

**FUNLAND**

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the culprit of the arson). Committee members said they felt those upgrades were important to include in plans for the new park.

Fetter said some community members had suggested moving the playground to a more visible location, but committee members said they felt that the current location at the center of Hermiston was best, not to mention it would be more cost-effective to rebuild there.

"This is the heart of our community," Mayor David Drotzmann said. "Just because someone stuck a knife in there and twisted it to make us feel bad, doesn't mean we should give in."

**How much will the project cost?**

The cost of the playground will depend on the design and materials used, but Fetter told committee members he thought it would likely fall somewhere around \$1 million.

**Where will the money come from?**

The city will receive a \$750,000 payout from its insurance company for the playground. On top of that committee members hope to raise about \$300,000 from sponsorships and individual donations. Fetter said the city has already brought in some donations, such as the \$6,000 raised by local churches during the I Love My City worship service, and service clubs and businesses have already let him know they are interested in donating once fundraising efforts officially launch.

**What features will be included in the new playground?**



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

**Hermiston Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter (right) assists Kayla Sandlyn and Dylan Duke in locating a wooden fence board carved with the name of Dylan's father Scott Duke, who passed away several years ago.**

The committee discussed including many of the same types of features as the previous iterations of Funland, broken up into one area for children under 6 and another targeted toward children ages 6-12.

They hope to include some educational elements and themed decorations such as watermelons or tractors, and plan to include some features that are more accessible for children with various disabilities.

Funds permitting, they would also like to add at least one additional picnic shelter to the area, as Fetter said the current shelter is in use all summer for birthday parties and other celebrations. In addition, Fetter proposed turning the irrigation shed near the playground into a larger building that would include restrooms and a

concession stand.

The stand could be rented out to the person who submitted the best proposal, or the Tiki Hut next to the splash park could be moved there. The Tiki Hut owner does a great job of keeping an eye on the splash pad, Fetter said, and it would be nice to have the same kind of watchful eye on Funland as well.

**What is happening to items from the old playground?**

All items with names on them, including plaques and the fence pickets featuring names of donors, have been removed from the burned structure, which will be demolished within the next couple of weeks after salvage work is complete. Fetter said the fence pickets are too corroded to reuse, however.

**How can we help?**

The Funland committee will examine proposals from playground designers next week and choose a company to work with on a design. Once that happens they plan to solicit community feedback on the design through public meetings and other efforts that will be announced in the future.

As with previous builds, there will be opportunities to make donations in order to have names on fence pickets and other items. Donations — which will be tax-deductible — will be collected through the Greater Hermiston Community Foundation and passed on to the city.

Fetter said he envisioned about 40% of the construction of the playground being done by contractors, 40% done by parks staff and 20% done by the community. But committee members said volunteer work should play a more prominent role if possible.

"The more community involvement, the more ownership people feel," Ric Sherman said.

**FUNLAND COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- Martha McClusky
- Charles Clupny
- Leah Lutz
- Ric Sherman
- Lindsey Lloyd
- Kelsey Volk
- Patricia Alder
- Jackie Myers
- Rod Hardin
- David Drotzmann

**PARADE**

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food or treats, listen to some music and then enjoy the parade."

In addition to monthly First Thursday events, other upcoming Hermiston Downtown District activities include the Annual Sidewalk Sale (Aug. 8), MelonFest (Aug. 17), Farm to Junk (Sept. 21) and Harvest Fest (Oct. 5). For more information, to volunteer or serve as a vendor, visit [www.facebook.com/hermistondowntown](http://www.facebook.com/hermistondowntown) or call 541-667-5026.

**Free fair shuttle**

Next week a free shuttle to and from the fair will help fairgoers and rodeo patrons avoid traffic and parking fees.

The shuttle runs from 4 p.m. until 1 a.m. on Aug. 6-10 and will make continual loops between Hermiston city hall (180 N.E. Second St.) and the east gate of the fairgrounds at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center (1705 E. Airport Road).

In its first year the shuttle ran earlier in the day, but this year's later schedule will allow people to stay for the rodeo and evening concerts and get back into town safely after a night of drinking at the Wildhorse main stage or Chute Eight.

Fair manager Angie McNalley said the shuttle is being sponsored by the city of Hermiston and run by Kayak Public Transit. While school buses from Midco have been used some years, she said this year's buses will be air-conditioned and handicapped-accessible.

Gates open for the fair on Tuesday, Aug. 6. Presale rates for carnival tickets will be available until Aug. 5.

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