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BY THE WAY

Election Day results online

Tuesday was **Election Day** in Oregon. While the results did not come in until after the Hermiston Herald went to print, they can be found online at www.hermistonherald.com and in next week's paper. Races included board positions for **Hermiston School District**, **Umatilla County Fire District 1** and other special districts.

Teenagers from **Morrow County** are planning a "climate strike" in Heppner to raise awareness about climate change.

The event, titled "**Fight for our Future**," will take place at **Heppner City Park** on Main Street on Friday, May 24 at noon. Community members of all ages are welcome to participate, and are encouraged to bring signs "with messages pertaining to the global climate crisis."

According to a news release about the event, the goal is to educate the public about the effect climate change has on individuals' daily lives and the broader environment. Educational materials will be provided, and organizers will be wearing T-shirts with the "Fight for our Future" slogan.

Organizers put together a website and blog at bit.ly/heppnerclimate to start raising awareness and created

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DERAILED

Union Pacific eliminates majority of remaining jobs at Hinkle



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Union Pacific Railroad announced it would be laying off 500 additional employees for the Hinkle Rail Yard on Tuesday outside of Hermiston.

By **JADE MCDOWELL AND PHIL WRIGHT**
STAFF WRITERS

The railroad looms large in Hermiston's past, but it will likely play a much smaller role in the city's future.

Union Pacific Railroad filed notice with the state on Tuesday that it will lay off up to 195 employees at the Hinkle Rail Yard in Hermiston and close the yard's supply warehouse and mechanical shop. It stated the 195 layoffs would be completed by July 19 and are expected to be permanent. The bulk layoff is an escalation of the scores of layoffs that have happened incrementally at the rail yard since October 2018.

Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann said his conversation on Tuesday with UP spokesman Aaron Hunt was a difficult one. The city of Hermiston's June 2018 financial report listed Union Pacific as one of the city's largest employers at the time, estimating the company employed about 500 people at Hinkle. Drotzmann said it was his understanding the latest layoffs will leave between 40 and 45 employees.

"It was both a conversation of frustration and sadness to realize an organization that has made such an impact on the community over the last 25 years is reducing to one eighth of what it was," he said.

He said the loss of so many jobs in the community will have an economic impact as families move away or cut back their spending significantly while facing



HH file photo

Rail cars roll down the hump and into the yard at the Union Pacific Railroad Hinkle Locomotive Service and Repair Facility and Freight Classification Yard near Stanfield in May 2012.

"Those were good-paying jobs with great benefits."

David Drotzmann, Hermiston Mayor

unemployment. But he said he was more concerned about the effects on the individuals who lost their jobs.

"Those were good-paying jobs with great benefits," he said.

After Union Pacific laid off more than 80 employees during the fall of 2018 and winter 2019, UP spokesman Tim McMahan declined to share how many employees Hinkle had, but said UP had 1,506 employees throughout Oregon. On Tuesday, he again declined to answer most questions submitted by the *East Oregonian* about the number of employees who will remain at Hinkle or what oper-

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Hermiston volunteers show love for their city

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

Volunteers were out in full force on Saturday to show Hermiston a little love.

The annual I Love My City cleanup event spread community members out across the city to pick up trash, weed flower beds, paint over graffiti and more.

Across from the Hermiston Community Center, a group of families in red "I Love My City" T-shirts were planting flowers and trimming bushes Saturday morning.

Al Llanos was handing flowers out of the bed of his pickup truck to his daugh-

ters, who passed them assembly line-style to his wife Ana.

"We're out here to support our community," he said.

The family moved to Hermiston from Idaho recently and decided to sign up when their church asked for volunteers.

"It's a really nice way to teach our kids how to help, it is important to help," he said.

Other groups spread out through downtown and along the railroad tracks, beautifying as they went, or washed cars for free.

The I Love My City movement began in 2016.

Hermiston had been rocked by a murder-suicide and several other tragedies, and members of Hermiston Assembly of God church wanted to do something to help raise the community's spirits. Their first day of service included creating a free car wash, handing out snacks at parks and going door to door with offers of service and prayers.

Since then the campaign has grown, encompassing several area churches and bringing out hundreds of volunteers each spring for their largest event of the year.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Ana Llanos, left, takes a flower from Samantha Llanos as they help plant new flowers across from Hermiston Community Center on Saturday during the I Love My City event.

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