

# Torres-Medrano named 2018 Citizen of the Year

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
STAFF WRITER

Umatilla city councilor Selene Torres-Medrano was named 2018 Citizen of the Year at Umatilla's Distinguished Citizens Award Banquet.

Torres-Medrano has been active in serving the community of Umatilla and recently organized a series of activities for May's Mental Health Awareness Month.

She works for Umatilla School District as an ELL Family Outreach Coordinator, and previously headed up the citizen committee that helped the district pass a bond to make needed improvements to Umatilla schools.

Those who nominated her described Torres-Medrano as "driven to making changes in town" and someone who never quits.

Business of the Year went to Banner Bank, which has a branch in Umatilla. Those who nominated the bank noted its staff go "the extra mile" in customer service and are always willing to help at community events around town.

The George Alan Curtis Award is given each year to a Umatilla resident who contributes to remembering Umatilla's past and enhancing its future. This year two awards were given, to Salud Campos and Nanci Sandoval.

Campos is the treasurer of the chamber of commerce and was recognized during Friday's banquet for her "ready smile and laugh,

her welcoming personality and the manner in which she shares her love for her community."

Sandoval is Umatilla's city recorder and has been instrumental in Landing Days, the 3 on 3 basketball tournament and the city's bilingual newsletter.

The Umatilla Police Department and Umatilla School District also presented awards at the banquet.

From Umatilla School District, Sarah Blake, Josy Torres, Lizette Ames and Kyle Sipe were recognized as this year's Bridge Builders.

Blake is a teacher in the district's bilingual kindergarten classroom and helps with the after school program, parent classes, youth track and transportation.

Torres works in the district office and is known for building bridges with the district's Latino community and for sharing her artistic talent to brighten up district property.

Ames works in the office of Umatilla High School and is a "familiar presence at all things Umatilla," cheering on students and taking photos that they can use to remember their extracurricular activities.

Sipe has worked for Umatilla School district for 18 years, serving as a math and science teacher, basketball coach, football coach and robotics coach.

Umatilla Police Department honored Thalia Leon as Reserve Officer of the Year and office administrator Kylie Baker as Employee of the Year.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO BY NANCI SANDOVAL  
**Umatilla Chamber of Commerce president Jeff Wheeler poses with Selene Torres-Medrano after she won the 2018 Citizen of the Year at the Umatilla Distinguished Citizens Award Banquet.**

## ELECTION

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November, when incumbent Lori Davis will face challenger Mark Gomolski in a run-off.

Gomolski gained the most votes of that race, at 36.2 percent, with Davis gaining 32.7 percent. Candidate Jackie Linton came in third at 30.9 percent and will therefore be excluded from the run-off between the top two candidates in the general election.

Gomolski, who is retired and moved to Hermiston in 2015 from Chicago, is currently a member of the Hermiston School District board, which meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month at the same time as the city council. He said if he wins it would be a good opportunity to ask the school board to vote to change its meeting nights, since he knows people in the community who would like to attend both.

Gomolski said the fact that he and Linton combined got more votes than Davis showed that Hermiston residents were ready for a change at city hall.

"It shows people are fed up with the current administration and who is in there," he said.

Incumbents Jackie Myers and Doug Smith retained their seats, however, despite having challengers. Myers received 55.6 percent of the vote running against Kyran Miller, while Smith received 61.7 percent of the vote. His challenger Michael Engelbrecht never did any campaigning and had publicly announced in April that he was dropping out of the race due to a change in employment.

### County commissioners

Not all incumbents in Umatilla County retained their seat. County commissioner Larry Givens was unseated by John Shafer, Athena mayor and sheriff's dispatch supervisor, while Rick Pullen forced a run-off with incumbent George Murdock.

Shafer received 52.3 percent of the vote.

Shafer, several members of his family and close supporters gathered for election night in the meeting room at the Pendleton Oxford Suites. Chatter and the clatter of dinnerware died down while Shafer and the crowd awaited the election results on the county's website. About a quarter past 8 p.m., the cheers erupted.

