

AGES

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the fair presents itself.

"It is a change, yes. It's just that the whole change became an emphasis away from what a farmer may raise in terms of livestock, to what the community is doing," said Don Miller, a former fair board member who is still involved in organizing.

Indeed, since the inception of the agricultural exhibits, the fair has expanded to showcase a variety of other goods. From hand sewn crafts to metal work, to even more recently, robotics.

"We always try to stay current with what's going on in the county," Miller said. "Ten years ago, robotics was not an issue for us."

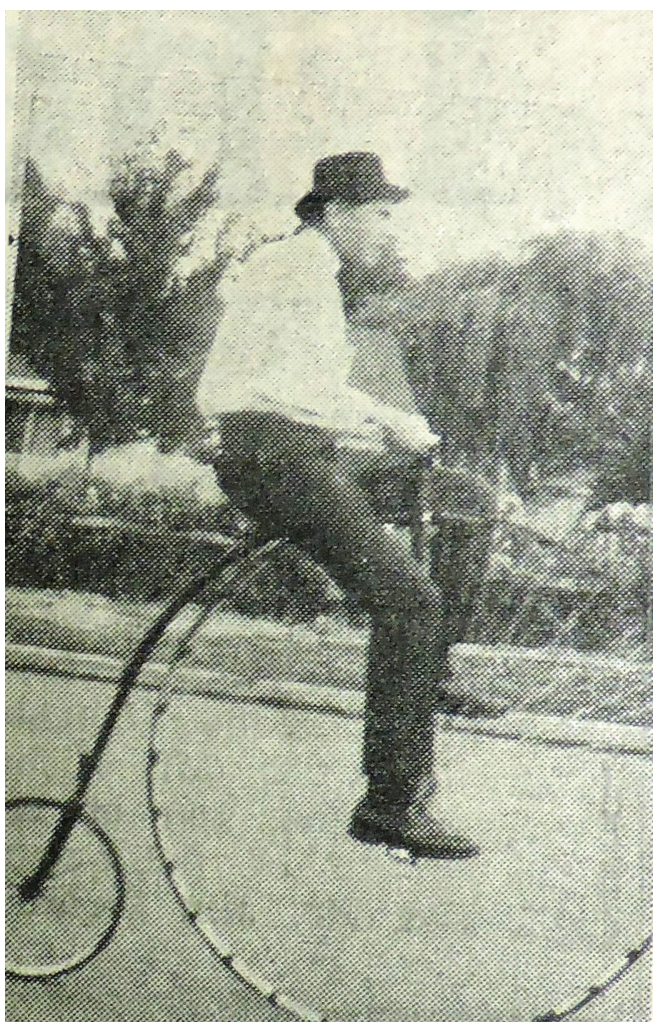
The Early Years

During the 1920s, the Hog and Dairy Show eventually became known as the Umatilla Project Fair.

"The Umatilla Project Fair is held primarily for the purpose of encouraging more profitable agriculture on the Greater Umatilla Project," wrote the *Hermiston Herald* in 1929.

Today, watermelon might be number one on Hermiston's produce list. But things were different almost 100 years ago.

"Especially striking," wrote the *Hermiston Herald* in 1921, "were the apples and honey. No visitor could go away without knowing that Hermiston is one of the best apple countries in the United States."



HH file photo

A man rides a high bicycle through the Umatilla County Fair Parade, Aug. 26, 1965.

The first-ever caged bird show in the state was hosted at the fair during the 1920s. Judges ranked parrots, canaries and other caged birds on cleanliness, appearance and general health.

Today, the fairgoers experience carnival rides, evening concerts and daytime entertainers such as magicians and jugglers. But in 1929, people were look-

ing forward to entertainment like air stunts, wing walking, trapeze and parachute dropping. A dance with a live orchestra capped off the fair, which at the time was a two-day weekend event.

The 1930s marked a push and pull for the Umatilla County Project Fair. In 1930, the fair made arrangements to have a merry-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Fairgoers fly through the air on a ride at the Umatilla County Fair. The fair continues daily through Saturday, August 10.

go-round, and an airplane which people could pay to take rides on. The following year, according to Ronald E. Ingle, author of *The Taming of The Desert*, windy weather knocked down the fairground barns and a display building was built in 1932.

The Project Fair of 1933 hosted its first rodeo.

The *Hermiston Herald* noted in 1935 that there was "considerable interest in the honey industry". Fairgoers attended tug-of-war matches, rolling pin throwing contests, greased pole races and eventually Model-T races. By the turn of the decade, the fair's scope was expanded, and it was labeled its modern title: The Umatilla County Fair.

