

BOND

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elementary school improvements to address congestion and be used to purchase more property to address projected student capacity.

A recent press release issued by the school district stated that taxpayers can expect to keep the \$0.40 reduction per \$1,000 assessed value they just gained from the district paying off its pre-2008 debt last month. Instead of raising school bond taxes to a higher level, the new bond would raise the \$82.7 million through new growth in Hermiston's tax base and adding more years onto the end of its bond payment schedule.

According to the Hermiston School District website, the Facility Planning Committee estimated the elementary schools would exceed capacity by the 2020-21 school year and Hermiston High School by this coming school year.

The committee, comprised of 20 community members, including employees of the city, the chamber of commerce, the Hermiston Irrigation District and local businesses, provided insight to the district prior to the authorization of the bond measure.

Stacey Stanek of Columbia River CPA Services, who serves as a co-chair on the committee, said that the growth in Hermiston played a large part in the formation of the bond proposal. She said that the district is collaborating with the

city, and that part of this includes contributing to the development of the Theater Lane area by constructing a new elementary school if the bond were to pass.

The proposal would bar bond funds from being used for deferred maintenance. The creation of a citizen oversight committee is also part of the proposal.

"I think the school is really working to be transparent," Stanek said.

School board chair Karen Sherman said in a news release that the district has an obligation to provide adequate space and quality programs for its students.

"With support from our residents, we'll be able to keep up with the growing demand for classroom space and maintain quality instruction at each of our campuses," she stated.

The district's last bond proposal, which was rejected by voters in 2017, was for \$104 million dollars. It would have funded the replacement of both Rocky Heights and Highland Hills Elementary, as well as construct a new elementary school and provide upgrades across the district.

If the bond had passed, it would have cost taxpayers an estimated \$0.90 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

"Even though we were unsuccessful last time," said school board vice chair Josh Goller on Monday, "the need is still there."

RETAIL

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additional resources to Hermiston, spend more of your money in Hermiston," Morgan said.

Most businesses the *Hermiston Herald* contacted to ask about what they look for in a new location didn't respond.

Olive Garden did send over a list of its site selection criteria. The requirements include a trade area of at least 100,000 people within a 15-minute drive (Hermiston's ZIP code held 50,415 in 2016) and a property of at least 2 acres with at least 20,000 average daily trips past it (Hermiston's busiest intersection at Highway 395 and Elm Avenue sees 22,000 vehicles per day). Other restaurants owned by the chain's parent company Darden require as high as 30,000 to 50,000 average daily trips.

Some chains set their sights lower. According to Golden Corral's website, their smallest restaurant model is made for sites with 21,500 average daily trips, 45,000 people within a 15-minute drive and 70,000 people within a

20-minute drive.

Costco, which has been the subject of rumor in many cities in Eastern Oregon and Washington, declined to comment on its site selection practices. Documents on a few websites, including a flier on the Gallelli Real Estate website, indicate Costco is looking for sites with 200,000 people within a 5-mile radius and a median income of \$75,000. Hermiston's median income was \$49,559 in 2016.

Of course, there are older Costcos that don't fit that rule — the smallest Costco is located in Juneau, Alaska, population 32,164. But many brick and mortar retailers are also expanding more cautiously now that they have to compete with online retailers.

Not everyone considers Hermiston too small. Panda Express just announced it is building a new restaurant in the former Stockman's Steakhouse location. Hermiston has also welcomed new retail in the past five years, including Ranch & Home, Harbor Freight and Petsense.

The community has also seen the addition of locally owned restaurants such as

Delish Bistro and Veg Out. Morgan said the city provides a treasure trove of market data on its website to assist entrepreneurs who may not have the resources to conduct their own market analysis.

Morgan said people tend to be willing to drive further for some things than others, which is why different businesses may be looking at differently sized "trade areas."

"Something like 7-Eleven is going to have a very different drive time people are willing to do versus something like Home Depot," he said.

It also makes a difference how many competitors are already there — Morgan said when people ask why The Dalles has a Fred Meyer even though it's smaller than Hermiston, he points out The Dalles doesn't have a Walmart that already offers many of the same goods.

He said the city's approach to recruiting restaurants and retail is generally to "set the table" for them with good infrastructure and fewer hurdles. Hermiston, unlike most cities, does not require a business license with the exception of food trucks.

Pendleton Whisky Music Fest expands kickoff party

HERMISTON HERALD

As the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest has grown, so has its kickoff party.

A Friday night concert on South Main Street the evening before Whisky Fest, the kickoff concert is expecting to attract more than 6,000 people, organizer Andy McAnally wrote in an email.

As a result of the anticipated crowds, Whisky Fest is hiring a second band to entertain an audience preparing for the July 13 main event at the Round-Up Grounds.

The kickoff party will feature holdovers DJ Govern-T and Precious Byrd, a self-described "dance band" from Bend.

The acts will be joined by

newcomer Kurt Van Meter, a former Hillsboro cop whose brush with death inspired him to pursue a career in country music.

The event, which runs from 6 p.m. to midnight, will mainly take place on the 200 block of Main Street, although a section of the 300 block next to the Pendleton Farmers Market will be open to kickoff party food vendors.

The Pendleton Police Department will close the 200 block of Main Street at 4 a.m. on July 12, with the 300 block to follow at 2 p.m.

Whisky Fest has also filled out the rest of its July 13 slate to compliment headline acts Post Malone and 50 Cent.

This year, organizers are going heavy on hip-hop acts,

with all five performers associated with the genre.

Before 50 Cent takes the stage, Whisky Fest will feature a performance from Tyla Yaweh, a Florida rapper and singer who is signed to Post Malone's record label and has performed with him on tour.

Although this year's Whisky Fest doesn't have the same kind of country acts it's had in years past, Blanco Brown, another of the opening acts, combines country and rap in a style he calls "trailer trap."

Opening the whole show as the first act is Grieves, a Seattle rapper who released a new single, "Let the Devil In," in March.

DJ Govern-T will return to do DJ sets between each act. Gates open at 4 p.m.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Members of the Party Pit watch as Blake Shelton performs during the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest last year. As a result of the anticipated crowds for this year's event, Whisky Fest is hiring a second band to entertain an audience preparing for the July 13 main event at the Round-Up Grounds.

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