



Hermiston Herald

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2019

HermistonHerald.com

\$1.00

INSIDE

WATER RATES

City of Hermiston staff are hearing complaints after a water and sewer rate increase to pay for new projects around the city. **PAGE A3**

EOTEC

The Hermiston city council will take a closer look at a proposed strategic plan for the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center after an RV park project gets bogged down. **PAGE A10**

GOAL!!!

Hermiston boys soccer team wins its first game in the Mid-Columbia Conference. **PAGE A11**

BY THE WAY

Wyden schedules town hall for Sunday

Sen. Ron Wyden will be in Boardman on Sunday for a town hall.

The town hall will be at noon at the **Port of Morrow** offices, 2 Marine Drive in Boardman.

The town halls are open to all and will have time for public comments and questions.

Wyden has promised to hold at least one town hall in each Oregon county per year, and according to a news release from his office has held 933 town halls since making that promise.

There's still time to get ready for taco Tuesday, taco Wednesday and taco Thursday by purchasing a **Tastiest Taco** stamp booklet. The **United Way of Umatilla & Morrow Counties** is hosting the Tastiest Taco fundraiser April 12 through May 5.

The booklets are \$10 and provide one featured taco at 10 participating vendors, including six locations in Hermiston and

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Chamber announces Kimberly Nevil as new director

BY JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
STAFF WRITER

The new CEO for the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce is no stranger to helping businesses thrive.

Kimberly Nevil was announced as the organization's new chief executive officer on Tuesday, and will step into the role April 22. Nevil, a Hermiston native, is currently a business and employment specialist with the Oregon Employment Department. In that role, she helps people looking for jobs in applying and preparing for work, and helps employers with hiring and human resource tasks.

Nevil said she is excited to

start the new job.

"Hermiston is in an era of growth, and I look forward to working with the Chamber's highly capable board and staff in helping businesses succeed," Nevil said in a press release from the chamber.

Nevil will manage a staff of three people, which coordinates membership for 428 businesses and organizations. She will oversee the activities of several chamber committees, as well as the development of a new chamber office and workforce development center on South Highway 395 and East Evelyn Avenue.

Chamber board chairman Paul Keeler said Nevil's energy and skill set will be an asset to Herm-

iston as the community continues to grow.

"She's the right person for the Chamber at the right time," he said. "Kim is engaging, energetic and passionate about our community, and we're thrilled."

Nevil, a Hermiston High School graduate, earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Eastern Oregon University. She is a member of Hermiston's chapter of PEO International, and enjoys sports and outdoor activities.

Nevil succeeds Debbie Pedro, who was the Chamber director for 18 years. Pedro resigned in December to take a job with the Columbia Development Authority.



Contributed photo
Kimberly Nevil will begin her new role as Hermiston Chamber of Commerce executive director on April 22.

WATER PARK



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Flood waters from the Umatilla River inundate Riverfront Park on Tuesday in Hermiston. Heavy rain and snow runoff has caused flooding throughout the region. See A15 for more flooding photos.

Flooding hits Umatilla County

The Umatilla River was overflowing its banks at multiple locations around the county on Tuesday.

The river covered the parking lot, playground and large portions of the walking trails at Riverfront Park in Hermiston, causing the city to close most of the park

for the day. The river water flowed into a channel along the Oxbow Trail, creating a temporary creek through the sagebrush and trees near the trail

The city's parks and recreation department said in an email that Riverfront Park floods about once every four years, but the

park and the Oxbow Trail are both built to handle such flooding.

Other portions of the county also experienced flooding Tuesday, as predicted by the National Weather Service. Forecasts call for more showers Thursday in Hermiston.

Weather icon design by vecteezy.com

Students hope for less silence on suicide

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN AND JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITERS

For many, mental health and suicide are taboo topics that can be uncomfortable, or even scary to talk about. But according to a group of students at Hermiston High School, the fear of open discussion is part of the problem.

In their English class, juniors Karyssa Fisher and Ericka Wells were asked to write opinion pieces for a class assignment. Both ended up writing columns about suicide and mental health — issues that have affected their student body every year since they've been in high school, as students have died by or attempted suicide. But while their class has been impacted by the issue, the students said they feel it has not been properly addressed in school.

The girls wrote about different angles of the issue (you can read their columns on A8), but both said that they wish students were more encouraged to seek help, and discuss their feel-

ings openly. Along with a few other classmates, they discussed some resources they'd like to see for students.

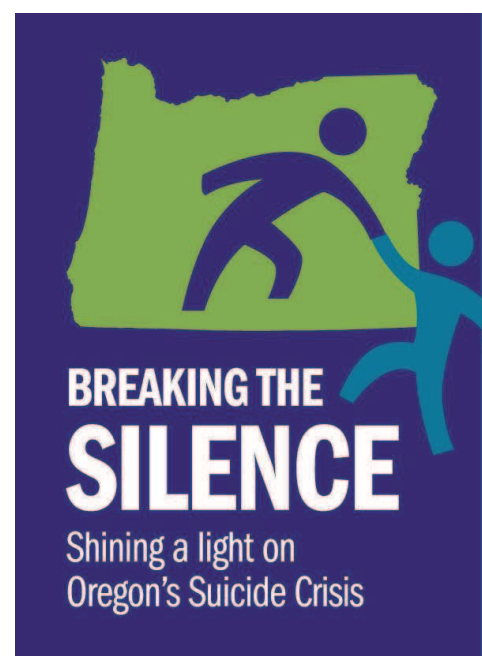
"I feel like we could learn from this — there are better ways to treat people who are depressed," Wells said.

Through dealing with the tragedies that have fallen upon their class, Wells said she hopes they will better learn how to support each other.

"I feel like having an incident like this brings the student body closer together, and makes us more aware of what students may be going through," she said.

That can include acknowledging a range of issues and needs that students may have. The students said while their school does offer some services, they would like to see them better publicized, and geared more toward everyday mental health, rather than a reaction to certain incidents.

"I think we should announce more where



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