

# Mama Bear's Quilt shop opens in Stanfield

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
NEWS EDITOR

Quilt enthusiasts and city officials gathered Friday morning to celebrate the opening of Mama Bear's Quilt Shop in Stanfield.

"We've taken a chance on a 119-year-old building, and we hope you like what we've done with it," Chad Ray told the group.

Chad and his wife, Kristi, own the quilt shop at 170 S. Main St. Chad said it all started 22 years ago when he bought Kristi a gift certificate for fabric and some sewing supplies for Christmas one year. Her love for the art of quilting grew over time, until eventually she decided to go all in.

He said he hopes more people from around the area catch the quilting "bug."

Kristi said she has always enjoyed the craft of coming up with new quilts, and loves seeing all the



beautiful quilts other people are able to create as well.

"They're all different and amazing," she said.

The store features walls of fabric, thread, PFAFF

sewing machines, a long arm quilting machine and other supplies. Kristi said she plans to start offering quilting classes soon, and Chad will provide maintenance and repairs for sewing machines.

They thanked the city of Stanfield for their patience and support through the financing and remodel process for the historic building, which over the decades has served as everything from a pharmacy to an auto parts store.

Mayor Tom McCann said he was amazed when he saw how the Rays had transformed the interior of the old building.



Staff photos by Jade McDowell

**LEFT: Customers browse fabrics at the grand opening event for Mama Bear's Quilt Shop. RIGHT: Members of the Ray family and officials from the city of Stanfield chat before cutting the ribbon on the new Mama Bear's Quilt Shop in Stanfield on Friday morning.**

cess for the historic building, which over the decades has served as everything from a pharmacy to an auto parts store.

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he was amazed when he saw how the Rays had transformed the interior of the old building.

"We are thrilled to have you here," he told them.

## Hermiston students greet GEAR UP

Schools visit to learn about college readiness

By **JESSICA POLLARD**  
STAFF WRITER

More than 15 years ago, Hermiston School District took part in the statewide grant program, GEAR UP, to boost student participation in post-high school education. Just last week, the district had a chance to show off their progress to schools that are going through the seven-year program.

"Each year we try to do school visits," said GEAR UP coordinator Adrienne Enriquez. "We would call Hermiston School District a success story."

GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a federally funded program which provides low income, rural schools a coordinator and funding to help increase interest in education after high school.

Hermiston was part of the state's first-ever GEAR UP cohort, from 2002 to 2008. Schools in Boardman, Stanfield and Umatilla are currently part of the 2014 to 2021 cohort.

Enriquez said there are specific challenges that more rural schools face when it comes to making students aware of their options after



Staff photo by Jessica Pollard

**Liz Marvin, Project College Bound coordinator at Hermiston High School, talks about college readiness programs in front of the GEAR UP cohort.**

high school.

"I think access is one of the big ones — physical access to colleges and universities. When learning about options, proximity is part of that challenge," she said.

Liz Marvin, Project College Bound coordinator at the high school, noted it's really difficult to tell how many students end up pursuing some form of post-secondary education — from trade school to university—straight out of high school because they don't have to share that information.

"It's really hard to track. But I would say that since GEAR UP, there're a lot more resources for students

to access, more opportunities," she said. "We haven't always been where we are now. We still see things that we can do and improve."

Maria Duron, communications officer at the district, said that the program helped bring Hermiston High School's Java Dawg coffee shop and Dawg Prints printing shop to life.

The GEAR UP cohort toured both shops, the work site for the student-built home and heard from different educators about college-readiness programs like ASPIRE and Career and Technical Education classes.

Roger Berger, the CTE advisor at the high school, mentioned that GEAR UP

funds helped the high school purchase a van used for regional college visits.

"GEAR UP has been a huge supporter of our programs," he said. "This is our opportunity to show that their investment has paid off, and to show what we've learned."

He said that the college application process is more difficult than ever before, and that students need more higher education support.

"We've really worked to tell students too, that when we say 'college' we mean post-secondary education. It could be military, trade-school, apprenticeship. We just don't want them to stop learning," Marvin said.

## Hansell shows off region to Portland colleagues

HERMISTON HERALD

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, recently welcomed two of his Senate colleagues to Morrow and Umatilla counties.

During the weekend of Sept. 21, Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, and Sen. Lew Frederick, D-Portland, participated in a tour along with a dozen of their constituents.

The goal of the trip, Hansell said, was to show the ongoing work in the Columbia Basin regarding water use and irrigation.

In addition, the group toured the former Lost Valley Dairy site, which is now owned by Easterday Farms. The group saw how the dairy is being revitalized and how area farms are using digital technology to monitor field irrigation systems in real-time.

The group also toured the Port of Morrow and the SAGE Center to see how technological advances are making agriculture more energy efficient.

"Ever since I was elected to the Senate, I have extended invitations

to my urban colleagues to visit rural Eastern Oregon," Hansell said in a news release. "These trips show how farmers and ranchers use our abundant natural resources in a sustainable way."

Hansell said his colleagues and their constituents participated in a full day of learning.

In addition, they were able to take sweet corn and Hermiston melons home with them from the fields.

The trip and tour, Hansell said, would not have been possible without the work of J.R. Cook, the Northeast Oregon Water Association, Bobby Levy and the Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition. Hansell expressed appreciation to the Port of Morrow, Easterday Farms, Madison Ranches and Bellinger Farms for their generous hospitality and for showing their operations.

"It was a special day," he said.

"I am proud of the agricultural innovation taking place in Senate District 29 and I'm glad that my colleagues were able to see it firsthand."

## School district sees decline in enrollment

HERMISTON HERALD

At the Hermiston School District board meeting Monday, an enrollment report revealed a slight dip in the number of students from the month of August to September.

In August, the district saw total student enrollment of 5,777, which dropped by 20 students in September to 5,757. The number represents 34 fewer students than the same time last year.

The dip breaks a trend of growth that the district has seen for several years. The district grew by 187 students from September 2014 to September 2015, 141 students from 2015 to 2016, 116 from 2016 to 2017 and 21 students from 2017 to 2018.

"That's a different spot for us to be in," said Superintendent Tricia Mooney. "We're a keeping a close eye on those numbers."

Mooney said it seemed that a lot of the students who left this year had moved out of state and were in families that contained more than one student.



**Karen King**  
Pendleton, Oregon

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