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RACE IS ON

Rick Pullen challenges George Murdock for county commissioner seat while Larry Givens launches a write-in campaign.

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STILL GOING

Retirement hasn't made life any less busy for former Hermiston Christian School principal Rod Hardin.

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HIGH HONOR

Good Shepherd Health Care System was named one of Oregon's top workplaces in 2018.

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BY THE WAY

Five apply for Hermiston school board

The **Hermiston School Board** will decide how to fill its vacancy at the next school board meeting, after hearing pitches from applicants on Monday.

The board had five applicants to fill the position vacated by **Jason Middleton** after he resigned in September. Those applicants are **Kris Lerten, Mark Millard, Brent Pitney, Trish Rossell** and **Mike Todryk**.

Four candidates (Millard was absent) answered a series of questions from board members on Monday, ranging from their reasons for wanting to join the board, to what they believe the role of a superintendent should be. Several said they have children in the district and that prompted them to get more involved.

Don't forget about the candidate forum tonight (Wednesday) hosted by the **Hermiston Chamber of Commerce** and **KOHU & The Q**. The forum goes from 5:30-7 p.m. in room 134/135 at the Hermiston campus of Blue Mountain Community College, 975 S.E. Columbia Drive. Umatilla County Board of Commissioners

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COMING HOME



TOP: Hunter Dyer, Malayna Anderson, Koi Mikami, Julianna Joyce and Grace Lind dressed up as doctors from the T.V. show *Grey's Anatomy* for Tuesday's Homecoming dress-up day. BOTTOM LEFT: Eseta Sepeni, Keali'imanaole Hamilton and Moana Peterson dressed up as characters from the movie "Moana" for Tuesday's homecoming dress-up day. BOTTOM RIGHT: Jenna Wallace and Isel Tejada Urenda dressed up as hot sauce packets for Tuesday's homecoming dress-up day.

STAFF PHOTO BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

For some students, Homecoming means dress-up days and tug-of-war. For others, it's all about football. But the week in October is a chance for all students to celebrate their school, whatever that means to them.

The Hermiston High School leadership class starts planning the event in summer, with several brainstorming sessions and meetings to decide themes and activities.

"It takes a lot of voting, time and opinions from a lot of people," said Kaylee Young, a Hermiston High School leadership student.

On Tuesday, students came to school decked out for the dress-up day, "Kickin' it With Your Crew" — where students

were encouraged to dress up as a group. The halls were filled with TV, movie and cartoon characters, and some got even more creative — a group of students dressed up as hot sauce packets, ranging from Mild to Fire.

HHS Leadership adviser Dave Rohrman said the students mix in some new events each year with Homecoming traditions. This year, the students held a new event, a carnival game night, on Monday. The pancake feed and the noise parade are back this year, along with traditions like the dance and Homecoming assembly.

Though the event is planned by a small group of kids, the leadership students try to make sure they receive input from the rest of the student body, promoting events and advertising on

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Water, sewer rates to go up in March

Hermiston will use the money to replace old pipes, boost capacity

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston City Council voted unanimously to raise water and sewer rates Monday.

The rate restructure will take effect in March 2019 and is expected to raise about \$2 million additional revenue per year that the city plans to put toward maintenance and upgrades.

Instead of merely increasing current rates by a specific percentage,

the council approved a complete rate restructure. Rates will be the same for residential and commercial customers, based entirely on usage and flipping the script so that larger users will now pay more per 1,000 gallons instead of less.

The new structure will charge \$35 a month for sewer service plus \$3 for each 1,000 gallons of use, based on wintertime usage. Water users will pay a base charge of \$30 per month, plus 50 cents per 1,000 gallons up to 15,000 gallons and \$3.50 per 1,000 gallons thereafter. Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said he calculated his own bill will go up about \$14.39 a month for sewer and an average of \$18.03 a month for water under the changes.

Morgan said even after paring

down the list of capital improvement needs by millions of dollars, the public infrastructure committee has still determined the city needs \$600,000 per year to replace old water and sewer pipes, plus additional money for new projects to increase capacity.

"We're to the point where we're getting down to projects that need started sooner rather than later," he said.

Under its current rate structure, Morgan said, revenue falls "hopelessly short" because of the \$2 million a year the city is paying on the debt service for the new recycled water treatment plant built in 2014.

When the treatment plant came online in 2014, the city reported

that the \$17.2 million upgrade was putting out recycled water "virtually indistinguishable from drinking water," with suspended solids at 0.7 parts per million instead of the previous 20 ppm. The city won a state award for its innovation in sending the recycled water to an irrigation canal for agricultural use instead of into the river. City manager Byron Smith told the city council that year that the final phase of the project, the outfall pipe carrying water away from the plant, came in \$1 million under budget.

Councilors said they felt the new structure was the most fair way to raise revenue. Commercial users like car washes will now pay more

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