

BTW

Continued from Page A1

said Neal was very deserving of the award, calling him “the best port manager in the United States.”

Lindsay joined the Port of Morrow’s commission in 1967, nine years after it started. He expressed appreciation to the people of **Morrow County** for supporting the dream and vision of the port.

Special Districts Association of Oregon represents more than 900 special districts across the state, assisting them in providing cost-effective and efficient public services to the people of Oregon. To view videos of award recipients, visit www.sdao.com/S4/Programs/Awards.aspx.

•••
Good Shepherd Health Care System walked away with five awards at the **HealthCare Service Excellence Conference**.

The awards committee reviewed 233 nominations from 23 different healthcare organizations spanning 11 states before handing out 55 Pinnacle Awards, and 15 of those Pinnacle achievers also received Summit Awards.

Peppa Stark of Good Shepherd was named a Pinnacle Achiever for being an exceptional nurse, **Martha Tibbs** received one for being an empowering manager, **Nick Bejarano** received one for being an inspirational administrator, **Good Shepherd Medical Group Rural Pediatrics** received a Pinnacle Award and Summit Award for being a medical clinic of choice.

•••
The regular monthly fundraising breakfast of the **Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center** is this weekend.

A hearty meal will be available Saturday from 7:30-10:30 a.m. at **Stokes Landing Senior Center**, 150 Columbia Lane, Irrigon. The cost is \$4.50 per person.

The group is dedicated to the preservation of Irrigon’s 1921 school building and developing a regional art venue. For more information, call Peggy Price at 541-567-3806.

•••
The **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** menu for Feb. 21 is pork chops, dressing with gravy, vegetables and dessert. The menu for Feb. 26 is clam chowder, half sandwich, salad and dessert.

—
You can submit items for our weekly By The Way column by emailing your tips to editor@hermistonherald.com.

HOMES

Continued from Page A1

While some housing growth in Hermiston is linked to the city’s continued growth in general, Spencer said some of the city’s recent initiatives have also helped projects pencil out for developers. For example, in September 2017 the city decreased the required size of lots, increased the percentage of the property a residence is allowed to cover and decreased how far houses are required to be set back from the sidewalk.

“Almost every house (built since) is taking advantage of that,” Spencer said.

The city also created an infill program meant to encourage development on long-empty lots in the middle of neighborhoods. A property owner can apply for a cheaper, more streamlined process to receive variances if they can show that barriers such as an unusually-shaped lot preclude them from building a home without being granted some excep-

tions to the city’s planning code. Spencer said the city has had two infill applications so far.

In May 2018 the city rezoned a 52-acre triangle off Diagonal Road, between Northeast Eighth Street and Northeast 10th Street, for residential use. Spencer said a new water project will put even more land into circulation for possible housing development on the northeast side of town.

The joint Hermiston-Umatilla County project, paid for by enterprise zone payments from a new Lamb Weston expansion, will bring new water pipes and a new one million gallon water tank to the northeast part of town.

“That opens up about 200 acres for development, and yes, it has absolutely generated interest,” Spencer said.

Umatilla

While Hermiston’s housing growth has increased steadily in recent years, Umatilla saw a dramatic spike in 2018.

The city issued nine permits

for new homes in 2014, 11 in 2015, 14 in 2016, 17 in 2017 and 56 permits in 2018. No permits for multi-family dwellings have been issued in the past five years.

City manager David Stockdale said based on the current market and conversations with developers, he believes 2018’s boom is only the beginning. He predicts Umatilla will issue twice as many permits in 2019 and that 2020 and 2021 will see similar numbers to 2019.

While Umatilla hasn’t made the same adjustments to its code as Hermiston, Stockdale said the city has become proactive in encouraging developers to ask the planning commission for a variance when they run into barriers. Several developers, who built homes in Umatilla in 2018, received variances.

“The planning commission has been very good to work with,” he said.

The city also rezoned a long-empty section of McNary from commercial to residential, paving

the way for the Virginia’s Place subdivision. They have also been willing to help developers out by allowing them to delay fee payments to the city if needed to help with cash flow.

Stockdale said city leaders know Umatilla needs housing at “all economic levels” and are planning to look into what has prevented developers from building any apartments in the last five years.

“We don’t know specifically what those hurdles are, so we need to do our homework and figure that out and take it to the planning commission,” he said.

Umatilla, Stanfield and Echo are partnering for a west Umatilla County housing study, made possible by a federal grant, that will help them prepare for future growth. The community is invited to an open house that will feature a draft inventory of buildable residential land and a residential land needs assessment on March 13 at 7 p.m. at the Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston.

AIRPORT

Continued from Page A1

Gorge Aviation Services is trying to do its part to entice the younger generation to look into aviation careers. The airport just took on its first high school intern, and is hosting activities for teens to learn airplane repair skills.

Saige Melson, a senior at Hermiston High School, started her internship in January. She said she wants to be a pilot someday.

