



STAFF PHOTO BY ANNIE FOWLER

Kennison Field press box hostess Thelma Mendiola prepares street tacos for coaches, media and workers during the Sept. 14 game against Kennewick. The school has fed workers and visitors for five years.

FEAST WITH FOES

Hermiston boosts feed their opponents after home games

By ANNIE FOWLER
STAFF WRITER

The one thing Oregon teams might miss about playing a football game at Hermiston High School is the post-game meal served by the Linebacker Club.

One man's loss is another's gain, as the Mid-Columbia Conference football teams have gladly belied up to the table and devoured the meal offered.

"It's awesome," Kennewick coach Bill Templeton said. "It is a real blessing. It's really just a great gesture. It's very gracious of them."

Pasco, Kennewick and Southridge have partaken in the post-game meal.

"We feed the whole visiting football team after the game," Linebacker Club member Dennis Barnett said. "Everyone is surprised we do this. In the old IMC, the teams were three or four hours away from home. We have been doing this for five

or seven years."

And just because Hermiston moved to a different league, doesn't mean things will change.

"We weren't sure the Tri-City teams would like it," Barnett said of the meal. "But after Pasco, they all are wanting it. The kids are thankful. When Pasco was here, we had about half the kids come up and thank us and shake our hands."

Pasco and Kennewick were served tri-tip, baked potatoes, salad and dessert.

"Originally, we were supposed to have street tacos, which we would have been most thankful for," Templeton said.

Barnett said there is more to the program than just feeding hungry football players.

"We are helping the kids wind down after a game," he said. "It's a great thing for the kids and a positive thing about our school."

The players aren't the only ones who get fed on game night.

Media, visiting coaches, radio personnel, and the people who run the clock and music also are treated to a meal served by hostess Thelma Mendiola, who

is in her second year in the position.

Mendiola, who has worked for the Hermiston school district for 15 years — the past three as the attendance secretary — said she fell into the job when athletic director Larry Usher asked if she would be interested.

"I love doing it," she said. "We feed about 30-35 people. Week One, the Pasco coaches came to me at half-time wondering if they could have more. And, I make sure the ladies working the ticket booth and the gate are taken care of."

This is the fifth year the Hermiston Sports Boosters have taken care of the people in the press box, with the help of the Hermiston High Family/Consumer Science program, which helps prepare the side dishes. They also offer a variety of beverages.

"It's pretty darn impressive," said Craig West, who was part of the SWX broadcast team two weeks ago. "They should be proud of what they do. What they are doing is first class. It's the only place I have been to that offers that, and it was really good."

Courts face growing need for interpreters

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

In the Umatilla County courthouse, the question, "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" may be answered in a number of different languages.

Across Oregon, requests for indigenous languages have spiked in the last year. As languages like Mam, Q'anjob'al and K'iche' become more common, so do requests for courtroom interpreters that speak them.

Spoken by people in Guatemala and parts of Mexico, Belize and Honduras, these languages are native to the regions from which their speakers come, and are all distinct from Spanish, and from each other.

Roy Blaine, the trial court administrator for Umatilla and Morrow County Circuit Courts, said the need for court interpreters far outweighs their availability.

He said while there may be more people who can translate from Mam to Spanish or to English, that doesn't automatically qualify them to be a court interpreter.

"I don't say to anybody in the community, 'Oh, you speak K'iche' or Mam, we need you to come to court,'" he said. "You have to communicate in the specific dialect, but also not be related to them, or have no personal investment in the case."

Local courts work closely with the Oregon Judicial Department's Court Language Access Services, which provides translation and interpretation services for many languages — including Spanish, Russian, Korean and Vietnamese. Interpreter requests are coordinated through the

state courts system.

According to Kelly Mills, the program manager for Court Language Access Services, the number of requests for several indigenous languages statewide has spiked in the last few years. From 2015 to 2016, requests for indigenous languages increased by 42 percent.



Bertilda Martin-Mendoza

In 2017, there were 133 requests for a Mam interpreter across the state. Requests are likely to be nearly double that in 2018, with 97 requested in the first six months of the year.

Mills said there have already been 33 requests for Q'anjob'al interpreters in the first half of 2018, and there were 33 all year in 2017. Requests for K'iche' interpreters have surpassed last year's numbers, with 25 in the first half of this year, and 24 in all of 2017.

In Umatilla and Morrow counties, there have been 15 requests for Mam language interpreters in the first half of 2018, and 19 requests for Q'anjob'al. There have been 11 requests for K'iche'.

There are several indigenous languages that aren't requested as often, and some requested this year that the courts had not seen before. Two of the most recently requested languages are Ixil and Achi.

But while the courts are trying to meet language needs, Mills said they often have to rely on people from out-of-state, such as interpreters over the phone for shorter court proceedings like arraignments. Blaine said there is one interpreter who speaks K'iche' that lives in Oregon, but many of the cases that require interpreters are handled over the phone — even for Spanish speakers.

"We have Spanish interpreters living in the area,

but only a couple. It's not sufficient," Blaine said.

There is one interpreter in Oregon for Mam, the most frequently requested indigenous language in the state. Bertilda Martin-Mendoza is a native of Guatemala, and Mam is her first language. She moved to the United States as a child, where she learned Spanish, and then English. She started working as a volunteer interpreter in 1998 in Washington, at hospitals and community events.

In 2000, someone asked her to help translate for a court case where someone spoke Mam. Afterward, the judge asked to meet with her, and asked if she wanted to start working there, which led to a career as a courtroom interpreter. Based in Portland, she travels within Oregon, and around the United States for her work. Last year, she helped train three Mam interpreters in Washington.

Martin-Mendoza said she's seen a growing number of native Mam speakers who know some Spanish. But it usually doesn't work the other way.

"There's no way a Spanish speaker would speak Mam," she said. "Native languages are not easy to learn. I've never met someone that has said they speak Mam as a second language, though there are probably some out there."

Martin-Mendoza said she had to educate herself for many aspects of the job.

"A lot of the things we see here don't exist in native culture," she said. "You have to educate yourself on how you are going to interpret."

Another challenge is translating specific legal terms — for which she said courts often rely on "relay interpreting."

"I would translate from Mam to Spanish, and another Spanish interpreter would translate from Spanish to English," she said.

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