

Phase 2:

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counter, where a customer must check out one at a time. Balls and shoes are sanitized inside and out after being returned.

"I don't know if it makes people feel safer, but we want to show that at least we're being proactive about their safety," Fields said of the changes.

To accommodate those changes, including time to thoroughly clean each area after a group leaves, the bowling center has switched from having customers walk in and pay per game to requiring people to reserve a lane for an hourlong block. They can play as many games in that block as they would like, and Fields said some people are reserving lanes for three or four hours at a time. He recommended calling at least 24 hours in advance to make sure there was a lane available at the desired time, particularly with only half the lanes being used at once.

"We're getting a lot of calls from the Tri-Cities," he said. "I think we're seeing some of what the golf courses saw."

Recreation centers aren't the only places opening back up. On June 7, Hermiston Church of the Nazarene had in-person services for the first time since the second Sunday in March.

Pastor Eric Fritz said they split the congregation into two, asking people to register on the church's website to attend the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. time slots to help keep people spread out in the pews and give time for cleaning in between services.

Fritz said about 70% of their usual attendees were there in person, with others watching the livestream online.

"There was a feeling of celebration, and they stayed and talked forever outside after we kicked them out," he said. "Everyone seemed excited to be back together."

He said the pandemic has made his job the busiest it has ever been the past few months, as he has reached out to each member of the congregation individually instead of being able to catch up with people during Sunday services.

"It's taken so much work to make phone calls, to be on social media, because everyone does things differently, so trying to get the word out has been challenging," he said.

The church collected diapers at its yearly "diaper dash" earlier in the year for parents who need them, but since its office remains closed for now, Fritz said people can get them from TruCare Pregnancy Clinic, Made to Thrive or Head Start.

Libraries are among institutions that faced closures and layoffs as a result of the pandemic, and as counties begin to enter Phase 2 of reopening plans, Hermiston Public Library Director Mark Rose said they don't have a reopening time scheduled for libraries at this point in time.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
People bowl at Desert Lanes Family Fun Center in Hermiston on Monday, June 8, 2020. The bowling alley is only using alternate lanes and having customers make reservations ahead of time.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Rasna Som, 10, bowls a spare at Desert Lanes Family Fun Center in Hermiston on Monday, June 8, 2020.

"We are going to continue as a curbside pickup for now, and I'm looking forward to having people back in the building, but I also want to make sure we have all the pieces in place," Rose said.

The city's parks and recreation department, which saw many of its facilities closed this year, is allowed to open some things back up under Phase 2, including the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center.

Director Larry Fetter said many of their lifeguards they recruited in the spring have since taken other jobs, so by the time the recruit and train sufficient staff, it will probably be about June 24 before they open the aquatic center.

Like everything else, it will look different this year. Groups of up to 10 people will be able to reserve an hour and a half chunk of time at the pool, with cleanings between sessions. In the mornings each group that arrives together will be given a zone of the pool that they must stay in, keeping everyone far apart. In the afternoons, groups will be allowed to roam around more, but must stay more than 6 feet apart from anyone not wearing a wristband of the same color as the rest of their party.

In the beginning, only the competitive pool will be open, and the multi-use pool with water slides will be off-limits. Fetter said as they get a handle on things, other areas of the pool, along with swimming lessons, will be added.

"This is how we will start the season, but it's not how we will end it," he said.

Concessions will be closed, but staff are relaxing rules on what food and drink can be brought from home.

"We will not be opening the locker rooms because of the volume of cleaning that would be required," Fetter

said, noting that two individual changing rooms with toilets will be available for restroom use.

Fitness centers can reopen under similar social distancing guidelines. In Hermiston, Club 24 returned to 24-hour gym access for its members last week, according to front desk employee Paige Esterbloom. Front desk hours are also back to normal. Currently, the showers remain closed.

Some businesses allowed to reopen under Phase 1 are still working on reopening under their new rules. The Union Club, a coffee by day, bar by night establishment, is set for a grand reopening on Friday, June 12, with live music, a DJ, dinner and dancing to celebrate their relaunch.

Staff writer *Nada Sewidan* contributed to this report.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell
John Carbage, president of the Hermiston Cultural Awareness Coalition, spoke to the crowd gathered at Hermiston City Hall as part of the Black Lives Matter protest held Saturday, June 6, 2020. Next to him is a shrine in remembrance of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, who were both killed by police in the United States in recent months.

BLM:

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sent to another state," she said.

Linton, who is black, listed things that other unarmed black Americans have been doing while shot and killed, including sleeping, jogging and holding a cellphone.

"We don't want our police officers being trained to kill on sight," she said. "They should be able to recognize a gun. Don't just pull up and start shooting and ask questions later when I'm laying on the ground dead."

Patrick Temple read a message on behalf of Mitch Thompson, who had wanted to speak at the event but was unable to attend. The message explained Thompson's reasons why white Americans should join the Black Lives Matter movement as allies and strive to listen to their experiences.

He said the "black lives matter" chant doesn't mean that all lives don't matter, just as wearing pink for breast cancer in October isn't done to spite people with other types of cancer. He said protests against racism make some white

people uncomfortable, but protest is how social progress, such as women getting the right to vote, has always been made in this country.

"It comes from a deep place of privilege to think that a crisis isn't occurring simply because it doesn't affect you," he said.

Other speakers, such as John Carbage, the president of the Hermiston Cultural Awareness Coalition, encouraged people to vote in every election and to run for local office. Vanessa Thomas, who sang "Change is Going to Come," told listeners to speak up and call people out when they see racism in their community.

While there wasn't a visible police presence at Saturday's protest, Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston posted a message to Facebook on June 8 saying he was glad that the community's protests over the past week had stayed peaceful.

He offered suggestions of other ways they can get involved with policing locally if they have concerns.

He encouraged people to attend meetings of the city council, which approves budgets and policy for the police department, and to attend the city's quar-

terly public safety committee meetings for more in-depth discussions about the department. While ride-alongs with officers have temporarily halted due to the pandemic, Edmiston also encouraged people to participate in those once they start up again.

"At HPD, we believe in transparency, accountability and we actively seek out employees who want to live and raise families here," he said, noting the average HPD officer has lived in the region for 27 years.

According to Edmiston, during the 2018-19 fiscal year they made 1,271 arrests and used force in effecting those arrests 20 times, for a rate of 1.6%, and engaged in eight pursuits.

As she was leaving Saturday's event, Lucia Antonio said she was glad she had come out to support a worthy cause. She said as a little girl growing up in West Richland, Washington, her family had been the only people of color in their neighborhood, and she had been the only non-white person in her kindergarten class.

"This is the beauty of people coming together," she said of the protest. "We're leaving happy, with full hearts."

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