

HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY

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Hermiston Herald

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BY THE WAY

City looking for feedback on food trucks

The City of Hermiston is considering amendments to its mobile food vendor rules, and it wants feedback from residents.

A survey will be available at hermiston.or.us until July 15.

After the city passed a mobile food vending ordinance in 2013, many food vendors closed up shop rather than pay for a \$500 license and follow the other regulations outlined. Those regulations include moving each night, providing parking, not providing seating for patrons, closing by 10 p.m. and following design standards. As a result, the city only issued three vendors licenses and cannot issue more without a vote from the city council.

As food trucks have gained in popularity nationwide, members of

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IN THE FIELD



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Hermiston High School senior Trevor Horn drives a combine while harvesting Kentucky blue grass on Friday at Golden Valley Farms outside of Stanfield.

Agricultural jobs for teens affected by technology, labor laws

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Whether pulling weeds, picking berries or driving machinery, many people found their first job on a farm.

For Umatilla County kids, farm labor has been one of many options for making money in the summer, but the way young workers fit into the agricultural industry has seen major changes in the past several years.

Darrin Ditchen, owner of Golden Valley Farms East in

Stanfield, said his minimum hiring age is 16, the age teens have to be to operate heavy equipment.

“If you can’t run equipment on a farm ... they can’t work too many hours,” Ditchen said. “At a farming job, that’s tough.”

The Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries has several requirements for employing minors both under 16, and under 18. Among other restrictions, workers under the age of 16 are prohibited from working in places where power-driven machinery is used.

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STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Recent graduate from the Baker Charter School Benjamin Moore pulls a text sample from a freezer in the entomology lab at HAREC on Friday in Hermiston.

Umatilla City Manager Pelleberg resigns

HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla city manager Russ Pelleberg has resigned after a short but turbulent time leading the city.

City recorder Nanci Sandoval confirmed the resignation in an email last week, noting that Pelleberg turned in his resignation to pursue other opportunities and that his last day would be July 27. He is heading up to Newport, Washington, for a city administrator job there and said in an email that he is leaving Umatilla on “great terms.”

On Thursday, the city council



Russ Pelleberg

held an emergency meeting. After a closed-door executive session, they voted to hire a recruitment firm that could facilitate a nationwide search, and asked the city recorder to add the naming of an interim city manager to Tuesday’s agenda, as well as a discussion of compensation and a letter of thanks and congratulations to Pelleberg.

Pelleberg joined the city in 2013 as public works director and was promoted in March 2016 to city manager while still maintaining his public works duties. Former city manager Bob Ward had been set to retire in February 2017 but asked the city

council in October 2015 if he could end his contract early to make way for Pelleberg.

The city council voted to accept Ward’s offer and promote Pelleberg without interviewing outside candidates. But later David Trott resigned from his position as mayor, citing “irreconcilable differences” with the city council after they declined to take any action on concerns Trott had about Pelleberg’s résumé. Pelleberg claimed two degrees from unaccredited online universities considered diploma mills.

Two other city councilors — Mary Dedrick and David Lougee — resigned shortly after voting not to accept Trott’s resignation, but did not specifically name the dis-

pute between Pelleberg and Trott as their reason for leaving.

During his tenure Pelleberg restructured city departments and created a community development director position, for which he hired former Umatilla County planning director Tamra Mabbott. He worked to create a parks master plan for the city and put in place initiatives for downtown revitalization. He has been working on a water re-use project that would use water from local data centers for irrigation purposes.

Mayor Daren Dufloth deferred comment to the city’s public information officer.

The Umatilla city council meets Tuesday, July 3 at 7 p.m. at city hall, 700 Sixth St. in Umatilla.



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