

# New learning center opens the door to industry child care

By JESSICA POLLARD  
STAFF WRITER

A new learning center opened its doors earlier this month, helping pave the way for industry-related child care in Eastern Oregon.

The Boardman Industry Learning Center was formed through a partnership between Boardman businesses, Umatilla Morrow County Head Start, and the Morrow County School District.

The center currently accepts three children from employees of each of its industry partners: Threemile Canyon Farms, Boardman Foods, Port of Morrow, Lamb Weston and Tillamook.

“This is new, we haven’t had partnerships with these businesses in a way that blends workforce development with early education. This is a first-time kind of event,” said executive director at UMCHS Maureen McGrath.

Dan Daltoso, associate director at UMCHS, said the project began when employers in Morrow County heard from workers that child care in the area was scarce.

According to a study out of Oregon State University earlier this year, just 16% of children between the ages of 3 and 5 have access to regulated care in Morrow County.

Currently, the BILC has openings in its pilot class of up to 20 preschool students in the 3- to 5-year age range. The care provided is year-round and 10 hours a day, at a rate of \$400 a month.

The current maximum monthly state rate for preschool care is \$680.

The BILC is able to keep



The Boardman Industry Learning Center is located on 240 N.E. Boardman Ave. in Boardman.

Staff photo by Jessica Pollard

**More information**  
Parents who are interested in the BILC can go to [www.umchs.com/BILC/](http://www.umchs.com/BILC/) to learn more.

the costs low with support from the involved businesses, and from the school district.

“It’s the only reason we can provide this high quality at a rate that is affordable to parents,” McGrath said.

In recent years, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has held conferences and roadshows across the nation, declaring child care and early education to be indus-



The lights are dim in the Boardman Industry Learning Center as children take an afternoon nap.

Staff photo by Jessica Pollard

try issues. In 2017, a report released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Founda-

tion cited a study revealing that 70% of the nonworking poor with children under

and Microsoft, others don’t.

This spring, Bloomberg reported hundreds of working moms at Amazon began advocating for their workplace to provide backup day care by collecting anecdotal evidence to show that lack of care has caused some women to miss out on high-level jobs. Some women, advocates stated, are even moving on to companies with more parent-friendly policies.

Ryan Neal, manager at the Port of Morrow, said he has noticed an increase of dual-income families in the Boardman area.

“It’s all about employee retention and recruitment for industries and making sure we are able to provide the workforce needed with continuous growth,” Neal said, “We’re just here to help support that effort and try to make it as best as possible.”

Parents enrolling their children in BILC can expect an emphasis on social, emotional, and academic skill-building through activities like family-style eating, play, counting, and vocabulary building.

“A day in the life of a preschooler is a little bit what you see at home,” said Suellen Whitlock, family engagement director at UMCHS. “Being kindergarten ready is not just being able to write your name.”

The BILC pilot will last three years, and organizers hope to eventually see it expand.

“There is quality learning from the moment they step through the doors,” Whitlock said. “It’s such a cool opportunity. I really think Boardman is doing something special.”

*“A day in the life of a preschooler is a little bit what you see at home.”*

Suellen Whitlock,  
Engagement director, UMCHS

age 5 cited “taking care of home/family” as their reason for not working.

And while some companies have child care or assistance available to their employees, like Nike, Intel

## Smith lands committee assignments

HERMISTON HERALD

Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, has been appointed by Speaker of the House Tina Kotek to serve on a number of committees during the 80th Legislative Assembly, including as co-vice chairman of the joint ways and means committee.



Smith

Some of the other committees Smith has been appointed to include House committee on revenue, joint legislative audit committee, joint tax expenditures com-

mittee, co-chairman of the joint ways and means subcommittee on general government, and co-vice chair of the joint student success committee.

In addition to Smith’s committee assignments, he has also been appointed by House Republican Leader Carl Wilson to continue to serve as the Caucus Budget Chair.

“I am honored to have been appointed to these positions by my colleagues and look forward to the opportunity to continue to

serve in a leadership capacity,” Smith said. “These committee appointments will allow me to continue to bring House District 57’s voice to the table as I work with my colleagues to craft solutions to the issues facing our great state.”

