



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Hermiston's new food truck pod, Third Street Eats, doesn't have its grand opening until May 1, but some food trucks are already open.

Hermiston food pod launches soft opening

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The people asked, and Hermiston listened.

The city's new food truck pod is now open for business after residents asked the city to reconsider its restrictions on mobile food vendors. Third Street Eats will have its official grand opening on Wednesday, but the pod is in soft opening mode now.

Last week Southern Twain BBQ, the Owie Outlaw Tribe Cafe and Tacos Garcia were serving customers in the parking lot at 240 S.E. Third St., across Orchard Avenue from McKenzie Park. Quality Concessions is also participating in the pod by selling elephant ears and other "fair food," but they were not parked there last week.

Patrick Hunt of Southern Twain BBQ said he has been doing good business so far. His truck sells everything from pulled pork sandwiches to brisket by the pound.

Previously, Hermiston had restricted its food truck licenses to three — all held by local taco trucks. Hunt, a Hermiston resident who perfected his culinary skills while living in North Carolina, had not been able to operate in Hermiston until several residents approached city hall and lobbied for changes that would allow for more food trucks in town.

He said he was grateful for those residents, and those who voiced their opinion in a survey the city put out afterward.

"You guys are great because you spoke up and

the city council followed your directive," he said. "If you want positive change in town, that's how to get it done."

Hunt had been traveling to Pendleton every day with his truck, but will now serve up ribs, sausage, brisket, pulled pork and coleslaw in Hermiston while Third Street Eats is in operation. He said he hopes to do enough business in Hermiston to afford a second truck that could return to Pendleton.

"I'm still loyal to Pendleton, but this is right around the corner from my house, so it's a no-brainer for me," he said.

Monica Todd, who operates the food truck pod on behalf of the city, said there are other food trucks that have expressed interest in participating this summer but have not yet gotten the required license from the Umatilla County Health Department. Space is still open for more vendors, who can pay for space by the month, by the day or by the weekend.

Technically, Tacos Garcia is on private property and is not part of the food pod, but vendors are glad it offers another option to draw in customers.

"We look at it like a co-op process," Todd said of the food pod. "We help each other out and we're finding what works for us."

In addition to the food trucks, there are picnic tables, garbage cans and a portable restroom onsite. Todd said she is getting in more tables soon, along with giant shade umbrellas donated by Pepsi. She plans

to get live music at the pod going on certain days in the future, and will host special events on days such as Mother's Day, Father's Day and graduation.

The city is requiring the food trucks to move once a week so that the parking lot can be cleaned. Participants plan to close up shop at 4 p.m. on Sunday afternoons and return at 4 p.m. on Mondays.

Angela Todd, Monica's daughter, was operating Owie Outlaw Tribe's pink food truck April 24, selling everything from corn-chip-and-chili "haystacks" to chili lime popcorn.

"We offer a lot of keto-friendly, gluten-free, carb-free options," she said.

They are also offering a "Bang for your Buck" lunch special adding a Bang energy drink to any lunch for a dollar, in the hopes of attracting students from nearby Hermiston High School.

So far, however, the food pod's customers have mostly been adults on their lunch break. On April 24 Travis Hulse, Jared Chandler and Ricardo Curiel were sitting at one of the tables enjoying sandwiches from Southern Twain BBQ.

"The brisket has got a lot of flavor," Chandler said, commenting he was happy the city had gotten the food truck pod idea off the ground.

Hulse said he liked the idea as well, and hoped word spread and more vendors joined the pod.

"I like the idea of bringing variety to town," he said. "We're kind of saturated with certain types of food here."

Hermiston Cinco de Mayo gears up for 2-day festival

Carnival kicks off Friday night

By TAMMY MALGESINI
COMMUNITY EDITOR

The Hermiston Cinco de Mayo committee is gearing up for a second year at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, 1705 Airport Road.

The popular event, which previously outgrew other venues, is Saturday from 4-11 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 10 p.m. The two-day festival features family activities, live entertainment, vendor booths, a beer garden, an evening dance and the Miss Senorita Cinco de Mayo pageant. There is no admission charge.

Saul Olvera said about 15 vendors have already committed for the event, and he expects a few more before the weekend. A variety of food and wares will be available for purchase, he said.

Rainier Amusements presents the Cinco de Mayo carnival, which kicks off Friday from 4-9 p.m. with a Buddy Night. Pre-sale wristbands for Friday are buy one, get one free.

The carnival continues Saturday from noon to



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini

Cousins Luciano Silva, Nadine Ortega and Alexis Silva pose for a photo before riding in the Kid Car Combo at the carnival during the 2017 Hermiston Cinco de Mayo celebration. The carnival opens Friday with Buddy Night at EOTEC.

10 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 9 p.m. Children must be at least 2 years old to ride. Wristbands purchased in advance are \$20 each (and include one game). They can be picked up at 395 Quick Stop, 455 N. First St., Hermiston. Those purchased on-site are \$30 each.

An evening dance — Gran Baile — will begin Saturday night at 5 p.m. Several Latin bands will play traditional and contemporary music. Live entertainment is featured Sunday, including music and folkloric dancers.

The Miss Senorita Cinco de Mayo pageant, which is Sunday at 3 p.m., includes Lili Juarez, Nayeli Resendiz, Paloma Silva and Brisieda Sandoval. In addition to the beauty contest, each contestant will share about their culture and what it means to them. At the conclusion of the live pageant, one of the young women will be crowned Miss Hermiston Cinco de Mayo 2019.

For more information, contact info@hermistoncincodemayo.com or visit www.HermistonCincoDeMayo.

40 Taps plans 'Star Wars' fiesta

All things "Star Wars" is featured during a fiesta at 40 Taps.

In addition to Mexican beers, margaritas and tacos, a full mariachi band will kick off the fun Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., Pendleton. The band, Mariachi Jalisciense, features Emilio Zapata, the grandson of

the famous Mexican general Emiliano Zapata.

May the Fourth Be With You continues with a "Star Wars" theme into the evening, including karaoke and an open mic from 4 p.m. to midnight. People are encouraged to dress in costumes — representing fiesta fun or "Star Wars" — but it's not required. There is no cover charge.

For more information, call 541-612-8559 or visit www.facebook.com/fortytaps.

What will you run for?

Join the Tri-Cities Cancer Center Foundation in support of local cancer patients and their families. Run for Ribbons is a 10k, 5k and 1mile run/walk community event to raise awareness and promote prevention of all forms of cancers. All funds raised from this event stay LOCAL.

Participants can purchase an event t-shirt featuring a blank ribbon. It's the Run for Ribbons tradition to decorate it, customize it, use it to honor a memory, celebrate survival, or to simply encourage hope.

\$25 Adults / \$15 Youth / \$10 for t-shirt
(Registration fee does not include t-shirt)

10k, 5k and 1mile Run - Walk
Howard Amon Park in Richland

RibbonFest / Check In 8:30 am
Run - Walk Begins 10:00 am

Register online: www.runforribbons.org
Register by phone: 509.737.3413

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