So far Melson has gotten a wide range of experience, from working with the mechanics to helping out in the offices. But her favorite so far has been getting to try out the flight simulator. She said it was harder than she thought it would be, particularly using the pedals that steer the plane while it is on the ground.

“The landing ... that was ... I may have run into a building,” she said

sheepishly.

After getting to check out what day-to-day life at a small municipal airport is like and asking questions of the pilots who land there, Melson said she still wants to head to college and study aviation after she graduates.

“If anything, it’s opened my eyes to more things I could do,” she said.

Melson isn’t the only teen getting experience with aviation. The airport’s repair hangar opens its doors to any interested teenagers every Thursday from 6-9 p.m.

Soon Umatilla School District will start busing kids to the airport on Thursday nights as part of its after-school STEM program, and Leirvik said he is working with Hermiston High School to set up something similar. Students who participate in the Thursday night sessions will learn how to take apart and rebuild an airplane engine, among

other skills.

Some area middle schools have already taken field trips out to the airport in recent months. Adults can also check out the airport and learn more about aviation at the airport’s monthly breakfasts, where pilots and others with an interest in aviation are invited to gather at 8:30 a.m. on the last Saturday of every month.

Mike Martin is the breakfasts’ “head pancake maker.” Martin has a plane and hangar in Hermiston and has served on the city’s Airport Advisory Committee for about 10 years. He is excited about what Gorge Aviation Services has accomplished so far.

Martin said in the 1980s Hermiston had city leaders, such as Tom Harper, who were passionate about aviation. Once those leaders moved on, however, the airport was “forgotten” for decades and not living up to its potential.

“The airport needs to grow with the city,” he said.

Martin said assistant city manager Mark Morgan has been a “god-send” for the airport in recent years as he has worked hard to bring in millions of dollars in Federal Aviation Administration grants. Those grants have paid for a taxiway realignment, pavement overlays, new lighting and moving and expanding the fuel station. Now Gorge Aviation is helping create a 180-degree turnaround on the operations side with new programs and services.

“I want the community to know these things are available to them, because a lot of people don’t know all they need to do is go there and ask,” he said.

Previously, for example, people who wanted to get their pilot’s license had to go up to the Tri-Cities for lessons. That’s where Martin’s

wife learned, and he said the commute increased the time commitment. Now that instructors are available in Hermiston, Martin is taking lessons for instrument flying, or flying through no-visibility conditions.

“It makes you a better pilot ... I wouldn’t have thought about it if I had to drive up to the Tri-Cities,” he said.

Leirvik said there are five or six beginners taking lessons right now, another five who are refreshing themselves after years of not flying, and a handful of experienced pilots taking the instrument flying classes.

In addition to having flying instructors available, Martin said he also appreciated the addition of the mechanic shop. There is a serious shortage of qualified aviation mechanics in the country, he said, and “you don’t want just any Tom, Dick or Harry working on your plane.”

PRESIDENTS DAY SALES EVENT

ALL WITH STANDARD TOYOTA SAFETY SENSE!

NEW 2019 TOYOTA COROLLA SE
NOW ONLY \$198/MO
Up to 36 months. On approved credit.

Stk. #19H068. New 2019 Toyota Corolla SE. MSRP \$21,714. Sale price \$20,623 after \$1700.00 TFS rebate. 36-month lease for \$198/month. 12,000 miles/year. \$1579 cash down. GFV \$11,074. No security deposit required. On approved credit. Plus tax, title and \$75 dealer doc fee. See dealer for details. Expires 02/28/19.

NEW 2019 TOYOTA RAV4 LE AWD
\$298/MO
Up to 36 months. On approved credit.

***Stk. #19H350. New 2019 Toyota Rav4 LE AWD. MSRP \$28,854. Sale price \$27,560 after Rogers discount. 36-month lease for \$298/month. 12,000 miles/year. \$1999.00 cash down. GFV \$17,889. No security deposit required. On approved credit. Plus tax, title and \$75 dealer doc fee. See dealer for details. Expires 02/28/19.

NEW 2019 TOYOTA TACOMA SR5 DBL CAB 4X4
LEASE NOW FOR ONLY \$298/MO
Up to 36 months. On approved credit.

Stk. #19H245. New 2019 Toyota Tacoma SR5 Double Cab 4WD. MSRP \$35,983. Sale price \$34,162 after \$1000 TFS rebate; excludes TRD Pro. 36-month lease for \$298/month. 12,000 miles/year. \$1699.00 cash down. GFV \$25,547.93. No security deposit required. On approved credit. Plus tax, title and \$75 dealer doc fee. See dealer for details. Expires 02/28/19.

ROGERS TOYOTA OF HERMISTON
We Care About What You're Driving!

541.567.6461 • 1.800.522.2308

1550 N. 1st St
Hermiston, OR

SALES HOURS
MON-SAT: 8:30 am - 7 pm
SUN: 10 am - 5 pm

SERVICE HOURS
MON-FRI: 7 am - 5:30 pm
SAT: 8 am - 5 pm

toyotaofhermiston.com