



HAPPY NEW YEAR

# Hermiston Herald

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### DANCE OFF

This year's lineup of Hermiston "stars" dancing for the mirror ball trophy is revealed. **Page » A4**

### NEW LAWS

Oregonians will face new regulations and protections in 2020. **Page » A6**

### FOOD STAMPS

Tightened requirements for SNAP eligibility will affect an unknown number of Umatilla County residents. **Page » A9**



HH file photo

Union Pacific Railroad announced in March that it would lay off 500 additional employees for the Hinkle Rail Yard outside of Hermiston.

## 2019 full of ups & downs

## BY THE WAY

### SAIF to hold ag safety seminar

SAIF, Oregon's not-for-profit workers' compensation insurance company, is offering a free, half-day seminar on agricultural safety and health in Hermiston on Jan. 14 in English and Jan. 15 in Spanish.

The seminars will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the **Hermiston Conference Center**, 415 South Highway 395. Lunch is included.

This year's seminars will focus on four topics: respiratory personal protective equipment, working at elevation, safety leadership for anyone, and incident analysis

Anyone can attend, even if they are not insured by SAIF, but registration is required. Registration details and other

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## Hermiston residents vote for their top stories of the year

HERMISTON HERALD

2019 was a year of highs and lows for Hermiston. A major employer closed its doors, residents were furious about a water rate increase and the city lost a beloved playground to arson. But the top headlines also tell a story of hope a growth, from major new investments in the community to voters passing a new bond to pay for new schools for Hermiston children.

Below are our top 10 stories of the year, which we ranked with assistance from a reader poll on our website:

### 1) Union Pacific lays off most of its Hermiston employees

The railroad played a central role in Hermiston's origin story and was a reliable source of family-wage jobs for decades, but that chapter came to a close in 2019.

In March, employees told the *Hermiston Herald* that Union Pacific had laid off at least 80 employees at the Hinkle Rail Yard over the past few months and closed the yard's hump. In May, the company announced it was laying off an additional 195 employees, leaving only a skeleton crew at the yard and closing the supply warehouse and mechanical shop.

Oregon's senators called for answers from Union Pacific in a letter stating it would "devastate this rural community by

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HH file photo

Supporters of the Hermiston School District Bond react to learning of the passing of the bond during an election party in November.

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More photo highlights of 2019 and a list of more than 20 "honorable mentions" from our readers, **Page A12**

## Helping hands continue after the holidays

By **JESSICA POLLARD**  
STAFF WRITER

Each holiday season, fundraisers and donation drives aid the missions of nonprofit organizations throughout the community. But what happens when the season of giving is over?

"A lot of people during the holidays are reuniting with family, they have a sense of community and feel the need to donate," said Kathryn Chaney, executive director of Domestic Violence Services in Umatilla County. "After the holidays, there might be a lull."

But the ebb and flow isn't a bad thing for an organization providing support to domestic violence

survivors. After all, the amount of clothing needed to support people through the winter months is a little higher than what's required other times of the year.

"We always need things throughout the year — underwear, sanitary products, blankets," Chaney said. "This time of year, we also need coats and hats."

She added that because holidays can be cold, and a particularly emotional time of year, the need for shelter away from a domestic violence situation can be heightened.

"It's emotionally gratifying to have a place to go this time of year,"

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HH file photo

Volunteer Doug Alvarez loads a box of food into the back of a vehicle during the Christmas Express on Dec. 17, 2018, at Agape House in Hermiston.

