

School districts and bus drivers work together to deliver meals

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

After COVID-19 closed schools for the rest of the year, school bus drivers are transporting food instead of students.

The sack lunches may be quieter passengers, but Mid Columbia Bus Company driver Dennis Cook said he misses the students and is glad he still gets to see some of them when he drops off meals at stops around Stanfield Monday through Thursday.

"It's been nice to see some of the kids," he said.

Staff from Stanfield School District have been taking turns riding along to distribute meals, and Cook said students get "really excited" when they see their own teacher at a drop-off.

Ricardo Martinez, a Umatilla bus driver for MidCo, said at first dropping off meals was "a little hectic," but everyone has settled into a routine now.

"I love it," he said. "... I was already going crazy at home, not going anywhere, so when my manager asked if I would do it, I said sure."

Each day the drivers run the same route, stopping at various bus stops to provide a package of one breakfast, lunch and dinner for any child under age 18 who shows up. On Wednesdays, they also drop off homework packets for elementary school students, and on Thursdays high school and middle school students get their homework. Homework can be sent back to the school with the bus



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Staff load lunches into a school bus at Hermiston High School on the morning of April 23. The lunches were distributed to students throughout the school district.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Hermiston School District food services manager David Busch helps to load boxes of bagged lunches into a school bus for distribution in the district on the morning of April 23.

"FOR A LOT OF THE KIDS, IT'S THE ONE TIME THEY GET OUT OF THE HOUSE."

Trista Thompson, a bus driver who delivers meals for Hermiston School District

drivers at a later date if students don't have a way to send it electronically.

Martinez said he would encourage more Umatilla families to take advantage of the free meals.

"On homework days, we get extra people, so sometimes we're running short on lunches, but the rest of the week, sometimes we're coming back with 20 or 30 lunches," he said.

Trista Thompson is one of the four MidCo drivers currently delivering

free meals for Hermiston School District. The district is dropping off breakfast and lunch separately, in the morning and afternoon, to give students something to look forward to now that their regular routines have been upended.

Thompson said it's gone "very well" so far, and she loves to see how excited the children are as the lunch bus pulls up.

"For a lot of the kids, it's the one time they get out of the house, and get that lit-

tle touch of freedom," she said.

Katie Saul, director of business services for Hermiston School District, said as of April 17, the district had served a total of 23,316 meals since Gov. Kate Brown first closed schools on March 17.

"We started with just two bus routes, then increased to three, and now we're up to four routes," she said.

Since the meals are paid for by the same federal funding as normal school lunches, the same nutritional requirements for a grain, dairy, fruit and vegetable apply. Saul said most days lunch is some kind of sandwich with a fruit and a vegetable and a milk carton.

Chartwells, the company the district contracts its food service through, prepares the meals at Hermiston High School. Teachers are taking turns going out with the buses to help with deliveries. Saul said about two-thirds of the meals are delivered to stops around Hermiston, while one-third of families prefer to pick up a meal from the high school, Sunset Elementary School or West Park Elementary School.

When the state first mandated that schools close, school districts were also given a mandate to continue providing meals for students, so that no children who depended on

school lunches for nutrition would go hungry. The meals are free to any child under age 18, regardless of whether they are a student in the district.

Morrow County School District posted on its website that in the first five weeks of school closure, the district has provided more than 21,000 meals to students. Buses deliver meals in Boardman, Irrigon and Heppner, and grab-and-go meals are also available at Sam Boardman Elementary, Heppner Jr./Sr. High and A.C. Houghton Elementary. On Fridays, the district sends home three days' worth of meals for students.

