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INSIDE

FIRE

A man was found deceased with a gunshot wound when firefighters searched a burning mobile home in Hermiston on Monday.
Page » A3

SPORTS

Hermiston's Garrett Walchli will play football for Utah State University.
Page » A8

GOODBYE

Reporter Jessica Pollard pens a farewell column as she moves back to Portland.
Page » A10

BY THE WAY

Medical center hosts Naloxone training

In response to the opioid crisis, which can result in misuse, abuse, overdose and death, a community naloxone training has been scheduled in Hermiston. The use of naloxone can reverse the effect of narcotics in an overdose situation.

The free event is Wednesday, March 11 from 1-2 p.m. in Conference Room 1-2 at **Good Shepherd Medical Center**, 610 N.W. 11th St. The session will include information presented by local professionals about the importance of naloxone, how to use it and free doses of the medication. Also, refreshments will be served.

While the workshop is free, people who plan to attend are asked to register at www.eventbrite.com or by contacting 541-667-3509 or health-info@gshealth.org.

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Grocery Outlet opens this week in Hermiston.

The new store opens its doors at 1875 N First St. (in the old Fiesta Foods building) on Thursday starting at 8 a.m.

See BTW, Page A1

Local organizations prepare for COVID-19

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
and **ANTONIO SIERRA**
STAFF WRITERS

An announcement Monday by the Oregon Health Authority brought coronavirus fears a little too close to home for Umatilla County residents.

The state announced Monday morning that there was a “presumptive positive” case of COVID-19 in the county, meaning it tested positive in a local laboratory but is waiting for confirmation by the CDC.

By Monday afternoon, Hermiston stores were out of hand sanitizer, masks and other items people hoped would protect them from the new strain of respiratory virus, which is mild for many patients but has killed nine people inside the United States and more than 3,100 worldwide.

The news release did not release information about where in the county the patient lives, but did reveal that the person attended a youth basketball game on Saturday at Weston Middle School in Weston, and others who attended may be at risk. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation also announced that the person is an employee of Wildhorse Resort and Casino outside Pendleton.

Pam Schulz, infection control program manager at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, said Monday that the hospital is following guidance from the CDC, OHA and Umatilla County Health Department.

“It’s currently a moving target,” she said. “We have a plan we’ve modified three times since Friday and we’re modifying it again today.”

Schulz said so far Good Shepherd has not had problems getting medical supplies such as masks, despite an increase in purchases of those items by the general public.

Schulz said if someone has mild or moderate symptoms they believe may be coronavirus, such as a cough, they should call and consult with their primary care provider before coming in. More serious symptoms such as difficulty breathing may need



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

The Oregon Health Authority confirmed Monday morning that adult Oregon resident from Umatilla County is the state's third presumptive positive case of COVID-19. Preliminary reports indicate the Oregon resident attended a youth basketball game in the gymnasium at Weston Middle School on Saturday, Feb. 29.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

A sign along Highway 331 in Mission warns that Wildhorse Resort & Casino is closed for cleaning. A Wildhorse employee returned a presumptive positive test for the COVID-19 virus resulting in the closure of Wildhorse as well as several additional CTUIR operations.

treated in the emergency room.

She encouraged people looking for information to consult the CDC website.

“They should make sure they’re getting their information from credible sources,” she said.

Hospitals and clinics aren’t the only places that need to worry about the possible spread of the virus in Umatilla County. Large gathering

places such as schools can also be a hot spot for germs.

Superintendent Tricia Mooney said Hermiston School District already had a “really solid, proactive cleaning procedure” in place before COVID-19 began. The procedures include regularly sanitizing surfaces around the schools, providing sanitizing wipes to clean computer keyboards between uses and even

INSIDE

Answers to frequently asked questions about the coronavirus and where to turn for accurate information, **Page A14**

using a sanitizing mist at night that helps clean the air.

“We’re sticking with those, and paying special attention to things like door handles,” she said.

Mooney said students and staff are also being reminded regularly to wash their hands, sneeze into a tissue and other hygienic practices. The district is also emphasizing that anyone — staff or students — should stay home if running a fever or displaying other symptoms of contagion.

If people are healthy, she said, they shouldn’t give in to panic.

“If you’re not sick, come to school,” she said. “We want you here. Just wash your hands.”

She said the district is keeping in contact with health officials in the county and state and will follow recommendations.

They are also monitoring

See Virus, Page A14

Flood damage adds up at Riverfront Park

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

Walkers and joggers who use Riverfront Park in Hermiston for exercise shouldn’t plan on the park reopening any time soon.

The 16-acre park must undergo a months-long makeover after flood waters decimated the parking lot and driveway, eroded away part of the embankment, damaged the playground and restroom, clogged the irrigation system with silt, toppled trees, cracked paths, deposited literally tons of debris around the park and washed away fencing.

Parks and recreation director Larry Fetter said the estimated cost to restore the park has climbed to almost half a million dollars.

Luckily, the smaller-scale dam-

age done to the park during a flood in 2019 qualified for FEMA funding to repair, so Fetter said the more extensive damage this time should be “way over the threshold.”

“They typically reimburse 75% of the cost, which will be super helpful,” he said.

In the meantime, however, the park is closed for safety reasons. Fetter said the eroded embankment along the river could give way even more if people put their weight on it. Piles of logs and other debris could also present a danger. Fetter said the deep layers of mud over the park have been too “squishy” to bring heavy equipment on so far, but it should be dried out enough by



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Bark chips that once surrounded the swing sets at Riverfront Park in Hermiston floated away and debris and high floodwater caused damage to structures at the park as a result of last month's floods.

See Damage, Page A14



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