

Dorrans will lead 2019 Umatilla County Fair parade

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
COMMUNITY EDITOR

With a theme of “Strong Roots & Cowboy Boots!,” the Umatilla County Fair Board is already cultivating people and plans for the Aug. 6-10, 2019 event.

Dan and Terri Dorran of Hermiston were introduced as the 2019 grand marshals during Saturday night’s Fair Appreciation Dinner at Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center. After serving for two decades, Dan stepped down from the fair board at the end of 2017.

A Hermiston native, Dan said his family have been longtime supporters of the fair. His grandfather first put him to work cleaning up stalls at the fairgrounds when he was 7 years old.

Serving on the fair board isn’t an honorary or ceremonial title, Dan said, it’s hands on and a lot of hard work. And, he’s quick to point out that it’s the sponsors, partnerships and people that contribute to the success of the Umatilla County Fair.

While Terri downplayed her role, Don Miller, who introduced the Dorrans, said over the years she has taken care of many last minute details and sometimes interesting requests.



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini
Terri and Dan Dorran of Hermiston head to the stage after being introduced as grand marshals of the 2019 Umatilla County Fair. The Fair Appreciation Dinner, held Saturday at Eastern Oregon Trade & Event Center, also included several award presentations.



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini
Kyleigh Sepulveda, 16, and Nive Hamilton, 15, both of Hermiston, and Madison Pryor, 15, of Pendleton were introduced as the 2019 Umatilla County Fair court Saturday at Eastern Oregon Trade & Event Center in Hermiston.



Fesler



Wallace



Dennis

“As a couple, they are more than deserving,” Miller said. “Dan and Terri are valued members of our team.”

Tears were plentiful as the 2018 fair court — Laik-

lyn Fields, Rebekah Miller, Bobbie Sharp and Olivia Warner — said their final farewells. A video with candid and posed shots provided a glimpse of their role as ambassadors for the fair

and county.

“The girls do a lot of traveling and have a lot of fun,” said Alice Newman, fair court chaperone. “It’s also a lot of hard work.”

Newman invited the 2019 court to the stage and each of the young ladies introduced themselves and their families. They are, Nive Hamilton, 15, and Kyleigh Sepulveda, 16, both of Hermiston, and Madison Pryor, 15, of Pendleton.

Others recognized during the event included Terrie Dennis, who was selected as female volunteer of the year for her on-going work in the

sheep barn. David Fesler received male volunteer of the year for everything from his support of the fair court to helping on the grounds.

The business partner of the year went to Velasco Used Car Sales. Fair board chairman Lucas Wagner said for the past handful of years, Miguel Velasco’s family-owned business has been instrumental in supporting Latino Night.

And, Steve Wallace of Western Ag Improvement received special recognition for countless hours provided to abate dust at the EOTEC site, as well as other volun-

teer activities. In addition, he was introduced as one of the new fair board members along with Doug Bennett. The two are replacing outgoing board members Gay Newman and Don Miller.

Wagner could barely contain his excitement about this year’s main stage entertainers. Since several have yet to sign contracts, he could only reveal two of the acts — Tuesday, Aug. 6 brings Tracy Byrd to the stage. While his self-titled debut album reached “gold” status, people likely will recognize his chart-topping hit, “Watermelon Crawl,” which appeared on “No Ordinary Man.”

And, Wednesday, Aug. 7 features Jackson Michelson, an up-and-coming country musician from Corvallis. He has opened shows for Lee Brice, Blake Shelton and Zac Brown Band. General admission to the concerts is free with fair tickets. The sale of reserved and premium seats will be announced.

The Umatilla County Fair is located at EOTEC, 1705 E. Airport Road, Hermiston. For more information, contact 541-567-6121, fair@umatillacounty.net or visit www.umatillacountyfair.net.

City charts new course with capital plan

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

The Hermiston City Council doesn’t think very many people will read this article.

They commented Monday that the joint capital improvement plan they adopted would not make waves in the press the way some city council meetings do. But the document — which creates a coordinated game plan for accomplishing a multi-million dollar list of water, sewer and street improvements over the next five years — is one of the most important things they will accomplish during their career on the council, Mayor David Drotzmann said.

He said the last thing he wants is for Hermiston to become “the next Flint, Michigan” and experience a public health crisis due to failing infrastructure.

“Infrastructure is not the super sexy thing everyone wants to talk about, but it’s so important,” councilor Roy Barron added.

The public works capital improvement plan schedules out about \$19 million in projects over the next five to six years, with an additional \$20 million in projects listed in the appendices to be used as funding becomes available. The city hopes to update the plan every two years.

“We want an inventory, instead of just reacting to when things break,” assistant city manager Mark



HH file photo

Reconfiguring the intersection of Geer, Harper and Umatilla River Road is one of Hermiston’s top street priorities in the next five years.

Morgan said.

Morgan said the city has created capital improvement plans in the past for various departments, but putting everything together in one coordinated document would increase efficiency. The plan schedules a major water line replacement under North First Place the same year as a major road improvement project on North First Place, for example, to prevent contractors from tearing up work that the city had just completed.

Streets

The city is getting an additional \$300,000 per year for street projects from an increase in franchise fees (paid for by cable and internet companies using the city’s right of way for their equipment) it enacted in late 2017.

It is also getting about \$200,000 per year from the legislature’s 2017 transportation package, set to increase to \$350,000 over the next five years. The North First Place project, which will widen and improve the road parallel to Highway 395 in the hopes of drawing more local traffic off the highway, will be paid for by a \$4.5 million earmark in the transportation package.

The city has already accepted a bid for the first road project on the plan, which will replace a box culvert on South First Street that is falling apart and is too narrow to support increasing traffic south of town. In the next year the city also plans to do an overlay on Hermiston Avenue from Northwest 11th Street to First Street.

Year two will bring pav-

ing on East Theater Lane, year three will be a hiatus to build up cash and year four will be a \$1.5 million realignment of the intersection of Geer Road, Harper Road, River Road and the railroad crossing located west of Home Depot. Year five will be the North First Place project and resurfacing West Theater Lane.

Water

To pay for water and sewer projects, the city recently restructured and increased its water and sewer rates. The new rates go into effect March 1.

Projects on the list for water include an upgrade to Well #6, which serves “critical customers” such as the Wal-Mart Distribution Center and Pioneer Seed, Morgan said.

The city also plans to replace the “system-wide brain” that has run the city’s water system since 1999.

“I don’t know how many of you have a 20-year-old computer, but that’s basically what we have running our system,” Morgan said.

Sewer

On Monday the city approved a bid from Sineco Construction of Hermiston for its first sewer project on the capital improvement plan, which will replace a narrow sewer line along Southeast Seventh Street that has been creating a “bottleneck” and causing concerns about possible overflow in the event of an equipment failure.

“We’ve been holding our breath and crossing our fingers every time we have the fair up at EOTEC,” Morgan said.

Other projects in the \$6.5 million in recycled water spending for the next five years include two lift station

reconstructions.

Most of the rest of the money will be put in reserve for 2024. The city’s recycled water treatment plant was built in 2014, and Morgan said several expensive components have an expected shelf life of about 10 years. City staff are good at extending the life of capital assets, he said, but the city needs to be prepared in case things start breaking in 2024.

City councilors praised staff and the public infrastructure committee for their work on the capital improvement plan. Drotzmann said the League of Oregon Cities estimates cities around the state have a combined \$7 billion in needed water and sewer infrastructure projects.

“I think this is huge, and I’m excited and proud of the city for doing it,” he said.

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