Beating an incumbent with years of experience is not easy, Shafer said as he thanked family and supporters.

He also dabbed away tears, joking, "My eyes are sweating a little bit." Of 45 voting precincts in Umatilla County, Shafer won 28 and Givens took 17. Support for Givens was heavier in Hermiston and Stanfield, while Shafer won much of the east side of the county. Both candidates are from northeastern part of the



Jackie Myers



Roy Barron



Doug Smith

county. Shafer said he plans to work for the sheriff's office right up until he takes office in January 2019. And before dealing with mental health services and other issues he brought up on the campaign, Shafer said he plans to get the pulse of county government.

"First I want to meet with all the county department heads," he said. "I want to make sure we're on the same page. ... I definitely want to hear from the department heads right out of the gate."

He also said he wants to meet with incumbent commissioners Bill Elfering and George Murdock, who is on his way to a November run-off against challenger Rick Pullen.

Murdock was the top vote-getter with 45.4 percent in the race for county commissioner position 1, while Rick Pullen pulled 30.5 percent and Tom Bailor received 23.8 percent. That sends Murdock and Pullen, both of Pendleton, down the road to a runoff.

Murdock said he is happy to be the front-runner with a sizable lead and looking forward to time off the campaign. Seeking political office, he said, tends to get in the way of work.

### Extension District

The voters spoke clearly on election night: there will be no OSU Extension Service District for taxpayers in Umatilla and Morrow counties.

Umatilla County voters declined to approve the new district by 63 percent to 37.

The measures proposed a property tax increase of 33 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The tax would have raised about \$1.7 million per year in Umatilla County, and \$700,000 in Morrow County, and the money was slated toward operations for the Extension Service like staffing and equipment costs, as well as agricultural

research and 4-H programs.

Mary Corp, director of the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center and OSU crop and soil science professor, said she was surprised by the results, especially in Umatilla County.

"Of course I'm disappointed it didn't pass," she said. "We talked to a lot of people, and had a lot of positive responses from folks about how Extension has impacted their lives."

She said she understood that it's always challenging to pass a new tax, and that the sticking point here may have been convincing people about the importance of funding agricultural research.

### Circuit Court

Rob Collins was elected to the open Circuit Court judge seat in the 6th Judicial District, beating Michael Breiling 60.6 percent to 39 percent.

Both Pendleton attorneys trekked to their respective law offices Tuesday and attempted to focus on work rather than whether they would win. Collins spent the early evening in another role as Round-Up Director, hosting Portland Rose Festival princesses in town to spend time with the Round-Up Court. After dinner at the Let 'er Buck Room, Collins drove home to find a houseful of ecstatic people ready to celebrate with their candidate.

"There was a lot of people cheering me, greeting me," Collins said. "It was pretty cool. Everyone was quite jubilant."

The attorney quieted for a moment.

"I feel excited that people have expressed that kind of confidence in me," he said. "It's really gratifying."

Collins will take the bench in January. He said he will spend the next seven months easing out of the law practice he shares with his brother, Michael Collins.

## BY THE WAY

### BTW

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Pendleton as soon as regulatory hurdles are cleared. The **Pendleton Treatment Center** will offer methadone and Suboxone — two medications used to combat addiction to prescription painkillers and heroin.

The clinic won't start receiving clients until the complicated regulatory process wraps up and staff members are hired, an undertaking that could take a couple of months or more.

Methadone clients will arrive at the clinic at 118 S.W. 20th in Pendleton each morning for their daily doses. As they prove their commitment and reliability, they earn the right to take doses home instead of having to return each day. Dispensing will take place between 5:30 and 9:30 a.m.

A number of students came up W-I-N-N-E-R-S during the **InterMountain Education Service District's Spelling Contest**.

