

Duo

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even helped start the fair's first-ever livestock sales committee, which shattered records last year by raising more than \$600,000.

But while announcing the two on Saturday night, Steve Wallace, chair of the fair board, highlighted the "dynamic duo's" indelible impact on the youth in the community above all else.

"We can't say just how many youth they have influenced," he said. "But we can say with 100% certainty that in some way or another, you and your family have benefited from their service."

After the event, Alice said she was shocked by the honor and proud to represent the people of Umatilla County.

"I love the town. I love the people. And I love the fair and everything it's done for them," Alice said.

The fair board also recognized its 2019 female and male volunteers of the year



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Travis Glover, holding his son Teagan, receives the 2019 Volunteer of the Year award from presenter Michael Hampton during Saturday's Umatilla County Fair Appreciation Dinner.

Saturday night, which were awarded to Jeri Jordan and Travis Glover, respectively.

Jordan was honored for her longtime service as the fair's overall superintendent of open class static entries and coordinating the textile and needle crafts. Steve Anderson, vice chair of the board, also highlighted Jordan's contributions to pre-fair planning and willingness to support the fair however she could.

"She is someone who leads and takes charge, which takes pressure off of

the fair board," Anderson said.

Glover's fair participation began while he was young and in the 4-H and FFA programs. Now, he's someone the fair board has relied on to show up and help no matter the job and no matter the time of day.

"He's someone who specializes in the grunt work, the down and dirty work," fair board member Micheal Hampton said during Glover's announcement. "He's someone who does the work that others don't want to do."

BTW

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officer in the Boardman Rural Fire Protection District, where he has served since 2007.

Hughes has 33 years of experience and is currently a volunteer firefighter. He has served as a training officer in Twin Bridges, Montana, since 2014.

The **Hermiston Warming Station** once again closed its doors earlier this week after not enough volunteers signed up to keep the emergency shelter open.

There is still a chance to catch two more volunteer trainings. They will be held on Wednesday from 6-7 p.m. and Thursday from 5-6 p.m. at the warming station, 1075 S. Highway 395.

Volunteers must have completed a training, be over the age of 18 and pass a background check. Shifts Aug. 11-15.

run throughout the night, and volunteers can sign up online as their schedule allows.

Cascadia Earthquake Preparedness Week runs Jan. 26- Feb. 5.

Don't forget to take the opportunity to check over your emergency supplies, stock up on a few more and make sure you have a family plan in the event of a natural disaster.

The menu for the **Harker Senior Activity Center** for Thursday is chicken soup, salad and dessert. Friday is a cook's choice smorgasbord. Monday is french dip sandwich, salad, fruit and dessert. Tuesday is beans with ham, cornbread, fruit and dessert. Next Wednesday is BLT sandwich, potato salad, fruit and dessert.

— You can submit items for our weekly *By The Way* column by emailing your tips to editor@hermistonherald.com.

Grad

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because of language arts credits," Depew said.

This year, the high school is providing supplemental classes for students who speak English as a second language to gain their language arts credits.

At 87.5%, Depew added the district's completer rate (which includes students who graduated late or got a GED) is above the state average, in part due to the district's GED program.

It's a number that administrators hope to see decrease over time as on-time graduation rates increase, but for now, Depew is certain of one thing.

"The kids who are leaving us are ready for college or a career," he said.

Umatilla School District

Umatilla School District superintendent Heidi Sipe was proud to announce Thursday that students in each data group measured by the Oregon Department of Education surpassed the state's averages.

"(Umatilla High School) strives to help every student graduate prepared for their next steps," Sipe said in news release. "The work of elementary and middle school instructors is evident in the graduation success as well as it takes strong foundations to build high school completion victories."

In the past few years, the district's graduation rate has risen from the low 60s up to 87% during the 2018-2019 school year.

Sipe said that when the district pulled its alternative school students back into the general population of the high school, graduation rates took a fall but that interven-

tions picked it back up.

"Kids who know people will not give up on them, who know failure is not an option are going to graduate," she said.

The male and English language learner graduation rates took a dip this year, by six and seven percentage points respectively. But Sipe said that in a class of just over 100 students, a few kids can make that kind of change.

"We track kids by name and face," she said.

Morrow County School District

At just over 88%, Morrow County School District's overall graduation rate for last school year is just shy of the administration's eventual 90% goal.

"Once we get to 90%, we'll try to get to 95%," said Superintendent Dirk Dirksen. "We're cautiously optimistic."

Dirksen acknowledged the district's slow and steady race past the state average began after the 2011-12 school year, when the district graduated just more than 70% of its senior class on time.

"We didn't have any type of GED program then," Dirksen said.

Since the implementation of that program around five years ago, he said the district was seeing higher graduation and completion rates. The 2018-19 completer rate sits at more than 90%.

Economically disadvantaged students and homeless students saw marked percentage increases in their cohort rates from the year before, which Dirksen credits to the district's one-on-one approach.

"We have a pretty robust wraparound program that helps support those kids, helps them get ready for

school. Whether they need an alarm clock, a phone call, nursing support," Dirksen said.

But while the number of diplomas is on an upward trend for some groups, students with disabilities and migrant students saw significant drops, by about 11% and 5%, respectively.

Dirksen is hoping an increase in state funding through the Student Success Act could help the district invest in more specific programming for those populations.

"We're working diligently to meet student specific needs," he said.

Stanfield School District

Across Umatilla County, the Stanfield School District saw one of the biggest jumps in graduation rates from the year prior by about 18 percentage points.

Superintendent Beth Burton believes the change

came from a number of factors in recent years, mainly stabilization of the district's leadership, and the re-implementation of an advisory program at the secondary level.

"It wouldn't work if it were just an administrator idea. But the staff has been really diligent in making sure that time is knowledge," Burton said.

Burton said the advisory program reserves a 30 minute period each day for students to evaluate their academic progress, to study, and to do make-up work or re-take tests.

While Stanfield saw improvement in every student sub-group, Burton said she hopes the district will continue increase graduation rates for historically underserved populations.

"I'm looking for those numbers to increase," she said.

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