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Find out which local "stars" will be dancing for their favorite charity on Saturday. **PAGE A4**

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Power House Treatment Center residents tell personal stories of drug battles they are fighting. **PAGE A8**

BY THE WAY

New Year's Eve starts off with a bang

By HERMISTON HERALD

New Year's Eve started with a bang in Hermiston this year, but not as much of a bang as the city had hoped.

The city's first New Year's Eve celebration on the new festival street in front of city hall drew an estimated 300 people by midnight, and live music by The Shades was followed by a fireworks show.

While the fireworks were successfully launched over a six-foot-long paper-mâché watermelon suspended by a Umatilla County Fire District ladder truck, the watermelon did not explode into a shower of confetti as planned.

Parks and recreation director Larry Fetter said the cold weather caused some unexpected technical difficulties, but promised next year the watermelon will explode.

Rep. Greg Walden (R-Oregon) will be holding town halls in Umatilla and Morrow counties on Jan. 23.

He will stop at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate in Pendleton, at 8:30 a.m. and the SAGE Center, 101 Olsen Road, in Boardman, at noon.

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LOOKING AHEAD



Erica Sandoval of the Hermiston Police Department talks with an attendee during an ice cream social block during a past National Night Out in Hermiston. HH file photo

Local organizations outline plans, goals for 2019

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN AND JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITERS

Hermiston's growth won't be slowing down in 2019.

Businesses and other organizations around town have plans for everything from new buildings to new programs they would like to implement over the next year. We caught up with a few about what they envision for 2019:

Umatilla County Fire District

Fire Chief Scott Stanton said the district has one main goal for 2019 — build a fifth fire station. The proposed location for the new building is a plot of land on East Walls Road and Highway 37, at the east edge of the district. Stanton said the district already has the equipment to supply another station. He said they don't know the cost yet, but they will not go out for a bond to help pay for the station. He said they hope to have it built by summer or fall.

Stanton said the district may also see some minor changes or expansion in coverage if the transfer of the Umatilla Army Depot is completed.

He said the district is always recruiting



Umatilla County Fire District 1 added full-time staffing at its Fire Station 22 at the intersection of East Punkin Center and Diagonal Road east of Hermiston in 2017. HH file photo

volunteer firefighters, and as they build their new station, they will look for volunteer coverage specific to that area.

Umatilla Electric Cooperative UEC spokesman Steve Meyers said the

electric cooperative has a few projects in the works for this year. One, he said, is a second transmission line from the McNary Substation to the Hermiston Butte Substation.

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Debbie Pedro hired by Columbia Development Authority

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Debbie Pedro, former executive director of the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce, will continue her work in economic development in a new position with the Columbia Development Authority.

Pedro will serve as director of economic coordination as the agency prepares to take control of most of the former Umatilla Chemical Depot outside of Hermiston. She started Jan. 3, working under the CDA's executive director Greg Smith.

"People will still be seeing me in Hermiston," she said, noting that her previous job at the chamber helped her get to know a wide variety of people in Umatilla and

Morrow counties. "I think it's great I already have those connections with folks. I still have the opportunity to support our businesses and the growth of our region."

Pedro worked for the chamber of commerce for 18 years, including 10 as director. She said in a news release that the chamber's membership grew from 240 to 440 during her time as director and had reached new levels of financial stability.

"I have enjoyed my time with the chamber and it was tough deciding to leave," she said in a statement released Jan. 2. "I saw some things I could do on a regional level with the new position and with the chamber being in good hands, I decided it was time to make a change."



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Pedro

