

Event center weekend schedule filling up fast

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center is filling up fast on weekends but could use some more weekday events, according to the center's general manager.

On Monday Al Davis, who was hired by Venuworks to run the project after the venue-management company began a contract with EOTEC in January, gave the city council an update about how the first six months of the year have gone.

Davis said booking every weekend for months at a time has not been a problem, but he is always looking for more Monday through Thursday events.

He is also looking for larger events than weddings and community dinners. He also said while the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo are great anchor tenants he hoped that EOTEC will someday host multiple events of that scale each year. When he worked for American Royal rodeo in Kansas City, they had a massive barbecue competition each year with over 500 contestants and more on the waiting list. Davis said



HH FILE PHOTO

General manager Al Davis and the city of Hermiston's EOTEC advisory committee are looking at ways to improve next year's Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo experience at EOTEC.

someday EOTEC could host the largest barbecue contest in the Pacific Northwest.

The center still doesn't have a completed marketing plan, but Davis said he is also doing some marketing in hopes of bringing in business conferences.

"People say, 'But Hermiston is in the middle of nowhere,' and we say 'Kind

of, but it's also in the middle of everywhere,'" he said. "It's between four major cities, so if you have offices in those four cities it's the perfect place to meet in the middle."

Finding out what works takes some experimentation — a recent attempt at a flea market there "failed miserably." But Davis said when

the group that tried to run the flea market apologized for the lack of vendors showing up, he told them that it was a learning experience for everybody and gave them some pointers for if they wanted to try again in the future.

Davis said he and the rest of the EOTEC staff are looking at ways to save money

on operational costs, such as bringing linen service in-house instead of contracting it out. They're also getting a better handle on the right amount to charge for

various events. Davis said some groups that were used to using the fairgrounds for free were initially unhappy to find they would be charged for using EOTEC, but many people do understand that the project needs to make money in order to support itself.

When asked about preparations for the fair and rodeo, Davis said Venuworks was planning to bring in professionals from the Toyota Center to run the parking, and they had some good ideas that should help considerably.

"With a plan and using paid staff, we think we can get people off the road a lot faster," he said.

Davis has been meeting with the city's new EOTEC committee, which includes representatives from the fair and rodeo boards, and Davis said they were on board with the ideas. They are also planning on switching to using Ticketmaster for ticketing, which will give them more accurate attendance data than in years past.

POLICE LOG

TUESDAY, JUNE 19

3:49 p.m. — A suicidal subject was reported at Southwest 11th Street, Hermiston.

5:07 p.m. — An intoxicated man refused to leave a building on North First Street, Hermiston.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20

11:11 a.m. — A caller reported drug activity at Northeast Aspen Drive, Hermiston.

4:07 p.m. — A person said someone broke in and stole a gun from their home on Southeast Sixth Street, Hermiston. The caller said they have all the information on the gun.

5:31 p.m. — A caller said she discovered she had a fuel leak while filling gas, and discovered someone had cut her fuel lines and tampered with

her fuel tank.

7:50 p.m. — A suicidal subject was reported at West Oak Avenue, Hermiston.

11:16 p.m. — On West Highland Avenue, a caller said they'd just heard a gun in the direction of Birch Avenue, or in the direction of the school headquarters.

THURSDAY, JUNE 21

1:16 p.m. — Lifeways put a juvenile on hold at a school on East Catherine Avenue, and needed an officer to transport him to the hospital.

8:33 p.m. — A drunk driver was reported at East Browning Avenue, Hermiston.

FRIDAY, JUNE 22

2:27 p.m. — A bomb threat was reported at Wal-Mart on North First

Street, Hermiston. The store was evacuated and searched but police did not find any explosives. The incident is under investigation.

9:55 p.m. — A fight was reported at North First Street, Hermiston.

10:24 p.m. — An assault was reported at Southwest Sage Drive, Hermiston.

SATURDAY, JUNE 23

9:01 a.m. — Four males were trying to enter a small, white compact car on North First Street, Hermiston.

12:53 p.m. — Someone reported their daughter missing on Southwest 10th Place, Hermiston.

SUNDAY, JUNE 24

1:05 a.m. — A fight was reported at South Highway 395, Hermiston.

4:26 a.m. — A missing juvenile was reported on Southwest Shea Drive in Hermiston.

4:12 p.m. — A theft was reported in progress at North First Street, Hermiston.

10:20 p.m. — Shots fired were reported at Southwest 13th Place, Hermiston.

MONDAY, JUNE 25

6:10 p.m. — A suicidal subject was reported at South First Street on South Cottonwood Drive, Hermiston.

7:32 p.m. — On North First Street, a caller said a dog was tied to a garbage can, and the owner was playing the lotto machines. The caller said she gave the dog water, and the owner thanked her and went back inside. The caller says law enforcement should come get the dog.

BTW

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be available from **Hermiston Brewing Company**.

A handful of local students graduated with the 10th class of the **Oregon Connections Academy**, which held a ceremony June 9 at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem.

Area students turning the tassels with the class of 2018 included **Breanna Bayer**, **Riley Miller** and **Maximus Neel**, all of Hermiston, and **Patrick Burch** of Umatilla. These students are among more than 370 graduating high school seniors who have now joined a growing alumni base of Oregon

Connections Academy, the state's largest virtual school. Members of the class of 2018 received nearly a million dollars in scholarship awards, and a majority of the graduates have plans to further their education or start a career.

ORCA served nearly 4,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade across the state this school year. Enrollment is now underway for ORCA's 2018-19 school year. For additional information about the tuition-free online school, visit www.oregonconnectionsacademy.com or call 1-800-382-6010.

Applause is in order for **Rogers Toyota of Hermiston**, as they were recently

presented with a **President's Award from Toyota Motor North America, Inc.**

The award is given to Toyota dealerships across the United States that exhibit an exceptional work ethic. The dealerships are recognized for achieving high standards of performance in all facets of the automotive dealer profession, including vehicle and parts sales, service and customer satisfaction.

Rogers Toyota is located at 1550 N. First St. For more information, call 541-567-6461 or visit www.toyotaofhermiston.com.

A 12-week course on anxiety and depression recently began at Calvary Apostolic Center.

The faith-based series offers ways to overcome emotional obstacles while creating a healthier community and relationships with others and God. There is no participation fee.

The sessions take place on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. at Calvary Apostolic Center, which meets at Agape House, 500 W. Harper Road, Hermiston. The lessons are presented by a variety of professionals and mental health providers.

For more information, call 310-678-0264 or search Facebook.

You can submit items for our weekly *By The Way* column by emailing your tips to editor@hermistonherald.com.

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Evening Service.....7:00 pm
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1 Pet. 5:7

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