge Governor Kate Brown, while a field of Democrats eyes Rep. Greg Walden's Congressional seat.
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BY THE WAY

Robotics team at world finals

A team of robotics students from **Umatilla High School** are in Houston, Texas, this week for the world finals FRC robotics championship.

Team 4125 Confidential had a strong season, according to superintendent **Heidi Sipe**, that included winning the prestigious Chairman's Award during the quarterfinals in Clackamas, semi-finals in Yakima and another Chairman's Award at the Pacific Northwest Championship.

The team will be updating their Facebook page during the trip and when they return will host a baked potato feed to share stories and pictures from the trip and raise start-up money for next year's season.

...
The state legislature's new **Joint Committee on Student Success** will be holding a public hearing on Wednesday, April 25 at 7 p.m. at Hermiston High School. The committee is holding a listening tour

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THE RACE IS ON



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston City Council candidate Jackie Linton answers a question during a candidate forum at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston.

City councilors discuss housing, economic development

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Housing, economic development and the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center were all topics of concern during a forum for Hermiston City Council candidates Wednesday night.

The seven candidates took questions presented by the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce. Michael Engelbrecht (Ward 4) was not at the forum after announcing to the *Hermiston Herald* that he is in the process of submitting paperwork to formally withdraw from the race due to a changing employment situation that means he may not be living in Hermiston next year. Incumbent Jackie Myers (Ward 3) was also absent from the council portion.

Questions covered a variety of problems facing Hermiston, giving candidates one minute each to present a solution.

EOTEC

A hot topic for the city recently has been how to make the new \$17 million Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center financially self-sustainable.

Several candidates mentioned keeping VenuWorks, which was recently contracted to run the center's day to day operations, accountable and making sure the professional venue management company is yielding good results.

"We need to keep their feet to the flame," Mark Gomolski (Ward 1) said.

Roy Barron (Ward 2) said he believed that EOTEC's current rental fee structure is unaffordable for most prospective clients, and that hurts the center's ability to attract events. He cited EOTEC being passed up by the Hermiston School District as a graduation venue as an example. He also said the facility needs to expand the services it provides to people renting the event center.

Shean Fitzgerald (Ward 2) said he thought the city should also seek private donations and volunteer work to help supplement the city's support for EOTEC.

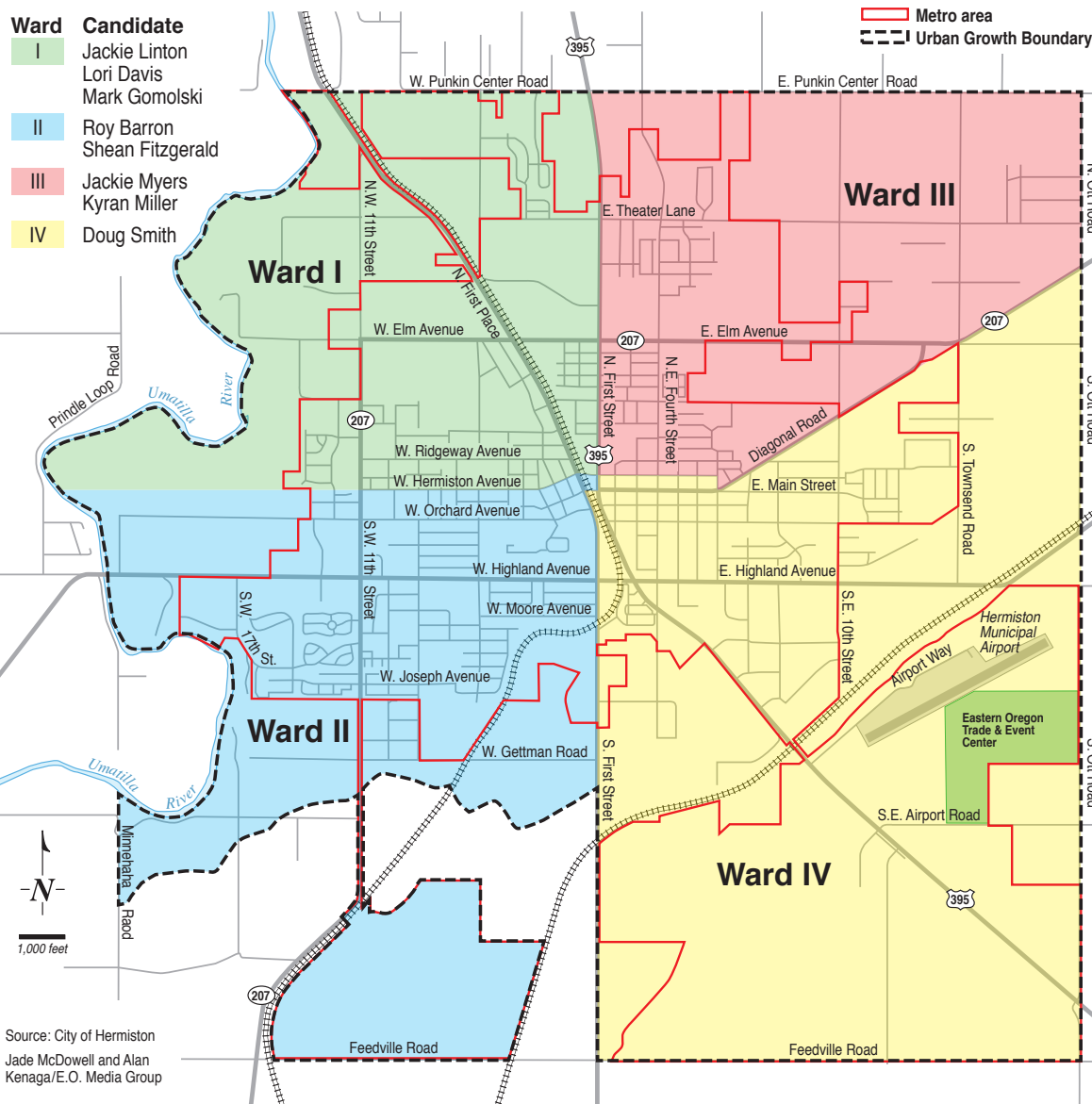
Housing

One of the council's current goals is tackling a shortage of affordable housing for families moving to Hermiston. Jackie Linton (Ward 1) said she believes the

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Hermiston City Council wards

Voters will be asked on May 15 to vote for one city council candidate from each ward.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock answers a question about the county budget during a candidate forum on Wednesday at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston. Murdock is running against Tom Bailor and Rick Pullen.

Opposite stances in contested county races

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
STAFF WRITER

Umatilla County commissioner candidates managed to take some shots at each other last week in spite of rules banning exchanges during a forum on April 11.

Rick Pullen and Tom Bailor are challenging Commissioner George Murdock for Position 1 on the county's three-member board. All three live in Pendleton. And Athena Mayor John Shafer aims to unseat Commissioner Larry Givens of Umapine from Position 2. The five men sat at the same

table last Wednesday night for a forum at Armand Larive Middle School, Hermiston.

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce helped sponsor the event, which attracted about 50 people. Under the rules, a moderator asked each candidate the same question, but the candidates were not allowed to debate each other. The topics ranged from economic development and housing to mental health, from law enforcement to balancing the county budget.

Givens led off with economic

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