Tax Problems: RESOLVED

There are many ways we can tackle IRS or State tax relief together:

- ✓ Tax Levies & Liens Release
- ✓ Wage Garnishment Release
- ✓ Stop Penalties and Interest
- ✓ Tax Debt Negotiation & Settlement
- ✓ Resolve Back Taxes
- ✓ Payroll Tax Negotiation
- ✓ Tax Preparation & Bookkeeping Services

"They stopped my garnishments in less than 2 days after hiring them. This saved me \$84,276 with the IRS and \$13,500 with the state of California. They saved my emotional and financial well-being."
- Wage Garnishment Client

Call us now for your FREE tax consultation & evaluation:
844-945-2056

Antheim offers a money-back guarantee designed to help you avoid wasting money on ineffective tax services. We will gather as much information from you as necessary and work with tax authorities to give you the best chance of reducing your tax debt. If for any reason that does not work out, and the government notifies us they refuse to reduce your overall tax liability or monthly payments by any amount, we will gladly refund you the fees you paid for our services in trying to reduce that debt. Money Back Guarantee does not apply to Bookkeeping and Tax Preparation Services.

One solution for oxygen at home, away, and for travel

Introducing the INOGEN ONE – It's oxygen therapy on your terms

No more tanks to refill. No more deliveries. No more hassles with travel. The INOGEN ONE portable oxygen concentrator is designed to provide unparalleled freedom for oxygen therapy users. It's small, lightweight, clinically proven for stationary and portable use, during the day and at night, and can go virtually anywhere — even on most airlines. Inogen accepts Medicare and many private insurances!

Reclaim Your Freedom And Independence NOW!

Call Inogen Today To Request Your FREE Info Kit
1-855-839-0752

YOUR PERFECT BUNDLE

BUNDLE NOW. SAVE ALL YEAR.

Now save \$30/mo. for a whole year on a bundle with DIRECTV and AT&T Internet.

\$79.98/mo.

CALL your AT&T Dealer Today! **1-877-441-1933**

AT&T Preferred Dealer

EASTERN OREGON marketplace

Place classified ads online at www.eastoregonian.com or call 1-800-962-2819 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. After hours, leave a voicemail and we'll confirm your ad the next business day. Email us at classifieds@eastoregonian.com or fax: 541-278-2680

Deadline is 3 p.m. the day before publication

We accept:

211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801

333 E. Main St. Hermiston, OR 97838

502 Real Estate

I am working from home and can help you with your home search. Please call Kerry at 541 377 6855 to help you every step of the way.

305 SW Court Ave Pendleton
TURN HERE REALTY & TRAVEL

Email kjcbaird@gmail.com or call 541 377 6855 for a Realtor to access all properties for your convenience. TURN HERE REALTY -- Prompt, Courteous, Honest service to represent you.

305 SW Court Ave Pendleton
TURN HERE REALTY & TRAVEL

504 Homes for Sale

\$148,900
3 bed, 1 bath home with a view, nice deck. Completely remodeled.

Call Shane @ 541-379-7802
Garton & Associates

Is it time to step into the new age in a new home? We'd love to sell your current home and help you step into your dream home. Give us a call
Garton & Associates
541-276-0931

504 Homes for Sale

Selling or Buying a property? If you are thinking of selling or buying a home, call for a free consultation. Day's or evenings, 7 days a week.

Blue Jeans Realty. Rocky Mikesell
Blue Jeans Realty
"Our office is wherever you are"
(541-379-8690)

504 Homes for Sale

Current MLS listings include several 3 and 4 bedroom, 2 bath homes for sale in popular locations. Call Matt Vogler, "The Weekend and After Hours Realtor" for addresses and pricing.

Matt Vogler
John J. Howard & Assoc.
541.377.9470

504 Homes for Sale

\$220,000
4 bed, 1 and 3/4 bath. 2022+/- foot home on north hill. Beautiful old home! Call Shane @ 541-379-7802

Garton & Associates
541-276-0931

504 Homes for Sale

\$189,900
North Hill bungalow, 3-bedroom charmer! New roof, new paint, new vinyl windows, new kitchen appliances, and new flooring. New mini-split heating/cooling. Jed 541-969-2887cell. #20682019.

Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates
541-276-0021

You can find your dream home

Check out our Real Estate Listings in the Classifieds EAST OREGONIAN

How Much is your Home Worth? Call Matt Vogler, The Weekend and After Hours Realtor, for a free Market Analysis. 541.377.9470. More Listings needed to meet current buyer demand!

Matt Vogler
John J. Howard & Assoc.
(541) 377-9470

Reach the buyer you are looking for with a low cost, effective classified ad.

