

Umatilla celebrates students' post-high school plans

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

As high school seniors get ready to write the next chapter of their life, Umatilla High School is celebrating those who are committed to furthering their education in some form.

"Any plan is a great plan, as long as you made it happen," superintendent Heidi Sipe told students on Wednesday.

Students were gathered in the gym for a talent show followed by the school's "college signing" day. Graduating seniors with post-high school plans were cheered on by underclassmen and teachers as they introduced themselves one by one and declared their commitment to a school, trade or other option. Afterward they signed "letters of intent," mimicking a ritual often performed by athletes committing to play a sport at the college level.

Counselor Dee Lorence told students post-secondary education wasn't limited to a university — it could also mean community college, the military, a trade school or apprenticeship. She said this year 69 of the school's 90 graduating seniors had some sort of plan in place for increasing their skills beyond a high school diploma.

A few students were recognized individually for their plans to play a sport at a college level or enlist in the National Guard. Emanuel Tejada was recognized as the winner of the Ronald Reagan Leadership medal, awarded to a student who "exemplifies drive, humility and service before self."

Tejada is planning to attend Oregon State University. He said after the ceremony that he plans to study civil engineering.

"I like the mathematics and the science that goes into it," he said.

He was debating between



Adrian Corta and Julian Gutierrez announce their post-secondary choice as Blue Mountain Community College during Signing Day on Wednesday at Umatilla High School.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney



Almost 70 high school seniors signed symbolic letters of intent for colleges or other post-secondary plans on Wednesday at Umatilla High School.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Oregon Technical Institute and OSU, but ended up choosing OSU because his brother attends there. He said he was looking forward to both the social and academic aspects of college.

Roughly half of the students who shared their plans Wednesday are bound for

Blue Mountain Community College. Cece Cardnas-Perez said she chose the local school because it is "affordable and closer to home."

She wants to pursue some sort of career in the medical field — she hasn't quite figured out what yet — and attending community col-



Hope Cameron announces her college choice as Oregon Tech during Signing Day on Wednesday at Umatilla High School.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

lege before transferring to a university later will allow her to save money.

Alexandrea Ford, who is

planning to study at BMCC to become a sonogram technician, said when seniors talked about their post-sec-

ondary plans they often talked about trying to walk onto a sports team in college, or "what their living situation is going to be and how they can afford it."

"It's really expensive," she said of going the university route. "We live in a small area and not a lot of parents can afford to send their kids to school."

Alana Wilson knows about that. She watched her son Andrew Wilson participate in the signing ceremony Wednesday by declaring his intention to attend Western Oregon University.

She said government financial aid comes about \$10,000 a semester short, leaving Andrew to pay for the rest through a job and support from his parents.

"There's a pretty big difference there that we have to make up," she said.

Andrew is planning to pursue a master's degree so that he can teach high school physics. He said Umatilla School District staff are very encouraging of students making plans to gain additional skills above their high school diploma.

"They're definitely pushing us in the right direction, pushing us to succeed," he said.

April Dirksen, dean of students, also said that district staff were "tremendous" in encouraging students to set goals and make plans.

Students take a "success" class their freshman year where they are required to make a 10-year plan, and then are moved through classes such as personal finance to help them succeed or refine their plan.

"We want them to find something they're passionate about and stick with it," she said.

She said the annual signing day was a way to recognize the "amazing" students who were working hard to better themselves.

"They worked a lot of years to get to this point," she said.

Clinic at Hermiston High School will open June 3

BY HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston School District is partnering with the Good Shepherd Health Care System to open a new Wellness Clinic at Hermiston High School.

By using Good Shepherd Urgent Care staff to offer illness evaluation and treatment, vaccines, routine physical exams and sports physicals, both parties are hoping the clinic will have wide-ranging effects.

"A significant part of our mission is to make health care accessible to our community. By partnering with the Hermiston School District to provide a Wellness Clinic for teachers, students, and staff members we will be able to provide for the health care needs of our community," Good Shepherd Medical Group Vice President Troy LeGore said in a press release. "The Wellness Clinic will provide easy access to

district employees, teachers, and students — reducing absenteeism — providing parents with an accessible care option for their children — all while providing high quality and compassionate care."

The high school previously had a wellness clinic in partnership with Family Health Associates, but that clinic closed. The new one will operate in the same space.

The new clinic began operations on Monday, and will also be open June 10 from 8 a.m. to noon and on June 5 and June 12 from noon to 4 p.m.

Students under 18 must have a parent or guardian turn in a parent consent form and medical history to receive care. If patients have insurance, the clinic will bill it.

Parents, students, and staff can make an appointment by calling 541-667-6199. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Hermiston School District shuffles administrators

Rocky Heights Elementary School principal Jerad Farley will fill the role of Sunset Elementary School principal next year after Christie Petersen announced her resignation, citing a move to Hillsboro for personal reasons.

Farley will bring with him current RHES dean of students Becky Bacon, who will swap places with current Sunset dean of students Anthony Voelker.

Armand Larive Middle School assistant principal and former Rocky Heights teacher Stefani Wyant will be promoted to Rocky

Heights principal.

The vacant assistant principal position at Armand Larive will be filled by Hermiston High School science teacher Juan Rodriguez.

"An administrator's vacancy usually leaves a big void, but thankfully, Hermiston School District is blessed with a strong administrative team," superintendent Tricia Mooney said in a statement. "I was able to look at the district's leadership strengths and current needs to fill posts internally."

Staff changes will take effect on July 1.

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PET OF THE WEEK

Lucious is a sweet 2-3 year old mastiff cross with an easy temperament. He gets along great with children, cats and other dogs. He had to have a hind leg amputated after being hit by a car on April 13th. He has adjusted well to three legs and is still very fast and strong. He is house broke, and knows his basic commands. Fence required.



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