



Hermiston Herald

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INSIDE

BUSTED

Local law enforcement targets drug trafficking organizations across the county with dozens of arrests.

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Comedians are headed to Hermiston this weekend for the annual Melonville comedy festival.

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REROUTE

Hermiston's free public bus system expands its hours in the hopes of accommodating more workers.

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BY THE WAY

Legislature is in session

The **Oregon State Legislature** convened Tuesday for the 2019 session.

Gun control, carbon taxes, education funding, rent control and paid family leave are a few of the hot-button topics legislators will discuss over the next five months.

Legislators will also be vying for state funding of local projects, such as the \$1 million the **Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce** received last session to build a new workforce development center. This time around, **Rep. Greg Smith** (R-Hepner) has said a mental health-focused upgrade of the **Umatilla County Jail** is his top capital funding priority. Although the jail, located in Pendleton, is outside Smith's district, he said he recognizes that it provides vital services to Hermiston and other parts of District 57.

... Tickets are now on sale for the 10th annual **Beach & Beef** fundraiser. Benefitting the **Hermiston Education Foundation**, the dinner and auction is Saturday, Feb. 2 at 6 p.m. (doors open at 5 p.m.) at **Eastern**

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WHAT'S THE HOLDUP?



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The Union Club was originally envisioned opening in the summer of 2018 in the Roemark's building in downtown Hermiston.

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

When someone announces a timeline for a large construction project, it's not a bad idea to take the number of months and double it. Maybe triple it.

It is possible, of course, to finish on time. But a look at many publicly announced projects in the Hermiston area shows delays of six to 12 months have been common.

Sometimes it's a problem getting financing. Other times it's a shortage of subcontractors, or an unexpectedly early start to winter weather.

Often construction delays don't come down to one specific problem. Allan Lambert of Affordable Family Eyewear said their remodel of a building on the corner of Northeast Third Street and Gladys Avenue has been prolonged by a combination of "self-inflicted" problems and things out of their control.

The sign on the building originally said "Coming in Summer." Then it was changed to "Coming in Autumn." Now Lambert said he thinks they might be done in April.

"I guess we were a little optimistic," he said.

For Affordable Family Eyewear, there hasn't been one major roadblock, just a series of smaller delays. Every time an



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A sign advertising an Autumn 2018 opening sits in the window for the new location for the Affordable Family Eyewear on Tuesday in Hermiston.

appraiser or contractor says they'll be there in three weeks and it turns out to be eight, that adds up, Lambert said. New banking laws have also set up more hoops to jump through before getting financing, stretching

out the process. "It used to be once you got the appraisal,

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Hermiston march honors King's legacy

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

Of all the timeless lessons Martin Luther King Jr. taught the world, an individual's responsibility and power to make the world a better place was a focus of Monday's annual march in Hermiston.

"It's amazing what we can do as people, as Americans," keynote speaker Joe Whitfield said.

Whitfield, who recently moved to Hermiston, was born in Montgomery, Alabama, four years after Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat for white passengers on a Montgomery bus. As a child, he helped his father bring water to civil rights marchers and attended segregated schools.

After students from his school were integrated with students from predominately white schools, Whitfield said sports helped bridge the gap between students of both races as they learned to work as a team. Today, he said, people should still work patiently to find common ground and understanding with those who are different than them.

"Sit down and work it out," he said. "You may not agree on everything, but you can still work through it, if you put in enough patience and time."

Whitfield shared King's six principles of nonviolence. Nonviolence is built on love instead of hate, he



Staff photo by E.J. Harris/East Oregonian

John Witherspoon of Tri-Cities performs an original song titled "Lanes" about being true to yourself Monday during a service for Martin Luther King Jr. Day in Hermiston.

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