

Soroptimists install officers

Philanthropic group invites new members to join their efforts

HERMISTON HERALD

Soroptimist International of the Greater Hermiston Area recently installed officers for the 2020-2021 club year.

According to a news release from the organization, new officers installed during the meeting at McKenzie Park are Victoria Horneck, president; Dawn Moreland, president-elect; Lisa Hagerman, vice president; Ateusa Salemi, secretary; June Mills, treasurer; and Sharone McCann and Michel Abney, directors. Each new officer was presented with a mask personally made for them by treasurer June Mills.

The news release stated the theme of their installation was "Be Kind," to highlight the efforts of the club working to fulfill their organization's mission to provide women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment through two main federation programs, the "Live Your Dream" program and the "Dream It, Be It" program.

Through the "Live Your Dream" program, the local chapter presents two women from the area grants of \$1,000 and \$500. These women must be the head of their household and have



Contributed photo

Soroptimist International of the Greater Hermiston Area recently installed officers for the 2020-21 club year, including (from left) director Michel Abney, president Vicki Horneck, president-elect Dawn Moreland, secretary Ateusa Salemi and treasurer June Mills.

been accepted into or be currently enrolled in a vocational training program or a post-high school educational degree program. Applications for these awards are available by emailing the local club at sigreaterhermistonarea@soroptimist.net or on the Soroptimist International of the Americas website at www.soroptimist.org. Applications will be available beginning August 1 and are due on November 15.

The "Dream It, Be It" program offers career education to young women ages 14-17. The curriculum for this program was developed by Soroptimist International of the Americas. The Herm-

iston-area club is in the process of setting up the program locally.

Other local activities and programs the club has been involved with since their chartering in 2001 include The Breakfast of Champions, the Festival of Trees and the Festival of Trees Family Day, support for the local Domestic Violence Services, the SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) program at Good Shepherd Medical Center, and supply drives for area school districts and the Hermiston Warming Station, as well as supporting other needs of the local community.

At the international level, each year the club raises

money to support the biennial "President's Appeal" of Soroptimist International. The 2019-21 program is the "Road to Equality": a trip to find and empower women and girls who have been left behind. It will raise awareness of human rights challenges that prevent women and girls from reaching their full potential.

Members of the community interested in becoming a member of the club can contact Sally Peatow at 541-571-0736, email the club at sigreaterhermiston@soroptimist.net or visit the Soroptimist International of the Greater Hermiston Area Facebook page for more information.

ADJUST:

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for sure," he said. "I think everyone knows in order to do this, in order to stay open, everyone knows they need to follow the governor's mandate."

Adams said for the most part, though, everyone has been semi-supportive. He said some people are unsure why they still have to wear a mask while working out if they remain socially distanced and 6 feet apart.

"I definitely had people say it's overkill," he said. "That's the biggest push back we're getting, but we're going to follow the rules and do what we can to keep people safe inside the facility."

Adams said his concern is that a lot of businesses are shutting down and the health and fitness industry is one that has taken a hit in general.

Neighborhood Books & Gifts is among the businesses that were shut down at the start of the pandemic. Since then, co-owner Judy Gormley said the company was able to make some changes for safety purposes, such as installing a shield at the counter and enforcing social distancing. The new restrictions didn't affect her store much, but she said that business has been slower.

"[New restrictions] haven't affected us too much, but the number of customers have been limited," Gormley said. "But we're

doing OK."

Other restrictions under Phase 2 include reducing private indoor gatherings from 50 people to 10. Recreational venues, such as movie theaters, public pools, places of worship and arcades, are now capped at 100 people instead of 250. Children 5 and older are now mandated to wear face coverings.

During the Hermiston City Council's July 27 meeting, Al Davis, the manager of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, said so far EOTEC has been able to host some outdoor events, but they have also had more than 40 cancellations for indoor bookings since the pandemic started.

"It's not good, but there's not much we can do about that," he said, noting that once October hits, the revenue from outdoor events would dry up.

He said there have been a few entities, such as the Port of Umatilla's board of directors, that have been holding meetings at EOTEC because they can sit much farther apart than they would be able to in their own board rooms.

Davis said barrel racing has been a popular event at EOTEC's large rodeo arena this summer, as people can sit far apart outdoors to watch. He said people who come to those events have been "very open" to requirements about having their temperature taken and leaving their information for contact tracing purposes.

