



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Rylie Hurst rides a robotic bull ride at the Umatilla County Fair Tuesday afternoon.

FAIR

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As Annikah Perez waited to sell her 147-pound lamb Saturday, her voice wavered as she described the good times she had with Tulip.

"I'm very sad," the 13-year-old Hermiston 4-H student said, sniffing. "I love Tulip very much."

The sheep is stubborn, she said, "but that's my favorite part about her."

It was Annikah's sixth year showing an animal at the fair, so she knew how hard it would be to say goodbye to the lamb she raised since birth. But she said she comes back year after year because she loves how much confidence she gains from the process.

Over the course of the hourslong auction in the largest barn at the fairgrounds, hundreds of thousands of dollars flowed from local businesses and individuals to area youths. Many of them plan to use the money for college, or to reinvest it into more animals next year.

The check comes at a price, however. Every kid who raises an animal for the fair knows their animal companion they fed and watered and walked for months is probably destined for someone's dinner table.

Wyatt Harris, 11, from Echo, said the money he got from selling his sheep Smoke would go into his savings fund for college and a truck.

When asked whether he was worried about parting with Smoke, he shrugged.

"Not really," he said. "I live on a farm so I kind of know what will happen."

Macy Rosselle, 17, from Pendleton, was also pragmatic about what would happen to her grand champion goat Maverick, who sold for \$12 a pound to United Grain Corporation.

"His purpose is for meat, and he will be fulfilling his purpose," she said.

Still, it tugged at her heartstrings. Although Macy has 25 head of goats, Maverick was her award-winner she has traveled with to multiple fairs.

"He's definitely my favorite goat by far," she said. "I'm sad to see him go."

Ayrin Davis 11, of Hermiston 4-H, had a harder time. She cried in the pens behind the auction arena after selling PJ, her backup lamb. She had already unexpectedly lost her primary lamb a week earlier when it got spooked by something and ran into a fence, breaking its neck.

Rapidash, she said, weighed much more than

PJ and might have won grand champion.

"I cried for two and a half days," she said.

The experience was part of the "circle of life" lessons that raising animals teaches youth who participate in 4-H and FFA.

Daytona Tracy, 16, said for some, that lesson is harder than others.

"You have to understand the process and know next year you're going to get attached to another animal," she said. "I know some kids are in it for the money, and then there are ones like me who get really attached."

She said she tells herself each year that her animals are just going to a new home and "the worst is not going to happen."

Her goat Rowdy went for \$10.25 a pound to Nutrien Ag Solutions on Saturday. She put on a brave smile as she entered the ring with the 76-pound brown and white goat Saturday, but earlier in the week she got teary-eyed as she talked about their impending separation.

"He's like my baby," the Hermiston FFA student said. "When I first got him he wasn't really tame at all

so I had to hang out with him as much as possible. I would eat dinner with him."

This year's sale included 53 steers at an average of \$3.89 a pound, 120 hogs averaging \$7.88 a pound, 60 lambs averaging \$8.79 a pound, 17 goats at \$12.62 a pound, 13 turkeys at \$475 each, 1 pen of rabbits at \$525 and one pen of chickens at \$400.

In addition to bidding on animals, buyers can also choose to "bump" the check youths receive if their animal drew a price on the lower side. About 30 businesses participating in the UCF Bump program added an extra \$28,000 to sales for more than 130 FFA and 4-H exhibitors.

RIDE

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which raises money for counties to use for public transportation.

The city has been approved to receive \$78,800 a year for the next three years for the program, subsidizing about 17,500 rides. Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said the city doesn't plan to add any of its own money to the program.

WORC will be added to the city's other two public transit options — a similar sub-

sidy program for senior citizens and disabled riders, and a free bus system known as HART. City councilors voiced support for WORC, which they said could benefit low-income residents who don't have a car to get to work, but also people who might not be driving due to anything from a DUII conviction to fear of icy roads.

The city will hold two workshops for employers to learn more about WORC on Aug. 21 at noon at the Hermiston Community Center and Aug. 26 at 5:30 p.m. at Hermiston City Hall.

PROPERTY OWNERS RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

HERMISTON — During a public hearing at Monday's Hermiston City Council meeting, property owners in the South Hermiston Industrial Park raised questions about a proposed local improvement district.

If formed, the district would charge the 20 neighboring property owners for improvements to the area behind the old Hermiston Foods plant. Projects would include creating a new road leading to Highway 395, paving the rest of Southeast Campbell Drive, creating a new road to a piece of undeveloped industrial land owned by the Port of Umatilla and extending water and sewer to new properties.

The city expects to get a grant from the federal Economic Development Administration for between 50 and 80% of the \$2.9 million project. The city and Umatilla County would kick in \$300,000 and property owners would be assessed for the rest. Construction would take place summer of 2020.

Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said the city was not planning to pursue the project if they did not receive the EDA grant, but it looked likely they will receive one.

He said the city calculated property owners' amount based on an assumption the city will receive a 50% grant. If they receive higher, he suggested the extra money first go to any cost overruns on the project, second to cover the city's administrative expenses and third to cover more of property owners' share.

Jon Patterson and Craig Evans, both neighboring property owners, questioned why the additional money should go to the city before them, however. They pointed out that a new road behind their property wouldn't have any immediate financial benefit to them, but opening up the Port of Umatilla property for development would result in increased property tax revenues for the city.

"Who benefits the most from this? Because it's not me," Patterson said.

He said he wasn't completely opposed to the project, but he also questioned the formal process for opposing it. Property owners can block a local improvement district if 60% turn in a "remonstrance" by 5 p.m. the business day before the public hearing. But Patterson said he missed the deadline because he thought he would be able to "vote" after getting questions answered at the public hearing.

According to Morgan, less than 60% of property owners turned in a remonstrance, and most of those who did were invalidated by past agreements they had signed, saying that they wouldn't oppose any future LID in exchange for not having to develop the road in front of their property when they first built there.

City councilors voted to close the hearing and reopen it in 90 days in order to see whether the Economic Development Authority grant comes through before deciding whether to form the district.

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