

Hermiston Herald

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020

HermistonHerald.com

\$1.50

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The DEQ fined Lamb Weston for wastewater violations at their Hermiston plant. **Page » A3**

DANCE

Veterans and Gold Star families are invited to share the love at a Valentine's dance. **Page » A4**

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A Hermiston club helps members lose weight and keep it off. **Page » A13**

BY THE WAY

Meet the Boardman fire chief candidates

Community members are invited to meet candidates for **Boardman Rural Fire Protection District's** chief on Sunday.

The meet and greet event will run from noon to 3 p.m. at the **SAGE Center**, 101 Olsen Road in Boardman. The candidates will be formally introduced at 12:30 p.m.

Finalists are **Dale Britton, Hal Bumgarner, John Clark, Adam Cole** and **Michael Hughes**.

Britton has 27 years of fire experience and served as a lieutenant in the Tumwater, Washington, fire department for 13 years. He has an associate's degree in fire science.

Bumgarner has 28 years in the fire service and is currently a chief officer for the Pottawatomie, Kansas, fire district. He has a master's degree in security administration.

Clark has 40 years in the fire service, with a master's degree in safety administration. He is currently the fire chief in Baker City, where he has served since 2018.

Cole has 13 years of experience in the fire service and an associate's degree in fire science. He is the captain and training

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For Hermiston, increased graduation rates are a long game

By **JESSICA POLLARD**
STAFF WRITER

Arising tide doesn't always lift all boats.

The Oregon Department of Education announced last week that the state's 80% graduation rate for the 2018-19 school year was the highest ever, and although most Umatilla County schools grew along with the state, Hermiston High School remains behind the average for on-time graduations.

Administrators at Eastern Oregon's biggest district know they have their work cut out for them.

At 74.37%, the district saw less than a one-percentage point increase in its overall graduation rate during the 2018-19 school year. But Scott Depew, director of secondary instruction, is not surprised.

"We had an 8% increase the year before, and that was huge," he said. "Everything this time held to our projections."

Depew said the previous year's big jump came from a few fast-acting interventions. A few years back, the district dissolved its alternative school and merged those students to the high school. Graduation rates saw a drop as a result.

The addition of a graduation coach, increased monitoring of early warning indicators and the heightened tracking of attendance data in recent years played a big help

2018-19 GRADUATION RATES

State of Oregon:	80%
Hermiston:	74.4%
Pendleton:	79.8%
Morrow County:	88%
Milton-Freewater:	79.9%
Umatilla:	87%
Athena-Weston:	87.8%
Stanfield:	94.4%
Pilot Rock:	75%
Echo:	87%
Ione:	100%
Helix:	93.8%
Ukiah:	100%

in boosting the numbers, Depew said.

And now, the district is turning to intervention methods administrators say need longer to take hold.

"What we're trying to do is build a system that's sustainable," Depew said. "An increase in graduation rates is not going to happen overnight."

Among those interventions, Depew lists the district's recent adoption of the supplemental Read 180 and Math 180 programs and the individualization of the newcomer center programs across elementary, middle and high schools.

"I'll be honest, we've got work to do," he said. "We're going to start to see some of these numbers rise."

Student populations that received fewer four-year diplomas during the last school year included the migrant student population, which saw a more than a 10% drop, and the white student population, which saw a 6% drop.

Depew said last year, there was a distinct number of white students who were unsuccessful in graduating with diplomas or attaining their GEDs. He added the graduation rate of the migrant student population, which was 40% last year, is prone to fluctuation.

"A lot of our kids weren't graduating

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Hermiston High School graduates walk out on to the floor at the Toyota Center for their commencement ceremony on June 6, 2019, in Kennewick, Wash.



HH file photo



Gay and Alice Newman smile at the crowd after being named 2020 grand marshals at Saturday's Umatilla County Fair Appreciation Dinner.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

'Dynamic duo' Gay and Alice Newman named 2020 fair grand marshals

By **ALEX CASTLE**
STAFF WRITER

Gay and Alice Newman first came to Umatilla County 47 years ago looking for job opportunities. The two were newly married and parents to a 2-month-old child, and the Umatilla County Fair was just two weeks away.

The Newmans didn't just attend the fair that year, they got involved and helped out right away.

In the 47 years since, the Newmans never left Umatilla County and they've never missed a fair.

That won't change this year after Gay and Alice Newman were named the 2020 Umatilla County Fair grand marshals at Saturday night's annual

appreciation dinner held at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston.

"It's a special honor," Gay said. "The fair has been a part of our family for a very long time, and it's a privilege to be able to give back to it."

The Newmans have served as leaders of the fair's 4-H and Future Farmers of America programs for 38 years, and on a variety of fair committees. Alice has worked as the fair court chaperone and helped develop the fair court program altogether. The couple have been key in helping secure fair donations and sponsorships as well.

According to Alice, her husband

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