

Discovering new places, seeking out backroads

By **CHRIS RUSH**
PUBLISHER, HERMISTON
HERALD

Whenever I've had the pleasure of moving to a new town, I've always tried to be very receptive to the good advice offered by folks who have lived there for awhile and know the ways and customs of their community.

That is certainly true of my first few weeks here in northeast Oregon.

I relocated here in May after spending three years on the west (and wetter) side of the state in Coos Bay/North Bend. Prior to that, my 26-year newspaper career has taken my family to small cities like Bentonville, Ark., Aberdeen, Wash., and Bartlesville, Okla. Although dramatically different in climate, culture and economic fortunes, each of the communities in which I have lived and worked shared something in common: They are all fiercely proud of their unique heritage and the niche they occupy in the world.

I have discovered this to be true here in northeast Oregon as well. In the brief time I have been here, I've had the opportunity to visit numerous towns in the region: Pendleton, Hermiston, Stanfield, Umatilla, Echo, Milton-Freewater, Athena,

Weston, Tollgate, Elgin, Wallowa, Lostine, Enterprise, Joseph, Pilot Rock, Ukiah, Long Creek, Mount Vernon, John Day and La Grande. I still have Irrigon, Boardman, Helix, Heppner, Lexington, Baker City and other towns on my to-visit list.



Chris Rush
PUBLISHER

Each community usually hangs its proverbial hat on something that sets it apart. For instance, I now know that watermelons play an important part of Hermiston's branding identity: "Where life is sweet."

"But beyond the cities and towns, it is clear to me that the land of Eastern Oregon is a special place."

Chris Rush, Publisher

Of course, everyone identifies Pendleton with a bronc-riding — "Let 'er Buck" — cowboy image, but as Mayor John Turner pointed out to me recently, the actual city seal honors

the city's woolen products heritage with an image of a sheep.

I see that the hamlet of Athena honors its 19th-century Scottish settlers with the annual Caledonian Games "to preserve and perpetuate Scottish social manners and customs." The event is scheduled for July 13-15 this year, by the way.

According to Wikipedia, Wallowa County's Lostine was named after a short-lived place by the same name in Cherokee County, Kansas. Further down the road, the tourist town of Joseph, originally named Silver Lake or Lake City, eventually adopted its name for the legendary chief of the Nez Perce.

In Grant County, John Day takes its name for a member of the famous 1811 Astor Expedition. A renowned hunter and fur trapper, his name is well remembered in the state as it is attached to multiple river branches in Oregon as well as the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument.

But perhaps my favorite name so far is the quaint hamlet of Echo, "Where History Blooms." It was named by one of the town's founding fathers, J. H. Koontz, for his then three-year-old daughter in 1880. Her Victorian image, as an adult, still adorns the city's signage and marketing materials.

But beyond the cities and towns, it is clear to me that the land of Eastern Oregon is a special place.

I've taken the opportunity on weekends to steer my four-wheel drive down some unpaved and unmarked roads in the beautiful Blue Mountains that surround us. The views from a mountain meadow at 4,000 feet in elevation can be breathtaking.

Most recently, I discovered the joy of taking the slow route from Deadman Pass down Cabbage Hill via the narrow and winding Poverty Flat Road (now, there's some interesting names for you!). If you're not in a hurry and the weather is clear, I highly recommend it.

Once down the mountain and back onto the gently rolling plains of golden wheat fields, the drive through the Umatilla Indian Reservation is enlightening. The Confederated Tribes are doing some extraordinary things with their facilities and services. And I truly believe I'm getting closer every day to the correct pronunciation of "Tamastlikt."

It's clear that we live in an incredibly rich and diverse area and I can't wait to continue my education and exploration here.

Here's to a safe and happy Independence Day holiday to everyone!

Chris Rush is the new regional publisher of the East Oregonian, Hermiston Herald, Wallowa County Chieftain, and Blue Mountain Eagle newspapers.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fundraising effort supports Ellwood family

On behalf of the Ellwood Family we wanted to say thank you to everyone who donated to the Jasmine Ellwood Fundraiser on June 2, 2018.

We had so many generous donation from individuals and businesses including the Hermiston Police Association, Umatilla County Fire District 1, Hermiston School District, Teri Allstott, Tom Spoo and Cooking Spoo Style Catering, Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team, Filipino Society of Hermiston, Dorothy Cofelt, Premier Designs, Eastern Oregon Correctional Institute, Two Rivers Correctional Institute, Main Stylin' Nook, Good Shepherd Gift Shop, Hermiston Cinema, Pilar Portrait Studio, Good Shepherd Auxiliary, Alive and Well, Norma Kightlinger, Catholic Daughters of America, Simply Divine, Kandie Jensen, Mike Botti, Hermiston Parks & Recreation, Buttercreek Salon, Carrie Marcum, Scott Miller, Nookies/Hermiston Brewing Company, Eastern Oregon Mobile Slaughter, city of Hermiston, Hermiston Vet Clinic, RDO, Lularoe with the Littles, Defining Details Photography, Angling Oregon, Wraptom Rods, Stahl's Guide Service LLC, Bookagami by Jamie, Greg and Sherri Smith, Jermey Kile, Farmhouse 73, Hales, Ford Bonney, Balance Chiropractic, Ken and Gale Gorrod, Diane McClure, NW Metal Fabricators, Smitty's Outpost, Breckyn Mecham, Last Supper Dining, 26 Mile by Whitney Knowles, Seattle Seahawks, Les Schwab Tire Factory, O So Kleen, James Simpson, Banner Bank, Neighbor Dudes, Terry Cummings, Desiree Balli Photography and to our other very generous anonymous donors. We also want to thank everyone who took the time out of the busy graduation weekend to attend.

