



United Parcel Service employees load an Ameriflight Metroliner cargo plane with overnight packages from the area in 2015 at the Hermiston Municipal Airport.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

TRCI food services manager Matt Vester (from left) and superintendent Troy Bowser present a check to Debbie Pedro, Fran Rice, Brad Wayland and Briana Cortaberria of Leadership Hermiston.

Prison inmates donate more than \$4,000 to Leadership Hermiston

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

Leadership Hermiston got a boost in funds after Two Rivers Correctional Institution inmates chose to raise money for the program that tours the prison each year.

The Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce got a \$4,321 check Thursday. The chamber offers Leadership Hermiston to a class of about 20 people annually. People who live or work in Hermiston learn about the city and get involved in a group service project of the class's choosing.

Public Safety Day includes a tour of the "city within a city" that is the prison.

"It's a great opportunity for folks in our region to see what you do out here," chamber director Debbie Pedro told superintendent Troy Bowser. "It's one of the best things we do."

TRCI allows inmates to create fundraisers internally to help local groups. And after the Leadership Hermiston tour, some of them decided they wanted to help the program.

Matt Vester, food ser-

vice manager for TRCI, said many of the forms giving permission for money to be drawn from their accounts included a thank-you note for allowing them the opportunity to contribute to a good cause.

"At the core of our mission is rehabilitation, and a lot of them want to do that," he said. "A lot of them want to give back."

Pedro said the steering committee would discuss how the funds would be used to improve the program.

The chamber is taking applications for the next Leadership Hermiston cycle, which begins Sept. 11 and ends in June 2019. Classes are the second Tuesday of each month from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

April's class will include an overnight trip to Salem to learn about state government.

To apply for a spot, download the application at hermistonchamber.com, email info@hermistonchamber.com or call 541-567-6151.

Airport looks for feedback on master plan

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

The public is invited to learn about current and upcoming projects at the Hermiston Municipal Airport next week.

The airport is hosting an open house Wednesday, July 25 from 3-4 p.m. at the airport on 1600 Airport Way, Hermiston, where project consultants and airport staff will be on hand to answer questions about recent upgrades to the airport and what projects are being considered for inclusion in the Airport Master Plan.

Rolf Anderson Leirvik, who started as the airport's new general manager this month, said he wants to hear from people.

"It's a great opportunity

for people to come in and ask questions or raise any issues," he said.

Hermiston's airport has received millions of dollars in upgrades over the past few years, thanks mostly to grants from the Federal Aviation Administration and Oregon Department of Aviation. In 2015 and 2016 contractors performed runway paving work and moved the airport's taxiway to comply with FAA standards. During the project, the airport's fueling station was moved and enlarged. Anderson Leirvik said the "great new fuel farm" was more convenient and also helped the airport be prepared for serving larger planes in the future.

Last year the city accepted federal and state grant funding to hire Cen-

tury West Engineering to update the airport's master plan. At the time assistant city manager Mark Morgan said that using the state grant as matching dollars for federal funds means the city's out-of-pocket costs for the \$300,000 project is expected to be about \$3,300.

Anderson Leirvik said airports are required to submit a master plan to the FAA for approval about every 10 years. The plan studies the airport and its traffic, potential growth and other factors in-depth and creates a roadmap for the next 10 to 15 years that the airport is required to follow.

"If it's not on the master plan, you're not going to get a grant for it," he said. "It's never going to go anywhere."

While the Hermiston Municipal Airport doesn't have commercial passenger flights, it is more than single-engine hobby planes. Traffic in and out of the airport includes UPS deliveries, corporate traffic and agricultural uses. A 2014 report from the Oregon Department of Aviation stated the airport supported 80 local jobs and 26 elsewhere in the state.

Anderson Leirvik said the master plan that citizens can give feedback for on Wednesday will help the city get funding for future projects to help it continue to improve and expand over the next decade.

"The community has grown a lot, and the airport is going to grow with it," he said.

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HHS Project Graduation Committee & HHS Class of 2018

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