

UPDATES

Umatilla County opens COVID-19 relief small business program

HERMISTON HERALD

Small businesses in Umatilla County can get a \$5,000 grant as money from the federal government's COVID-19 relief package continues to trickle down to Umatilla County.

Umatilla County Economic Development announced the start of a new small business relief program in a Aug. 6 press release, stating the county intends to distribute \$5,000 grants to qualifying businesses proportionately throughout the county.

According to the city of Hermiston, the city is partnering with the county to provide extra funds for the program from the city's portion of the federal CARES Act, reserving a total of \$745,000 specifically for Hermiston businesses.

The county states that eligible businesses, including sole proprietors, must be directly affected by the state's COVID-19 orders, through a closure or other mandated changes to the business. Business must also be headquartered and operating in the county and employ 50 people or fewer.

A business can only submit one application and nonprofits are not eligible.

The deadline to apply is Aug. 26 and business owners can apply for the grants at www.umatilla-county.net/grants. Paper applications are available at local city halls, where they can also be submitted.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Katelyn Griffin takes a moment with her lamb prior to having her picture taken on the first day of the 2020 Umatilla County Fair Modified Youth Livestock Show on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2020 at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston.

An early goodbye

Youths drop off animals for a socially distanced county fair

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

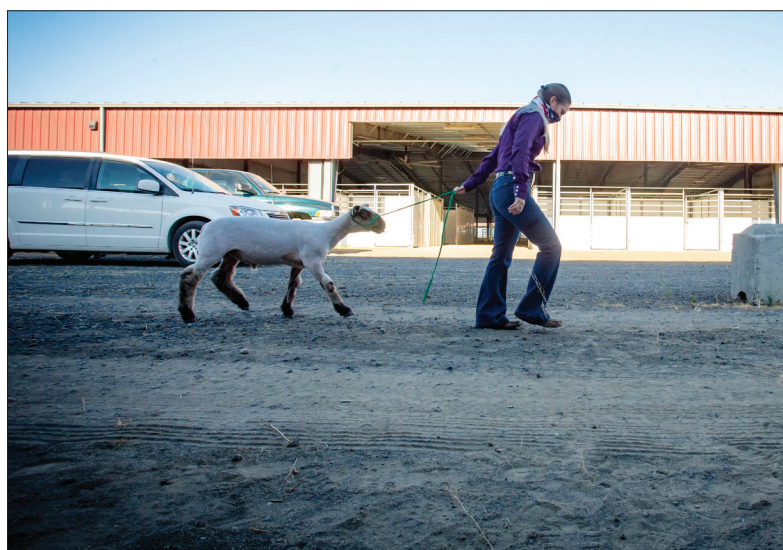
Fair week for the Umatilla County Fair kicked off, like everything else in 2020, in an unprecedented way at 6 a.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 11.

There were no corn dogs or rides, no concerts or jugglers. But there were still animals.

Youths (or their parents) showed up early Tuesday morning with their lambs, saying goodbye for the week before the animal they spent the summer raising was weighed, photographed and sent off to await the Youth Livestock Auction at the end of the week. Other animals will get their turn throughout the week.

Blake Betz, an 18-year-old FFA student who has shown animals at the fair every year since he was first old enough, said he would miss the usual experiences of fair week, even though he still got the experience of raising his steer, Lil' Smoky.

"In years previous I've looked forward to seeing friends from other towns that I don't usually get to see, and get a week off and



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Juliann Bruce leads her lamb to the livestock check-in on the first day of the 2020 Umatilla County Fair Modified Youth Livestock Show on Tuesday, Aug. 11, 2020, at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston.

"IT'S SUCH A VITAL THING THAT THE COMMUNITY IS NOT JUST GOING TO FORGET ABOUT IT."

— Kendall Cooper, Standfield

Online

For more photos from the fair, see this story at hermistonherald.com.

have fun hanging out," he said.

Kendall Cooper, 17, an FFA student from Stanfield, said this was her fifth year raising a market hog for the fair. She said her hog, a Yorkshire-Hampshire cross named Belle, was looking good and should make weight.

She said when the FFA students got their animals in March, school had just shut down and so they had an inkling that if they went through with raising an animal to show, fair week probably wouldn't look exactly the same as they were used to.

Cooper said normally during the week, particularly during the Youth Livestock Auction, she is making connections with people

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Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

The city of Hermiston is weighing the possibility of offering 8 acres of land, near the city's wastewater treatment plant, for a potential housing development for senior citizens.

Council OKs \$9.6 million in bonds for new city hall

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The Hermiston City Council authorized the sale of up to \$9.6 million in bonds to pay for a new city hall and renovation of the lower level of the Hermiston Public Library during their Monday, Aug. 10 meeting.

The city plans to build a new, larger, three-story city hall on the site of the current city hall at 180 N.E. Second St. The interior of the previous city hall was damaged during a fire in the building's HVAC system in December 2019, but the council had already set a goal to start working toward building a new city hall sometime

in the next few years. They cited overcrowding that had pushed staff into other buildings, and a lack of wheelchair accessibility.

City Manager Byron Smith told the council that based on preliminary designs, ArchitectsWest had given a "high-level" estimate of \$9 million for the project, but the \$9.6 million approval would give some wiggle room if costs came in higher than expected. Smith said they expect to have a firm, detailed cost estimate on city hall by mid-October.

Paying off \$9.6 million in bonds would require a \$470,000 annual payment, Smith said,

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