

UPDATES

City offers live updates of Funland progress

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The city of Hermiston is offering an up-to-date look at progress on building the new Funland Playground at Butte Park through a live video feed at hermistonprojects.com/funland.

Work crews have been leveling and preparing the site to begin installation of playground pieces that have already arrived. In addition to a new playground, they will also be installing a new picnic shelter, restrooms and a concession stand nearby.

In addition to the video feed, the website also offers an interactive map of what the playground will look like, illustrations of the different sections planned for the playground, a breakdown of the project's budget and a frequently asked questions section.

According to the site, the city has \$1,662,000 of its goal of \$1,750,000 for the project. Individuals and businesses can still buy an engraved fence picket to help support the project.

The city hopes to have a grand opening celebration of the playground by late October of 2020. The playground burned down in a suspected arson in May of 2019.

The city started the hermistonprojects.com website in 2019 as a way for city residents to check on the progress of capital improvement projects in the city or find out information about the project's budget and purpose.

The site has tabs for planned projects, projects in progress and completed projects.

People can also sort projects by type, including wastewater, water and street projects.

Protests spark conflict



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
A Black Lives Matter protester calls out through a megaphone early in the evening. A crowd of roughly 40 Black Lives Matter protesters were met with about 100 counter-protesters at the intersection of Highway 395 and East Highland Avenue in Hermiston on Friday, Aug. 21, 2020.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
A counter-protest organizer walks the line of counter-protesters chanting through a megaphone. A crowd of roughly 40 Black Lives Matter protesters were met with about 100 counter-protesters at the intersection of Highway 395 and East Highland Avenue in Hermiston on Friday, Aug. 21, 2020.

Protests, shooting ratchet up police overtime costs

BY JADE MCDOWELL NEWS EDITOR

Rising tensions pushed a Black Lives Matter protest and counter-protest in Hermiston late into the night twice over the weekend, causing high overtime costs for the Hermiston Police Department.

A shooting unrelated to the protests took place in Hermiston on the afternoon of Friday, Aug. 21, and Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said between the shooting and the protests that took place Aug. 21-22, the department used up the equivalent of a month and a half of overtime pay in two days.

That doesn't count the extra hours put in by the department's leadership paid on a salaried basis, he said.

A group of Hermiston residents have been holding a Black Lives Matter protest on Friday evenings, which organizers say usually draw 10 or fewer people. But a Facebook event created for the Aug. 21 protest sparked a rumor online that, in the words of one post shared 85 times, "BLM & ANTIFA Members from the Portland area will be coming to Hermiston," possibly in the range of 150 people.

By 6 p.m. — the scheduled start to the Black Lives Matter protest — about 100 counter-protesters had gathered in the strip mall parking lot on the west side of the Highway 395 and Highland Avenue intersection. Many were openly carrying handguns or rifles, and most were carrying flags (America, Confederate, Trump, Thin Blue Line and Don't Tread on Me) instead of signs.

The group's apparent organizer, who declined to give his name to the *Hermiston Herald*, asked those gathered to not engage with the other group of protesters unless their life was threatened, and to avoid racial slurs and name-calling. He said their goal was to prevent any vandalism.

See Protests, Page A12

"PEACEFUL PROTESTS ARE GREAT. THEY'RE AWESOME. THAT'S WHAT AMERICA IS ALL ABOUT. BUT WHEN IT GETS VIOLENT, THAT'S A PROBLEM."

Terina Newton, Hermiston

Pandemic shifts college plans for area grads

By ANNIE FOWLER
FOR THE HERMISTON HERALD

It's that time of year of where college campuses nationwide would be welcoming back students.

The coronavirus pandemic, which has shuttered campuses and altered sports schedules from Oregon to Florida, has caused colleges to change their method of offering classes to students.

Recent Hermiston graduate Josie Goodrich, who is attending Washington State University in Pullman, will begin her college experience at her family's dining room table.

"Honestly, it's upsetting," said Goodrich, who is studying criminal justice law enforcement administration. "I was excited to start a new chapter in my life. I would like to be there. Now, not much is changing, except for the teachers."

Goodrich is just one of thousands of area students who have had to change their post-high school plans with COVID-19 and local governments keeping campuses closed.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Josie Goodrich is attending her Washington State University classes online from home in Hermiston after the COVID-19 pandemic caused the university to decide on a virtual start to the school year.

According to Eastern Oregon University's website, classes will be held in-person, remotely and in hybrid formats this fall. Some class locations may change to control classroom density.

Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton will provide classes and student support

from a distance during fall semester, while Walla Walla Community College will offer online classes, and select in-person classes where hands-on learning is needed.

Goodrich, who started classes Monday, Aug. 24, said she bought some books for her classes, and also bought online access material

for one of her classes. She also had to buy several online programs that are needed to submit class work because each professor uses a different program.

The hardest part of the fall distance learning for Goodrich was doing the sorority rush online. She spent the better part of a week doing Zoom interviews and taking virtual tours of the different sororities at WSU.

"There are 14 sororities at WSU," Goodrich said. "You pick your top 10, go through interviews, and cut the list down again. It would have been nice to do that in person."

Goodrich now is a member of Kappa Delta, and said she's already made friends with her sorority sisters on social media.

While Goodrich is learning from home, her 2020 Hermiston classmate Garrett Walchli is at Utah State University in Logan. He has a mix of online classes and hybrid classes, which include some in-person instruction.

"I moved down here a week and a half ago," said Walchli, who is a member of the Aggies foot-

ball team. "Our campus is open, but depending on the professor, there are online classes, in-person classes, and some that are a mix."

Classes at Utah State begin Aug. 31, but because of COVID-19, the football season has been put on hold until the spring. The Mountain West Conference, as well as every other major conference throughout the nation, opted to move their seasons.

"We can't be with the coaches or in the (athletic) facilities," said Walchli, who is majoring in international agribusiness management. "I live in the dorms, and there is no mixing of students. You cannot go visit someone in another dorm. We are trying to be college students the best we can."

The two facets of Idaho

Heppner co-valedictorian Nicole Prophet is attending school at Lewis-Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho, where she also is a member of the women's golf team. Classes started Aug. 24.

She appreciates being able

See College, Page A12

INSIDE

A3 ▶ Shooting puts Hermiston man in critical condition

A6 ▶ Hermiston residents march to raise awareness of human trafficking

A7 ▶ Maxwell Market to reopen Thursday after Umatilla County returns to Phase 1

A8 ▶ Hermiston School District sees lower enrollment heading into 2020-21