The Tuesday, May 8 event was held at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton. Participants had already won division spelling contests at their schools. The local stu-

dent winners include: **MORROW COUNTY:** Division 1 (first-fifth grades) third place: **Dakota Seufert**, Irrigon Elementary School. Division 2 (sixth-eighth grades) second place: **Jozen Byers**, Irrigon Elementary School; third: **Axel Paredes-Rosales**, Windy River Elementary School

**U M A T I L L A COUNTY:** Division 1 (first-fifth grades) second place: **Adriel Ibarra**, Stanfield Elementary School; third: **Eden Enkey**, McNary Heights Elementary School. Division 2 (sixth-eighth grades) second place: **Luis Tejada**, Clara Brownell Middle School.

"IMESD is pleased to congratulate all of our spelling contest winners and would like to thank all the students who devoted time to compete this year," said **Lizette Berryessa**, IMESD spelling contest coordinator.

Echo recently announced winners of its **"If I were Mayor Contest."** The top students entries included illustrations by **Logan Kellan Smith**, posters by **Emma Pollick** and **Jacee James**, and an essay by **Lillian Wallis**.

Winners received cash prizes, which was donated for the contest and promotional items from the city of Echo.

The **Bonneville Power Administration** presented former Umatilla resident **James Burns** with the Administrator's Unsung Heroes award, one of its highest honors.

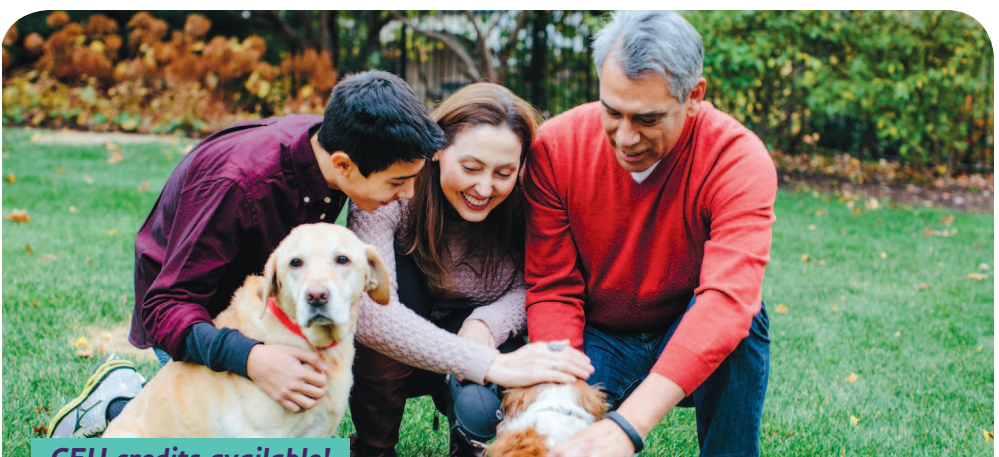
The award was presented at BPA's 2018 Administrator's Excellence Awards, an annual program that honors those who have made "exceptional" contributions to BPA or the utility industry.

Over the course of his career Burns worked as an electrical engineer for BPA for 41 years, supporting safe and reliable operation of the power grid throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"He spent countless hours deciphering massive amounts of data, reconstructing events and formulating corrective actions, all while mentoring others to perform this critical work," according to a news release from BPA.

You can submit items for our weekly *By The Way* column by emailing your tips to [editor@hermistonherald.com](mailto:editor@hermistonherald.com) or share them on social media using the hashtag #HHBTW.

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## THE BASICS & EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

**DATE** Wednesday, June 6

**TIME** 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**LOCATION** Good Shepherd Health Care System  
610 NW 11th St., Conference Room 2  
Hermiston, OR 97838

**REGISTER** These class is free, but registration is required. To register, call 800-272-3900.

The Alzheimer's Association Oregon Chapter is pleased to present these back-to-back community classes in Hermiston: "The Basics" and "Effective Communication Strategies."

In the first class, you'll learn about Alzheimer's disease detection, causes and risk factors, stages of the disease and treatment. In the second class, you'll explore how communication takes place when someone has Alzheimer's, learn to decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia, and identify strategies to help you connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.

An education program by the **alzheimer's association**

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