The family is very grateful for the all of the support from the community!

SINCERELY,
JESSICA MARCUM, QUIDA GENTRY
AND CAROLINE JOURDAN

Special Olympics appreciates news coverage

The Hermiston/Pendleton Special Olympics Local Program #510 would like to express our appreciation for the wonderful news coverage our athletes and coaches have received through the past many years from the Hermiston Herald. On this 50th anniversary of Special Olympics, we appreciate having the light shine on not only our local program but also on Special Olympics International, which grew from one track meet to a worldwide program serving over one million athletes.

Our area athletes and coaches have always felt strong support from our local communities. We know that one of the reasons for this support is due to the positive coverage we have received highlighting our program and activities in the Hermiston Herald.

The local board, made up totally of volunteers, is incredibly committed to bringing sports training and competition to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Thank you for helping us in this worthy effort.

Angela Schneider, program coordinator,
and program board members

HERMISTON/PENDLETON
SPECIAL OLYMPICS LOCAL PROGRAM #510

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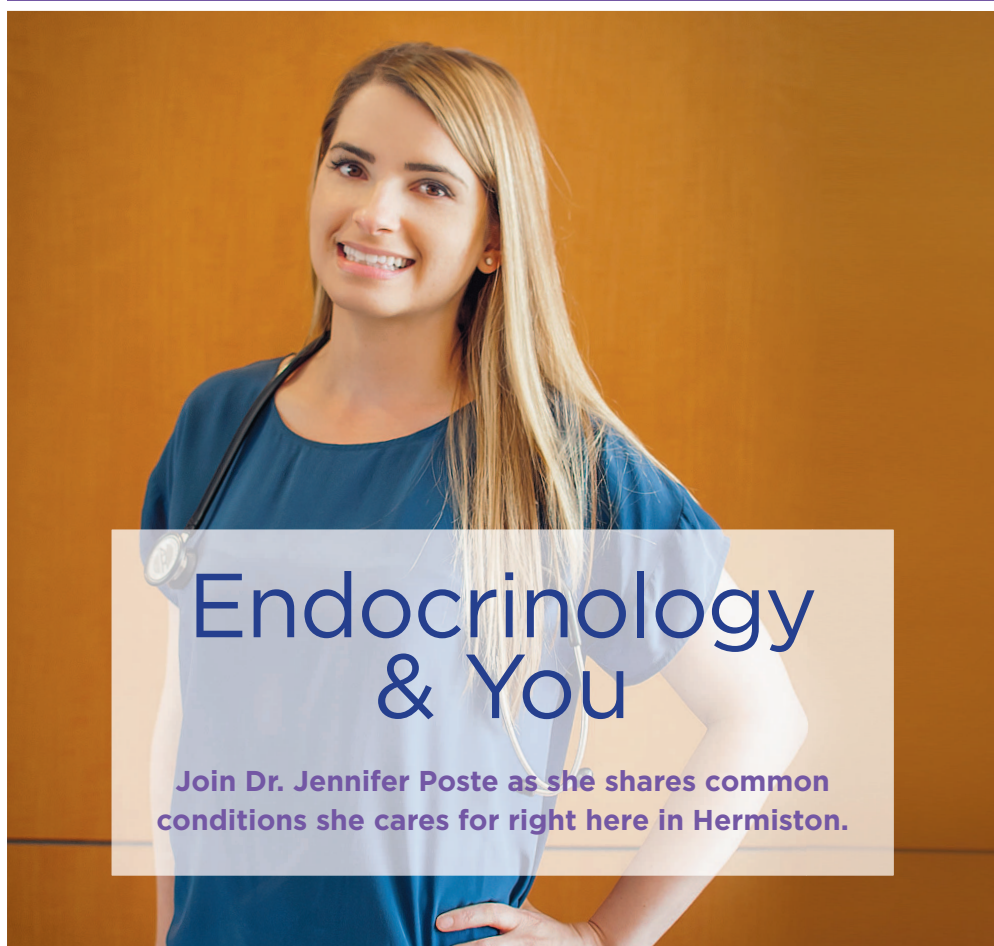
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