Leading with Legacy

What happens at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center today might be a far cry from the car races and airplane rides of

yesteryear, but the spirit of the fair remains.

"There's some things that have changed and some things that have not changed," Miller said.

Dorran and Miller both have a history with fair dating back through the decades. Both began as student exhibitors and eventually became board members who served for over 20 years apiece.

Miller has lived in Milton-Freewater for over 70 years.

"I haven't missed any fair since 1962," he said.

Dorran, who grew up in Hermiston, remembers walking his steer from Seventh Street to the old fairgrounds downtown as a child. He grew up cleaning stalls during the celebrations and exhibiting metal-working projects.

"My family had always been involved," he said.

His mother participated

heavily when Dorran was growing up, and his grandfather was a part-time fair manager during the 1950s. He served in the army and lived in Alaska for 14 years. By the time he found his way back to the Umatilla County Fair in the 1990s, Miller had a decade of being a board member behind him.

Both men have since retired.

"Now we're just old guys, here to give to any help that we can," Miller joked.

Michael Davis, who owns Davis Amusement Cascadia, said the business's relationship with the fair goes back at least 50 years. The Umatilla County Fair holds the family-owned company's oldest contract.

"We grow with the event. We've expanded the number of rides over the years. Of course, now we've made the leap with them over to the EOTEC facility," Davis said.

Davis, 44, said that this will be at least his 43rd fair.

"Every year of my life," he said. "It's been important to my whole family. The relationships we've built in Umatilla County are second to none."

For many, Aug. 6 through 10 represents a week of remembering and reuniting.

"The people who come to the fair may not have seen each other for 12 months. They just talk to each other like it's the day before. It's truly a fair family which exists in Umatilla county," Miller said.

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Simmons Insurance Group has welcomed a new insurance agent — Brady Struchen — to Hermiston.

According to Simmons, Struchen is the leading agent for **Millang Financial Group**, serving hundreds of clients over his past nine years there. During that time, he was repeatedly recognized by **Kansas City Life Insurance** company as being in the top ten agents in the nation.

Struchen specializes in life insurance, retirement planning and Medicare supplements. He started July 29 after relocating his family from **Polk City, Iowa**.

"We are excited to have

such an amazing agent joining our team at Simmons," said Simmons president **Justin Simmons**. "Brady's wealth of knowledge will be a great asset to not only our team, but all of our clients as well."

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Top honors for cleanliness were recently awarded to 181 Oregon hotels, including one in Hermiston.

Presented by AAA, the **Cleanliness in Best of Housekeeping Awards** was presented to **Holiday Inn Express & Suites** in Hermiston. In addition, **Oxford Suites** and **Holiday Inn Express**, both in Pendleton, received recognition.

Travelers want a clean room when they're staying at a hotel, said **Marie Dodds** of AAA Oregon.

AAA's new Inspector's Best of Housekeeping award highlights those hotels that go above and beyond. Properties receiving the award, Dodds said, surpassed expectations, as measured during on-site inspections. During visits, AAA inspectors look for evidence of dirt, dust, pests, equipment performance and more.

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The menu at the **Harkenrider Senior Activity Center** for Thursday is enchilada casserole, Spanish rice, fruit and dessert. Friday is ham and cheese sandwich, salad and dessert. Monday is salad bar, garlic bread and dessert. Tuesday is chef salad, fruit and dessert. Next Wednesday is two slices of pizza, salad and dessert.

to what has been a shortage of psychiatric beds in Oregon and across the nation, reducing wait times for care.

The facility is located at 1212 Linda Avenue, near Lifeways' Hermiston offices.

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than even a hospital, such as "anti-ligature" measures to prevent possible suicide attempts.

"The intention is to make it the most safe we can for patients and staff, which is why we wanted to do it right the first time," she said.

Aspen Springs will include 16 individual rooms for patients, a dining area, common area, reflection room, nurses station, offices for therapists, a fenced courtyard and more. Tours will be available to the public before the facility begins providing care.

Johnsen and Cathey said Aspen Springs will fill a "huge gap" in mental health care in Eastern Oregon. Currently, most patients experiencing a mental health crisis are transported to facilities on the western side of the state, pulling them away from support systems like friends and family.

Now, they said, if someone in Umatilla County is in a crisis they can stay in Hermiston, where family can visit, participate in family therapy sessions and work with care providers in person to create a plan for transitioning the patient back out of the acute care facility. Lifeways staff who provide inpatient care at Aspen Springs will also be able to coordinate closely with Lifeways staff who provide outpatient services to the client.

"The key is that we will be able to serve our community directly in the community," Cathey said.

It will also add more beds



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