



Ramon Quirarte and Joel Varela enjoy breakfast before class at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston.

STAFF PHOTO BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN

Students benefit from free breakfast

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

Often touted as the “most important meal of the day,” breakfast is frequently overlooked in favor of more sleep or hurried morning routines. The Hermiston School District hopes to change that and has started offering free breakfast to all students this year.

The district contracts with Chartwells, a catering service, for all its meals. Chartwells’ new director, David Busch, hopes that more students will take advantage of the opportunity.

“We saw a great need for students,” Busch said. “Every child deserves the opportunity to learn without a grumbling stomach, or wondering when lunch is.”

Breakfast is available at all schools, and to all students regardless of economic status.

“The district has always had free breakfast, depending on the need of

individual students,” he said.

But Busch said some students have been hesitant to eat school-offered meals, even if they do qualify.

“A lot of kids don’t participate because of peer pressure, or they want to spend time with their friends,” he said. “Now, we’ve created an environment where everyone can still be together and get something in their stomachs.”

He said currently about 22 percent of the district’s students take advantage of the free breakfast program and he hopes to see at least a 10 percent increase in participation this year.

“If we went to 50 percent, I’d be so pleased,” he said.

Chartwells offers a different main morning meal each day, such as biscuits and sausage with gravy, egg-and-cheese burritos, scrambled egg pizzas or cinnamon oatmeal. Students can also get cereal, milk and fruit every day.

Katie Saul, Hermiston School Dis-

trict’s director of business services, said some funding for meals comes from the state and the rest is covered by the district’s contract with Chartwells.

“It’s built into the contract price,” Saul said.

Busch said Chartwells is also looking into some other new meal programs for the district.

“At the high school we’ll be implementing a student choice program,” he said. Every few months, Chartwells will have a tasting table at the high school with several different types of food. Students can try the different meals and vote for the ones they’d like to have served at lunch.

“Because they choose meals, we’re hoping for greater participation,” Busch said. He said he hopes to encourage students to eat on campus, instead of going to nearby convenience stores for lunch.

“We can give better nutritional choices,” he said.

Echo looking at sewer rate increase

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

The city of Echo is ready to dive into its new wastewater systems upgrade, but the project will come at a cost.

City manager Diane Berry said engineers estimate the city will need to charge residents between \$74 and \$75 a month to operate the new system and pay off its debt service. The city council will vote on a resolution raising rates at the city council meeting next Thursday.

The city currently charges residents \$47 per month for sewer. Berry will recommend the council raise rates to \$60 starting in October and then up to \$75 in the spring.

The wastewater the city discharges into the Uma-

tilla River does not meet state standards for biological oxygen demand, and the Department of Environmental Quality has ordered the city to fix the problem by 2019. The city got about 12 years’ worth of extensions from the DEQ before then, but the state agency has warned it will not continue giving extensions indefinitely and failure to comply would result in significant fines.

The city of Stanfield has volunteered to take the recycled water generated by Echo, and Echo is ready to move forward on designing the project.

During the November election, Echo residents will be voting on who will help guide the city through the project. Four of Echo’s seven at-large council seats are up for election, as well

as its mayor.

Berry said incumbent Jeanne Hampton was the only person to file for the mayor’s position. On the council, Karl Jensen and Gayle Yoder did not re-file. Tammie Williams, who was appointed to fill a vacant seat earlier this year, has filed, as has incumbent Janie Enright and newcomers Dick Yoder and Chad Ray. The top four vote-getters in the election —

including the four on the ballot and any write-in candidates — will receive spots on the council.

In other news, Berry said the Thielsen Street project is nearly complete. The project placed sidewalks along Thielsen Street from Main Street to the bridge before the cemetery, with benches, planters and a bike lane added as well. Landscaping will be added in the spring.

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BTW

continued from Page A1

cuss immigration policy, **Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack** and 43 sheriffs from around the U.S. are raising money to construct the wall that **President Donald Trump** has frequently discussed building along the United States’ southern border.

In a press release sent out to several local media outlets, Matlack said he and the sheriffs who went to the conference in D.C. two weeks ago have launched a crowd-funding website called www.SheriffsWall.org.

According to the website, donations to the wall are tax-deductible, and go to the Department of Homeland Security through the National Sheriff’s Association.

The website states that the Sheriffs’ fundraising goal is \$100,000, and they have about \$14,000 so far.

Get ready to tip back a few brews and open your wallets to help support **Altrusa Interna-**

tional of Hermiston. The annual **Oktoberfest Wine & Stein** event is Saturday, Sept. 29. The doors open at 5 p.m. and a dinner featuring German fare will be served up at 5:30 p.m. at the **Hermiston Community Center.**

The event also includes music, raffles and live/silent auctions. Dinner tickets are \$30 each and can be purchased from Altrusans or at the **Hermiston Chamber of Commerce**, 1055 S. Highway 395, Suite 111. For more information, see the Sept. 26 edition of the *Hermiston Herald*.

As part of a two-month tour, **State of Safety** is presenting the documentary film, “101 Seconds.” It portrays the debate concerning gun violence in Oregon following the Clackamas Town Center shooting in 2012. The free event is Saturday from 3-7 p.m. at **Blue Mountain Community College**, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton.

Submit items for our *By The Way* column at editor@hermistonherald.com.

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Rev. Ed Baker - Rev. Nina Baker

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Office.....567-5812

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