New Listings available. What is on your WISHLIST? Call Kerry at 541 377 6855 to find your new home. Access to all listings in the area of your choice.

305 SW Court Ave Pendleton
TURN HERE REALTY & TRAVEL

Prices are up! Now may be the time to gain some equity and move up to a larger home. Call Matt Vogler for a free Market Analysis.

Matt Vogler
John J. Howard & Assoc.
(541) 377-9470

Invest or Live on main level and rent to finance! Main level home with rentals above and below. Owner will carry finance with acceptable offer. \$229,000 Call Kerry 541-377 6855. #19408035

305 SW Court Ave Pendleton
TURN HERE REALTY & TRAVEL

504 Homes for Sale

\$219,000
3bedroom, 2bath, 2174 sf(m/l) North Hill home. Hardwood floors, kitchen island, full finished basement. Nice yard, firepit, garden area, tool shed. **Cari** 541-377-5058. #20173926

Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates
541-276-0021

504 Homes for Sale

\$159,000 – 3 Bedroom 1 Bath with large parking lot. Commercial Lot with Highway 395 Location. Business Office or Residential Rental. Close to Hospital. MLS# 20055665

Blue Jeans Realty. Rocky Mikesell
Blue Jeans Realty
"Our office is wherever you are"
(541-379-8690)

504 Homes for Sale

\$399,999 – 3 Bedroom 2 Bath Log Home on 6.5 Acres. Beautiful Log Home with Spacious Upstairs Master Bedroom. 360 Degree View. Spacious open floor plan. Private Setting. MLS# 19681400

Blue Jeans Realty. Rocky Mikesell
Blue Jeans Realty
"Our office is wherever you are"
(541-379-8690)

516 Lots & Acreage

VIEW LOTS – Royal Ridge Subdivision. Beautiful views starting at \$30,000. Land / Home Financing available. Custom Home Builders/Developers welcome.

Blue Jeans Realty. Rocky Mikesell
Blue Jeans Realty
"Our office is wherever you are"
(541-379-8690)

VIEW LOTS – Tutuilla Heights Subdivision. Beautiful view/ Large lots. Land / Home Financing available. Custom Home Builders/Developers welcome. Call for more information.

Blue Jeans Realty. Rocky Mikesell
Blue Jeans Realty
"Our office is wherever you are"
(541-379-8690)

504 Homes for Sale

\$314,000
Beautiful Craftsman. This 5bed, 2.5bath, 3180sf(m/l) home offers unbelievable view and privacy. The style and character of this house is unique. **Kevin** 541-969-8243. #20394335

Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates
541-276-0021

504 Homes for Sale

\$149,900
Convenient walk to downtown. 2bed (ea) duplex but can be home single family. 4/5bedrooms, 2baths. 2bonus buildings for garage/shop. Corner lot. **Vicki** 541-969-9441 cell. #19319541

Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates
541-276-0021

504 Homes for Sale

\$289,500
Beautiful custom-built Royal Ridge home. Stone/gas fireplace, w/vaulted ceilings. Deck on view/protected side of the home. Large master suite. Fresh interior paint. **Jef** 541 969-9539cell. #20550119

Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates
541-276-0021

How Much is your Home Worth? Call Matt Vogler, The Weekend and After Hours Realtor, for a free Market Analysis. 541.377.9470. More Listings needed to meet current buyer demand!

Matt Vogler
John J. Howard & Assoc.
(541) 377-9470

WHATEVER YOU ARE looking for, don't buy until you've checked the Classifieds!

CLASSIFIEDS HAVE IT!

504 Homes for Sale

\$214,500
3bedrooms, 2full baths. Living room w/bay window, family room w/gas fireplace. Newer A/C. Double car garage, deck, pond, fenced backyard. **Marsha** 541-377-5152cell. #20228150

Coldwell Banker Whitney & Associates
541-276-0021

Meacham Area. 10-13 Acre Building Sites now starting now at \$109,650 including Power & Water. Financing available. Build your Dream! Call for Details.

Blue Jeans Realty. Rocky Mikesell
Blue Jeans Realty
"Our office is wherever you are"
(541-379-8690)

CLASSIFIEDS WORK!