SCHOOLS: Umatilla School District students also will have distance learning, rather than the hybrid model that had been planned

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"There is a lot to do, but I know our staff will rise to the challenge," Mooney said. "This will be different than anything we've done before."

Shifting the calendar would also mean pushing semester breaks and the end of the school year forward to June 14, 2021.

As for course offerings, Mooney said it is part of the district's plan to maintain the same course offerings that adhere to the curriculum.

"It's still our plan to offer the same courses, but some things will look very different," she said.

In terms of what day-to-day distance learning will look like for primary and secondary schools, Mooney said the district will try and maintain as much of a schedule as possible.

For secondary schools, distance learning will look more like a full school day that follows a "bell schedule" in terms of structured class times and courses. At the secondary level, attendance also will be taken for each period.

In the elementary schools, schedule development is still in process. Although students will be working remotely, teachers will be instructing via video from their classrooms.

Grading practices will return to the district's usual practices, unlike spring term when the district switched to a complete/incomplete model.

The move to distance learning for fall does not affect staff size. As of now, the district plans on retaining staff. Mooney said at this point it is the district's plan to not implement furloughs or cuts in force.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Classrooms will remain empty when school resumes this fall as students in the Hermiston School District will be distance learning.

"IT'S STILL OUR PLAN TO OFFER THE SAME COURSES, BUT SOME THINGS WILL LOOK VERY DIFFERENT."

Tricia Mooney, Hermiston School District Superintendent

However, positions may change in terms of duties.

The district is still required to provide lunches, but details on what that system will look like is still underway. As for sports programs and extracurriculars, the district is still awaiting guidance from the state on how to proceed, but it is likely that the season will be pushed back. The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association, of which Hermiston is a part, has tentatively planned to move football to March.

In June, the state issued guidance for early learning and child care programs that included three possible instruction methods — on-site, hybrid and distance learning — for the 2020-21 school year. Each school

district will make their own decisions regarding which instruction methods to utilize, depending on the progression of COVID-19 and guidance released by the Department of Education.

"With heightened concern related to the COVID-19 virus and indoor gatherings, Hermiston School District will begin the year with a comprehensive distance learning model, with the intent of moving to a hybrid model when it is safe to return students to the classroom," Mooney said.

Mooney stated it is the district's goal to have students return to face-to-face instruction as soon as possible, if it can be done safely.

"We have a large percentage of staff that want

to be in school and with our students," Mooney said. "But it is not an option right now to plan for face-to-face instruction."

The decision comes following the guidance of the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority. Mooney said when the most recent rounds of guidance were released by the Department of Education, the district realized they needed to move to comprehensive distance learning.

What tipped the scale, according to Mooney, is the guidance stated that within the coming weeks a set of guideposts, protocols and public health indicators will help determine the best instructional model for a given ZIP code or county.

Since COVID-19 rates in a given county will help inform school decisions regarding distance learning, Mooney said it was clear that Hermiston was not ready to move to face-to-face learning.

"That language in light of the fact that Umatilla County is a hot spot in Oregon, and Hermiston being the largest community in Umatilla County and having the most cases, we felt it is pretty clear that our model to begin school is to be comprehensive distant learning," she said.

The guidance, which includes protocols for daily health checks, group sizes, Personal Protective Equipment for children and adults, daily activities, cleaning and response protocols for possible and confirmed COVID-19 cases, will be applied statewide once it is finalized on Friday, Aug. 14.

"Much like K-12 schools, we know that our early childhood programs won't look the same this fall. But, one thing is clear: We know that kids need safe, caring, quality environments while their parents are at work," stated Gov. Kate Brown in a July 23 press release.

Umatilla School District

Umatilla School District had been planning a hybrid model of instruction for

the fall, giving students the option to attend in-person classes four days a week if desired.

In an email after the state's announcement, Superintendent Heidi Sipe released an outline of what the district's online-only learning will look like until Umatilla County schools are allowed to have students in the classroom.

Elementary school students will remain with the teacher they have already been assigned, and will be given a schedule of times to check in online for video learning. They can participate in the video sessions with their teacher live, or watch a recording of the session at their convenience. Teachers will have times available on Friday to help students individually or in smaller groups as needed.

Students in grades six through 12 will function similarly, but with multiple teachers for the various core classes and electives they signed up for. They will turn in homework through Google Classroom and other online tools, and have scheduled check-ins with their teachers.

"Some lessons may be modified, but families should expect rigor and expectations equal to the on-site classroom," the plan stated.

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