

Hermiston celebrates Cinco de Mayo

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

Music filled the fairgrounds all weekend long as Hermiston hosted its annual Cinco de Mayo celebration.

The event, which outgrew its previous homes at various city parks and downtown streets, took place at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center on Friday through Sunday.

On Saturday, the slate of live performances kicked off at 5 p.m. Luz Lopez of Boardman, who was listening with her friends from the bleachers, said she hoped people got up and started dancing soon.

"I came here because of the music, and I wanted to dance," she said. "It's been a long time since I've danced."

She said she appreciated the local volunteers that come together each year to put on the event.

Lopez said she was there because it seemed like a fun way to spend a Saturday night, but also because "it's my culture."

While Americans sometimes incorrectly assume that Cinco de Mayo is Mexico's independence day, the holiday actually marks Mexican victory in a single battle against the French in 1862 at the Battle of Puebla.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Cuarto Concepto performs at the Hermiston Cinco de Mayo celebration on Saturday night.

In the United States, the day has evolved into an opportunity for Mexican-Americans to celebrate their heritage.

Bands performing

throughout the weekend ranged from local bands to international stars, such as Huichol Musical.

Other performers included Paso Firme, Plebil-

loz Style, Inizzio Norteño, Cuarto Concepto, Herencia con Estilo and more. There was also dancing by Baile Folklórico.

Christian Contreras, a

guitarist from the local group Herencia con Estilo, was spending time with friends Saturday while waiting to go on. He said he always enjoys the games, food and music at

Hermiston's Cinco de Mayo celebration.

"We're here to just chill and have fun," he said.

In addition to live music the weekend featured a carnival, food vendors, beer garden and a pageant.

Lili Juarez was crowned this year's Miss Cinco de Mayo during the pageant on Sunday afternoon. Also competing for the title were Hermiston teens Nayeli Resendiz, Paloma Silva and Briesida Sandoval.

Juarez told the *Hermiston Herald* that winning the title of Miss Cinco de Mayo meant a lot to her because it was a way to show her pride in her heritage. She said she felt honored to represent her culture and her family, who have taught her the importance of never giving up on her dreams.

"As I grow older, I fall more and more in love with my culture and our beautiful traditions," she said in an email. "I'm proud to be a part of such hard working culture, who come here with nothing and work hard everyday for a better future for their families."

The Hermiston High School student enjoys cheerleading and fishing, and said she loves playing with makeup. After she graduates she plans to attend cosmetology school.

East Oregonian newspaper welcomes new managing editor

By **CHRISTOPHER RUSH**
PUBLISHER

The *East Oregonian* has hired a new editor who is no stranger to Northeast Oregon.

Andrew Cutler, an Idaho native with experience at papers in Oregon, Idaho and South Dakota, started work for the *East Oregonian* on Monday, after spending 16 months as a manager of communications and public relations for Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative in Baker City.

"We're delighted to have someone of Andrew's journalistic experience and Northeast Oregon background lead our award-winning newsroom," said Regional Publisher Chris Rush in making the announcement. "I'm certain Andrew will continue the tradition of excellent community-focused journalism already established here at the *EO*."

The *East Oregonian* is the *Hermiston Herald's* sister paper. Both are owned by EO Media Group and share some of the same staff. Jade McDowell will continue to serve as news editor of the *Hermiston Herald*.

Prior to going to work for the electric cooperative, Cutler spent five years in La Grande as the editor of *The Observer*, with the last three including an addi-



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Cutler

tional role as publisher of the publication.

"I'm excited about coming to Pendleton and, specifically, working at a paper like the *East Oregonian* and for a company like the East Oregonian Media Group," Cutler said. "This paper has a long legacy of great journalism. Its reputation is unmatched by any paper in Eastern Oregon and is among the best in the state of Oregon. I'm in awe of trying to uphold that legacy but looking forward to the challenge."

Cutler's newspaper career began in late 2000 at the *Argus Observer*

in Ontario where he first started as a senior sportswriter before being promoted to sports editor in early 2001.

Following a stint as a Boise State University beat writer at the *Idaho Press-Tribune* in Nampa, Idaho, Cutler returned to the *Argus Observer* in 2004 and worked both as a sports editor and as news editor.

Cutler moved to South Dakota in 2006, working first as the managing editor at the *Capital Journal* in Pierre, and later as a sports editor and weekend news editor at the *Rapid City Journal*. Cutler left Rapid

City to begin work in La Grande in November 2012.

Cutler-led publications are the winners of numerous Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association and South Dakota Newspaper Association awards. As managing editor of the *Capital Journal*, Cutler led the paper to the 2008 SDNA General Excellence award for daily newspapers with circulation under 16,000. It was the first time the *Capital Journal* had earned the award in 126 years of existence. Cutler also won general excellence awards as a member of staffs at the *Argus Observer* and the *Rapid City Journal*. As editor of the La Grande paper, he led the publication to a second-place finish in ONPA's Division C

category for General Excellence, finishing behind the *East Oregonian*.

"I'm really happy about joining the *East Oregonian*, instead of competing against it," Cutler said. "This paper has a great staff of hardworking, talented people who truly love what they do and the product they put out. I'm excited to be part of that."

Cutler was born in Pocatello, Idaho, and raised in Fruitland, Idaho. A 1990 graduate of Fruitland High School, he went on to earn an associates of arts degree from Treasure Valley Community College in 2000 and a bachelor of arts degree in multidisciplinary studies from Boise State University in 2016.

After high school, Cutler joined the U.S. Army in 1991 and served as a combat medic in Germany, Fort Stewart, Georgia, and Honduras before his discharge in 1995.

Cutler and his wife, Larra, have been married nearly 24 years and are parents to two grown sons. Their oldest son, Brady, currently works for Alaska Airlines and will be attending flight school this fall. Their youngest son, Connor, is completing his sophomore year at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande.

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