

Deans of students added to Hermiston elementary schools

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston School District is introducing a new position to all five of its elementary schools — the dean of students.

According to district representative Maria Duron, the position was created to give principals and teachers more support due to increasing enrollment in the district.

Four of the five deans were hired from within the district, and Becky Bacon, the new dean of students for Rocky Heights Elementary School, used to work as a teacher on special assignment for the Echo School District, where her duties included coordinating testing for the district.

Bacon said the roles of the deans of students will vary a bit based on the needs of each school.

“With increasing student enrollment, we’re looking at focusing the deans’ role on student support, so the principals can focus on teacher support,” she said.

The deans will also coordinate Talented and Gifted programming, behavior interventions, and focus on improving student attendance.

“The district goal is

to improve student attendance by five percent,” Bacon said.

Jolene Davis, a long-time teacher in the district, will serve as the new dean of students for Highland Hills Elementary School.

She described the role as a “bridge between students and teachers.”

While all the deans have their administrative license, or are working toward it, the dean of students position is not officially listed as an administrative role, but falls under the category of a teacher on special assignment. But Bacon likened her role to that of a vice principal.

Duron said the positions are permanent, and the deans were hired specifically for their buildings. She said the deans will get paid in the same salary range as an elementary school teacher, but will spend 10 additional days at the beginning and end of the school year. Duron said the salary range is between \$37,354 and \$74,560 annually, depending on experience.

There is also an existing dean of students position at Hermiston High School. That position was vacated this year by David Melville and will be filled by Blaine Braithwaite, who previously taught in the Stanfield School District.



HH FILE PHOTO

Mexican Independence Day Celebration organizer Martin Villanueva sings the Mexican national anthem during Hermiston's 2015 Cinco de Mayo celebration.

Celebration of Mexico's Independence Day scheduled for Sept. 16 at EOTEC

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

An artist with two Latin Grammy awards and a pair of siblings who recently appeared on the television show “Little Big Shots” will perform in Hermiston next month.

Michael Salgado will headline a celebration of Mexico's Independence Day at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center on Sunday, Sept. 16. The event will include other Latino artists, a Mexican-style rodeo, folk dancers, authentic Mexican food and more starting at 1 p.m.

Organizer Martin Villanueva, who owns El Rodeo Club restaurant in Umatilla, said he expected the event to draw people from around

the Pacific Northwest.

“It’s time for us to celebrate something this large, now that we have a big, beautiful venue,” he said.

Villanueva called Salgado a male version of Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, one of the most popular Mexican-American performers of the 1990s, and said the San Antonio-based singer has the appeal to draw in people from communities outside Hermiston. Like Selena, Salgado is a Tejano musician, mixing music with traditionally Latino roots together with the sounds of American country music. He performs in both Spanish and English.

The young sibling duo Los Luzeros de Rioverde will also be performing at EOTEC that day, sing-

ing Norteño songs while accompanying themselves on the banjo and accordion. Yaxeni, 11, plays the accordion and Ricardo, 8, accompanies them on the guitar. They were recently featured on Steve Harvey’s television show “Little Big Shots.”

Mariachi bands, folk dancers and other performers will also take the stage throughout the afternoon and into the evening during the outdoor concert and rodeo event. While the event is a celebration of Mexican Independence Day, Villanueva said he hoped that many people in the community without Mexican heritage will also come enjoy the music and get a taste of Mexican rodeo.

“This is targeted toward our families,” he said. “This

is love music, happy music, everyone dance together music.”

In America, people tend to think of Cinco de Mayo as a celebration of Mexico’s independence, but that holiday is actually a celebration of a single battle. Independence Day for Mexico actually falls on Sept. 16, and Villanueva said there was interest in the local Latino community in honoring that day too.

Tickets for the concert will be available soon through Ticketmaster.com, Villanueva said, by searching for events near Hermiston, and can also be purchased at the store El Caporal at 315 S.W. 11th St. For more information about the event, call 509-727-5404.



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