

POPULATION

continued from Page A1

for that, but you also don't want to under-build and not have capacity," he said.

The city is currently working on a new water project northeast of town that will include a new water tower and pipes by the spring of 2020. Morgan said there are already housing developers talking to the city about taking advantage of the additional capacity to bring in new housing.

East-end cities in Umatilla County lost population or stayed the same, with the exception of Milton-Freewater, which gained 35 people. On the west side, Umatilla gained 75 people, Stanfield gained 40 and Echo gained five. Overall, Umatilla County's population increased 0.3 percent to 80,765.

Morgan said he wasn't surprised to see growth in Umatilla, Stanfield and Echo.

"We're really more like neighborhoods of the same housing market," he said.

Stanfield City Manager Blair Larsen echoed that sentiment, noting that new jobs for projects like Lamb Weston's expansion and Amazon's new data centers usually result in people moving in to all four west-end cities.

"I think we're really seeing a rising tide lifting all boats in this area right now," he said.

Larsen said the city is always looking for ways it can help people who own property in Stanfield to get it developed, and is seeking to add more industrial land around the Interstate 84 interchange. Housing development has been up this year, he said, and Stanfield had 15 homes under construction in February.

"That was the first time in anyone's memory that we had that many stick-built homes going at once," he said.

Population increases come with benefits and challenges for cities. Often money that comes to local government from the state is based on population, which is why the state requires PSU to undertake population estimates each year. More people means more money, from the state and from local property taxes.

On the other hand, the growth can also strain resources. Hermiston School District Superintendent Tricia Mooney said the district will be adding two more modular classroom buildings to its campuses over spring break — one at Hermiston High School and one at Sunset Elementary School. They will also be using spaces at the middle schools differently next year to accommodate more students there.

She said enrollment is currently about 50 students higher than it was at this point last year, which is in line with the growth that the district had projected. The district's smallest class is its high school juniors, at 375 students.

"Obviously growth has been a theme for the district over the last 10 years," she said.

Mooney said the district is looking forward to continue to partner with the city to address continued growth in the area.

While Umatilla County saw slight growth, Morrow County had a net loss of five residents. Boardman grew by 55 residents, but other parts of the county lost residents.

Overall eight counties in Oregon lost population, mostly in Eastern Oregon. The state's total population grew by 1.3 percent to 4,195,300 residents, according to PSU's estimates.



Goss Family Jewelers, pictured here, is one of the Main Street businesses participating in Small Business Saturday.

STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL.

RUSH

Continued from Page A1 for retailers.

"There's not as much pressure, but it was also exciting and different, and the drama was kind of fun to manage," he said.

The Smiths are third-generation owners of the business, which started in 1948 — predating the Black Friday craze. The phrase "Black Friday" as it pertained to post-Thanksgiving shopping was popularized in Philadelphia in the 1960s, by police in the city who dreaded trying to manage crowds of holiday shoppers coming in to the city. By the 1980s it had spread nationwide, and retailers had come up with a more positive connotation for the name by noting that the profits from holiday shopping put them "in the black" financially for the year.

While retailers of all sizes often offer deals the weekend after Thanksgiving, small businesses have been getting an extra focus over the past few years as Small Business Saturday has caught on.

Goss Family Jewelers, located on Main Street, is one of the small businesses participating in Black Friday and Small Business Saturday, with 20 percent off jewelry. James Goss said he doesn't usually see a big rush the weekend after Thanksgiving, because people tend to be traveling out of town for the four-day weekend.

"We get a few, but I think people go up to the Tri-Cities," he said.

But because he does custom work, overall he does see an increase around the holidays from people who are interested in a unique gift for their loved ones. Elk ivory jewelry is especially

popular, he said.

Debbie Pedro, director of the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce, said several local businesses are participating in Small Business Saturday this year. She said people should be able to find out about plenty of great deals by checking out local business's Facebook pages and radio and newspaper advertisements.

"It's really exciting to see each one of our businesses really participate," she said.

Pedro put in a plug for shopping local year-round, but particularly during the holiday season. It's an opportunity for people to support their friends and neighbors, she said, and make sure that money continues to circulate throughout the community. Local big box stores offer deals on big-ticket items, while smaller businesses offer unique Christmas presents

not found in other cities.

"There is an opportunity to buy just about anything you need right here in Hermiston," she said.

Hermiston will have even more shopping options once the long-awaited Ranch & Home opens on South Highway 395. A manager at the Hermiston store confirmed on Monday the business is planning to open in Mid-December, and job listings are prominently displayed on its website.

While Pedro and local businesses encourage keeping the Christmas shopping local, in recent years Cyber Monday the week after Thanksgiving has offered online deals for what people can't find locally. That money may not be directly recycled into the local economy, but the world's largest online retailer, Amazon, employs a significant number of people locally via its data centers.

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