

Hermiston board eyes enrollment drop

School board announces vacancy on district's budget committee

By JESSICA POLLARD
STAFF WRITER

The Hermiston School Board hit the ground running Monday evening in commemorating 10 educators of the year, announcing a budget committee vacancy and taking a closer look at a December's drop in enrollment this month.

The board recognized 10 educators of the 2019-2020 school year, one from each school at the board meeting. The educators will be recognized—and one will be awarded Educator of the Year—during the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Citizens Banquet in February.

"I'M FORTUNATE TO HAVE AN AMAZING TEAM. I'M HUMBLLED AND HONORED."



Tricia Mooney, Hermiston School District superintendent, on being named Administrator of the Year for the district.

Technology manager Jeff Kelso and athletic director Larry Usher caught superintendent Tricia Mooney by surprise when they announced her as Administrator of the Year for the district.

Kelso said Mooney was a "dynamic visionary". The pair applauded her for her recent accomplishments, including the successful completion of her PhD and her "nearly superhuman

work ethic."

"I'm usually not at a loss for words," Mooney said. "This isn't what I thought the outcome would be. I'm fortunate to have an amazing team, I'm humbled and honored."

Mooney turned the attention back to the meeting, and issued a proclamation declaring January to be School Board Appreciation Month.

"We're fortunate in our

district to have seven board members who are involved in our community," Mooney said. "I can't say that enough, especially this year."

School board members appointed former school board member David Smith to the Hermiston School District Community Budget Committee, which two members recently resigned from.

"His experience on the board will be useful to us on the budget committee," Mooney said.

Smith resigned from the school board in August, and at the time told the *Hermiston Herald* that the expansion of his business, O So Klean, left him with little time to serve on the board.

Smith will now serve on the budget committee

through June 2022. A single vacancy on the citizen committee remains to be filled. The term for the position runs through June 2020.

According to an enrollment report presented at Monday's board meeting, district-wide enrollment dropped 90 students from November to December, leaving enrollment at 70 students fewer than December of last year.

Mooney said that 58 of those 90 students' families informed the district prior to winter break that they'd be on extended vacations.

Oregon's 10-day rule requires schools to withdraw students who are gone for more than 10 consecutive days.

Mooney said that 38 of those students are back, and that the remainder of

the withdrawn students included in and out-of-state moves, as well as one student enrolled in online classes.

Mooney also presented the board with a compliance report, which showed Hermiston School District to be in total compliance with Oregon standards for primary and secondary public schools.

The District 22 Standards encompass everything from how sexuality is taught in schools to how the district reports P.E. data.

"It's been pretty quiet," said Board Chairwoman Karen Sherman on Monday night. "But now we're up and running."

The district ended the meeting with an executive session to discuss property transactions.

Davis Amusement closes

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

A longtime provider of carnival rides, concessions and midway games for the Umatilla County Fair closed its doors at the beginning of January.

Michael J. Davis, CEO of Davis Amusement Cascadia, confirmed to the *Hermiston Herald* in an email that the company would not be running any carnivals in 2020.

"After 80 years and five generations of family business, our company has reached a point where we are no longer able to overcome the high costs of doing business in today's world," he said. "Like many other family-owned businesses we have struggled in recent years with the increases in trucking, insurance, minimum wage and labor."

He said like many businesses, there was a ceiling on how much they could charge the public before it became "counter-productive" in driving business away, and they had reached a point where the company's revenues could "no longer go as far as they needed to."

Angie McNalley, Umatilla County Fair coordinator, said in an email that the fair had recently been made aware of the news. She said fortunately she and fair board members were in Roseburg for the Oregon Fairs Association Convention last weekend, allowing them to start prelimi-



Workers unload parts of a carnival ride from a Davis Amusement Cascadia trailer during setup for the Umatilla County Fair in August 2019.

nary discussions with other carnival vendors who serve Oregon.

"Davis Amusement Cascadia holds the Umatilla County Fair in high regard and has offered to assist in our recruitment efforts in any way that they can," she said. "We value their input given their extensive knowledge of the carnival and fair industries and are lucky to have the ability to consult with them during this process. We foresee a smooth carnival transition for the 2020 fair."

Davis Amusement Cascadia is sometimes confused with Davis Shows Northwest, which provides the rides in downtown Pendleton during the Pendleton



Miguel Rojas pushes a roller coaster car off of the starting platform to allow for further construction of the Davis Amusement Cascadia roller coaster during a setup day for the Umatilla County Fair in August 2019.

Round-Up. Davis said that Davis Shows Northwest is run by other members of the Davis family but is a completely separate company and is "still running strong and aggressively with no changes in sight."



Photo contributed by OSP
Police responded to a fatal crash in Morrow County on Friday night.

Hermiston man killed in fatal crash on Highway 207

HERMISTON HERALD

A Hermiston man died in a single-vehicle crash on Highway 207 in Morrow County on Friday night, according to a press release from Oregon State Police.

Philip Sharkey, 56, was traveling north on Highway 207 in a freightliner truck pulling a loaded trailer when it struck the guardrail, traveled off the road and down an embankment near milepost 19B.

It's believed that Sharkey wasn't wearing his seat belt at the time of the crash, according to Capt. Tim Fox, the state police's public information officer.

Police and emergency personnel responded at approximately 6:24 p.m. but Sharkey sustained

fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Fox wrote in an email that he's unsure what company Sharkey was driving for but that his truck was carrying mint.

The only damage on the highway was sustained to the guardrail, though it's unknown to what extent, according to Fox.

State police were assisted by Boardman Fire, Echo Fire, Umatilla County Fire District No. 1, Morrow County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Sharkey was a local business owner who grew up in Eastern Oregon. A celebration of life service will be held at 1 p.m. on Jan. 25, 2020, at New Hope Community Church, 1350 S. Highway 395.

Hermiston man gets four years in prison in kidnapping case

HERMISTON HERALD

A Hermiston man indicted in November after police arrested him for kidnapping will spend more than four years in prison, according to court documents.

Jeremy Jeppeson, 42, whose last listed address is in Hermiston, was arrested by Pendleton police on Nov. 18, 2019, after a 32-year-old Washington woman called for help at the Short Stop gas station, 32553 East Punkin Center Road, Hermiston.

The woman reported that Jeppeson, her ex-boyfriend,

kidnapped her in Pendleton and kept her against her will in a Ford Windstar on back roads between Hermiston and Pendleton, threatening her life when she attempted to escape.

After she did escape, the Pendleton Police Department located the vehicle in Pendleton on Nov. 18 and arrested Jeppeson on a detention warrant issued by his probation officer in Hood River County.

Jeppeson was later indicted on eight criminal charges, including strangulation, menacing, fourth-degree assault, and

three counts of coercion.

But Jeppeson forewent a 12-person jury trial scheduled for mid-January, and took a plea deal in late December.

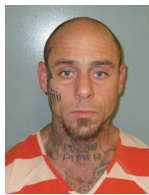
He pleaded guilty to two charges — second-degree attempted kidnapping and coercion.

Both carry a maximum sentence of five years, but in the case presided over by Circuit Court Judge Christopher R. Brauer, he's facing 25 months for each count, with possi-

ble credit for time already served in jail. Each charge comes with three months of mandatory post-prison supervision.

According to the Department of Corrections, and the Hood River County District Attorney's Office, Jeppeson is currently on supervised probation in Hood River County related to another conviction.

It is unknown when Jeppeson will begin his prison sentence or where he will serve his time.



Jeppeson

Oregon Water Coalition (OWC) & Northeast Oregon Water Association (NOWA)
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