Smith will also serve on the Oregon Legislature’s Emergency Board, a bicameral and bipartisan committee that functions during the time that the legislature is not in session.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve on the Emergency Board once again,” Smith said. “I look forward to working with

my colleagues to ensure state agencies remain funded, the state budget remains balanced, and tax dollars of hard-working Oregonians are spent wisely.”

The Emergency Board allocates emergency funds, increases expenditure limitations, authorizes transfers, receives reports, and approves submissions of federal grant applications.

The 2019 legislative session wrapped up Sunday after protesting Senate Republicans returned to the Capitol on Saturday to finish passing bills after a walkout.

## Panda Express coming to Hermiston

HERMISTON HERALD

Hermiston’s fast food offerings are about to expand with the addition of a Panda Express.

The “fast casual Chinese” restaurant confirmed in a tweet that it is building a restaurant at 1530 N. First St. in Hermiston. It is expected to open in December.

The property just north of Walmart housed Stockman’s Steakhouse for several years, followed by a brief period as Indian Kitchen and Steakhouse, an Indian buffet that also offered more American fare.

Currently the nearest Panda Express to Hermiston is in Kennewick. The first Panda Express opened in Glendale, California, in 1983.

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## Hermiston School District pays off all pre-2008 bonds

By JESSICA POLLARD  
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston residents will see a tax break after Hermiston School District made a final payment toward all bond debt incurred prior to 2008 last month.

The district expects school bond property tax rates to decrease by an estimated 40 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for area homeowners. Its general fund property tax will stay at \$4.87 per \$1,000.

“I think obviously this isn’t something that happened overnight. It’s the result of the district taking financial responsibility very

seriously,” Superintendent Tricia Mooney said.

In 1999, \$39.9 million in bonds were approved to fund expansions and remodeling. In 2004, the district refinanced the bonds to shave off almost \$1.6 million dollars for taxpayers and lower the interest rate.

Not all of the district’s bonds were paid off — another bond for \$69.9 million which was approved in 2008 helped to replace West Park and Sunset elementary schools and Armand Larive Middle School. The pay-off dates for those bonds are June 2026 and June 2029.

Voters rejected a bid for a \$104 million bond in

2017 that would have built a new elementary school off Theater Lane, replaced Highland Hills and Rocky Heights elementary schools with new buildings and expanded the high school. The district’s Facility Planning Committee has been studying options for smaller bonds.

“Our elementary schools, middle schools, and Hermiston High School have continued to see rapid growth in the number of students we

serve, and we expect this growth to continue into the future,” Mooney said.

She stated that bond funding has allowed the school district to address the need for increasing capacity.

“We take seriously our financial obligations to pay bonds off on-time and clear debt off our books,” Mooney said in a statement. “Thank you to the voters who have supported our students and school district over the years.”

**Eagle Cap Excursion Train**  
Mid-Week Train Ride  
Wednesday, July 10  
Two Rivers Train Ride  
Saturday, July 20  
Book online or call 800.323.7330  
See the full 2019 schedule at [www.eaglecaptrainrides.com](http://www.eaglecaptrainrides.com)

**Music in the Parks**  
FREE Summer Concert Series  
Enjoy a summer of free concerts alternating between Boardman & Irrigon Marina Parks!  
BOARDMAN MARINA PARK  
July 8 Brady Goss "The Piano Man"  
July 22 Cruise Control Classic Rock  
August 5 Cosmo's Dream Bluegrass  
IRRIGON MARINA PARK  
July 15 Martin Gerschwitz Rock  
July 29 Fonzis Latino  
August 12 Cale Moon Country  
Music in the Parks is funded by: Morrow County Unified Recreation District and Portland General Electric and is sponsored by North Morrow Community Foundation  
In the event of inclement weather, Boardman performances will be held at the SAGE Center and Irrigon performances will be held at the Irrigon Senior Center.

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Featuring Celtic Band: Skweez the Weezle  
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Dinner in City Park  
7:00pm  
Candle lighting ceremony and the Blessing of the Clans  
Performing: Unforgettable Celtic Fiddler, Anna Burgess  
Saturday July 13 9:00am - 8:00pm  
Parade starts at 9am  
Vendors, Entertainment, Dancing, Piping & Scottish Athletic Competitions, Pipe Bands, Kids' Games, Story Tellers, Tattoo  
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