

Hermiston Herald

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Staff photo by Kathy Aney
Hermiston's Paige Palzinski gets ready to throw the shot put.

INSIDE

GROUND-BREAKING

Hermiston launched construction on a new water tower at the corner of Northeast 10th Street and Punkin Center last week.

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NEW HOUSES

A new 54-lot single family subdivision is planned for West Theater Lane across from Kopacz Nursery.

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GOOD FRIDAY

Hundreds of Hermiston Catholics celebrated Good Friday with the annual Way of the Cross pageant.

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BY THE WAY

New food trucks in town

Hermiston's new food truck pod **Third Street Eats** wasn't officially set to open until May, but a few trucks have already begun serving up food on the site.

The pod is located in the public parking lot across Orchard Avenue from **McKenzie Park**, and includes picnic tables and food from vendors such as **Southern Twain BBQ**.

Look for more information about the food pod's upcoming summer season in next week's **Hermiston Herald**.

... **Hermiston High School** hired **Drew Preuninger** on Monday as the boys basketball coach. Preuninger replaces **Casey Arstein**, who stepped down at the end of the season for personal reasons.

Preuninger, 29, graduated from **Camas High School** and played collegiately for **Concordia University**. He is teaching math at **Zionsville High School** in Zionsville, Ind., and coaching basketball for a company called **Shoot360**.

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The tastiest Tacos



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini
Maria Castillo, Aaliyah Estrada, 2, and Elida Gutierrez wait to be served Monday night at Nookie's Restaurant/Hermiston Brewing Co. They are participating in the Tastiest Taco, a fundraiser for United Way of Umatilla & Morrow Counties.

Local fundraiser serves Tastiest Tacos

By **TAMMY MALGESINI**
COMMUNITY EDITOR

For a handful of co-workers at Hermiston's Columbia Bank, it's been "Taco Tuesday" almost every day of the week.

Debra Wainwright, vice president/business banking relationship manager, shared about the Tastiest Taco fundraiser spearheaded by the United Way of Umatilla & Morrow Counties. Wainwright, who also serves on the United Way board, was thrilled with the nearly universal positive response.

"A taco is never a bad thing," personal banker Elida Gutierrez said with a laugh.

"Oh my god, tacos — let's go," added Aracely Urenda, a bank teller.

Branch manager Chris Betencourt said in

addition to a contest between co-workers, there's a competition between the Hermiston and Pendleton branches to see who can sell the most Tastiest Taco stamp books. While the prize for the winner in the Hermiston branch is still a surprise, the incentive between the branches is pretty basic.

"It's bragging rights," said Angela Stanley, branch supervisor. "It's the Hermiston vs. Pendleton thing of bragging rights."

Beth Harrington, United Way's resource development coordinator, encourages people to have fun with the contest. In addition to enjoying tacos at 10 different area restaurants and food trucks, she invites people to post about it on social media.

The Tastiest Taco fundraiser began April 12 and continues through May 5. The stamp book, which cost \$10, provides one free featured taco at each vendor.

After going to each place, participants are encouraged to vote for their favorite. Harrington said the winner gets to display the Tastiest Taco plaque for a year — until next year's contest.

In addition to enjoying a variety of tacos, Gutierrez said the fundraiser helps important causes through the United Way. Unless designated otherwise by the giver, a donation to the United Way

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Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini

A special prime rib taco is offered at Nookie's Restaurant/Hermiston Brewing Co. for Tastiest Taco, a United Way of Umatilla & Morrow Counties fundraiser.

Ranch & Home opens in Hermiston

BY **JADE MCDOWELL** NEWS EDITOR

It may be one of Hermiston's most anticipated events of 2019: Ranch & Home opened Friday.

The retailer announced plans for a Hermiston store in early 2016, planning to open by the end of 2017. But continued delays plaguing the project made guessing its timeline a running joke around town. The company even got in on the joke for April Fool's Day this year, putting out a video stating that the building would be turned into a retirement home since that's what current Hermiston residents will need by the time it opens.

In reality, a surprise soft opening kicked off Friday. Marketing coordinator Morgan Hunsaker said the store would hold an official grand opening on May 31 when everything was fully in place, but Hermiston customers had been so patient they wanted

to open as soon as possible.

Ranch & Home also has locations in Kennewick, Pasco and Milton-Freewater. The Hermiston store, located at 2500 S. Highway 395, boasts more than 100,000 square feet of retail space. Sections of merchandise include a large selection of clothing, tools, automotive items, gardening supplies, barbecue grills, fishing gear, firearms, animal feed and more.

"It's pretty similar to the Kennewick store, just a little different layout," Hunsaker said.

Most sections of the store were fully stocked on Friday — black and yellow DeWalt tools took up a long row of shelves in one area, while racks of Under Armour clothing, 30% off, stood in another. But there were also areas where staff were still busy unpacking boxes.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Racks of clothing stretch down an aisle of Ranch & Home in Hermiston during the first day of its soft opening on Friday.

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