

# Hermiston School Board hires Mooney

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**  
STAFF WRITER

Superintendent Tricia Mooney can now drop the word “interim” from her title. The Hermiston School Board unanimously voted to appoint Mooney as the Hermiston School District’s leader at a meeting last week.

“I am honored and humbled to be selected to serve this amazing community as the superintendent of the Hermiston School District,” Mooney said in a statement.

Mooney had previously served for more than a year in the interim role, after then-superintendent Fred Maiocco left for active duty as a brigadier general with the U.S. Army Reserves. He submitted a letter of resignation in August 2018, after he informed the board that his term of service had been

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Tricia Mooney



extended for another year, and he would only return to the district in January 2020.

The board appointed Mooney one month after Maiocco offered his resignation. At a meeting in

early September, board members discussed how to fill the role. Many said they considered expanding the search to other applicants, but felt Mooney had demonstrated her capability in the role, and hiring

her would maintain stability in the district.

The district held a meet-and-greet Sept. 24 where the community was invited to hear Mooney talk about her work and history in Hermiston, and asked participants to fill out a survey. About 30 people attended the meeting, half of them district staff and administrators, and the rest parents and community members.

Mooney spoke about the strains of a growing school district and strategies to improve the high school’s graduation rate.

At a special meeting Sept. 26, board chairwoman Karen Sherman reviewed the survey results, and said they were “overwhelmingly positive.”

Before the vote, board member Dave Smith said he was convinced the job should be offered to

Mooney, but said that he had initially struggled with the shortened timeline, worrying that the district did not go through a full vetting process.

Sherman said she and other board members felt that though the timeline was short, Mooney had been vetted through the past year as the interim superintendent.

Board member Josh Goller said the board and Mooney will now begin to negotiate a contract, which could include a salary increase. Mooney’s base salary as interim superintendent is \$141,221.

Goller said the contract will be disclosed to the public before the board takes action, and the vote to approve it will take place in a public session.

The board has not announced when they will begin contract negotiations with Mooney.

## Free flu shots available in October

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
STAFF WRITER

Opportunities for free flu vaccines are plentiful in Umatilla County after the flu killed an estimated 80,000 people in the United States last year.

Good Shepherd Health Care System is doing a free clinic on Oct. 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the hospital’s conference rooms, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Marketing and communications director Nick Bejarano said the clinic is open to all ages — no insurance required — and will have the specialized doses for infants and the elderly on hand.

Vaccines are also available through primary care providers and are often covered 100 percent by insurance. Good Shepherd administers the vaccine to emergency room patients during flu season. Businesses can also arrange for the hospital to come and host a flu shot clinic for employees.

“Statistically speaking, (the vaccine) is very helpful to prevent the flu,” Bejarano said.

Local pharmacists around



HH FILE PHOTO

An influenza vaccine is prepared in this 2015 file photo.

the county also offer flu vaccines, including the pharmacies at Walmart, Safeway, Rite Aid and Bi-Mart.

Alisha Southwick, school health and community wellness supervisor for Umatilla County Public Health, said people can get the flu shot wherever is most convenient for them — the important thing is that they get the shot.

The public health department encourages people to get the vaccine through their pharmacist or primary care provider but the department does have regular flu vaccines for adults and children

on hand. People should call ahead and make an appointment, but the Hermiston office at 435 E Newport St. is taking walk-ins Oct. 26.

Southwick said children and the elderly are most at risk of serious complications from the flu, and she highly encourages they get a vaccine before flu season gets into full swing.

“We don’t know what this season will bring,” she said.

According to the Associated Press, last year’s season was particularly deadly. About 80,000 Americans died, compared with 12,000 to 56,000 in a normal year.

The flu can increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes and other deadly complications.

The flu vaccine is more effective some years than others, because scientists developing each year’s vaccine have to guess which strains will take off. But even in less effective years, people who get the vaccine are statistically less likely to get the flu and usually have more mild symptoms. The vaccine takes about two weeks to become effective, so doctors recommend not waiting until friends, family and co-workers are already sick.

## Fire on Navy property near Boardman burns 10,000 acres

HERMISTON HERALD

Crews contained a wildfire near Boardman on Sept. 26 that had started about 24 hours earlier and burned 10,000 acres.

The fire started at Bombing Range Road, at the Naval Weapons System Training Facility, around 1 p.m. Sept. 25, and was contained around 1:20 p.m. the next day.

Mike Welding, a public information officer for Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, said the bombing range is about 48,000 acres, and the fire was about 10 miles away from Interstate 84. He said the fire moved southwest, away from the freeway. It got within about a mile of the coal-fired plant in Boardman.

Welding said the cause

of the fire is still under investigation.

A press release from the Naval Air Station said most of the fire was on Navy property, and no structures or people were threatened by the blaze. Wind made the fire difficult to contain, and the fire spread onto Nature Conservancy property.

The press release stated that the Navy requested local mutual aid when the fire started, and crews from Boardman Rural Fire Department, Kitsap Naval base, and Yakima Training Center and Fairchild Air Force Base also came to help fight the fire. Hermiston crews arrived on Tuesday afternoon, but left shortly after.

Welding said between all the agencies, 32 people helped control the fire.

## Walla Walla VA announces flu shot clinics

Veterans can receive free flu shots at several walk-in clinics sponsored by Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center.

No appointments are necessary. The local flu clinics are available in Boardman, Richland and Walla Walla:

•Friday, Oct. 12 from

8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Boardman Telehealth Clinic at the Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Suite 103.

•Monday-Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Walla Walla VA Clinic, 77 Wainwright Drive, and the Richland VA Clinic, 825

Jadwin Drive.

In addition, for those unable to visit the clinics, the VA has partnered with Walgreens for enrolled veterans to receive a flu shot — some restrictions may apply.

For more information, contact Linda Wondra at

509-525-5200, linda.wondra@va.gov or visit www.wallawalla.va.gov.

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