

County, city approve agreements for more Umatilla data centers

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

Umatilla County and the city of Umatilla have both approved enterprise zone agreements with Amazon Data Services for two new \$200 million data center campuses in Umatilla.

Umatilla City Manager David Stockdale said the agreements differ some from previous tax abatement agreements the city has entered into for data centers in the past, but are very similar to agreements that Hermiston and Boardman have both entered into with Amazon over the past year.

The long-term enterprise zone agreement exempts Amazon from property taxes on the developments for 15 years, provided Amazon makes at least a \$200 million investment in each development, hires at least 10 full-time employees for the site



Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer, right, listens as county counsel Doug Olsen describes the enterprise zone agreement with Amazon Data Services during a board of commissioners meeting on Nov. 4, 2020.

and provides compensation for those employees at least 130% of Umatilla County's average wage.

Stockdale said the formula for payments that Amazon will make in lieu

of taxes includes a minimum of \$2 million per year to be split between the city and county (higher if more than two buildings are built), plus \$50,000 for education, \$50,000 for public safety

and payments to all taxing districts equivalent to what the company would be paying in taxes on the first \$25 million of assessed value.

In 2017, Umatilla County signed a different type of

tax abatement agreement with Amazon's subsidiary Vadata, known as a Strategic Investment Program agreement, sparking a major disagreement between the city of Umatilla and the county over how the payments in lieu of taxes should be split. The county decided to give Umatilla about \$1 million of the \$4 million payment, but the city manager at the time, Russ Pelleberg, argued that the city should receive at least half, and threatened legal action.

Since then, Stockdale said, he is "proud to say the city and county have made some really great strides in our relationship."

He said the city appreciates the county's philosophy with the long-term enterprise zone agreements that not only should cities where the projects are located receive half the payments, but the county should use its

half to reinvest that money back into economic development in the community where it was generated.

At a Nov. 4 Umatilla County Board of Commissioners meeting, commissioners voted unanimously to approve the two agreements for the new Amazon campuses. County counsel Doug Olsen told commissioners the two planned projects would be identical in size and adjacent to each other in the Wanapa industrial area on the east side of Umatilla. He said the plan is for construction on the first campus to begin "shortly."

"The terms of the agreement are very similar to previous ones with this developer," he told commissioners.

Commissioner George Murdock said the county and city had worked together as co-sponsors of the enterprise zone to forge the agreement.

New floral shop opens in Hermiston

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

Hermiston Floral Shop is now open for business.

The shop, located at 174 W. Hermiston Ave. in Hermiston, is owned by Esperanza and Lucio Ochoa, who also own a jewelry store and boutique in the building.

According to information provided by the shop's employees, it sells custom floral arrangements, including corsages, table centerpieces, wedding bouquets, vases, funeral arrangements and more. The business also offers gift baskets, boxes of chocolates and other gifts, and can provide customized names and messages on ribbons, water bottles and other items.

Orders can be picked up curbside during the pan-



Hermiston Floral Shop/
Contributed Photo

This fall-inspired floral arrangement is for sale at Hermiston Floral Shop, which opened on Nov. 12 in Hermiston.

demic, and Hermiston Floral Shop also offers delivery. It is open seven days a week.

The store had its grand opening on Nov. 12.

For more information visit the Hermiston Floral Shop Facebook page or call 541-289-0213.

Umatilla County Public Health announces three new COVID-19 deaths

Hermiston's ZIP code still holds the record for most cases in the state with 1,767

HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla County Public Health announced three more county residents have died with COVID-19.

In a Nov. 16 news release, the local health department stated 49 county residents have now died with the virus.

According to the news release, an 81-year-old man who tested positive on Oct. 27 died Nov. 8 at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston.

A 63-year-old man, who tested positive Oct.

29, died Nov. 8 at Trios Southridge Hospital in Kennewick.

A 66-year-old woman with underlying conditions tested positive Nov. 2 and died Nov. 13 at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland.

Over the seven-day period between Nov. 11 and Nov. 17, the health department also announced a total of 271 new cases in Umatilla County.

The county has had a total of 3,924 cases since the pandemic began, with a majority of the cases centered in Hermiston. According to the Oregon Health Authority's latest weekly report, released Nov. 11, Hermiston's ZIP code still holds the record for most COVID-19 cases

of any ZIP code in the state, with 1,767 since the pandemic began.

Oregon Health Authority continues to track workplace outbreaks, updating its list in its weekly report each Wednesday.

According to the Nov. 11 report, worksites in Umatilla County with at least 30 people working there, that have seen COVID-19 cases among employees in the past 30 days, are Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton, Lamb Weston's Hermiston site, Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, J&J Snack Foods in Weston, Home Depot in Hermiston and Dutch Bros Coffee in Hermiston. Worksites in Morrow County on




OHA's report are Lamb Weston East in Boardman and Lamb Weston Boardman Pac. The report also lists an outbreak of 35 cases at Avamere Hermiston, an assisted living facility.



Statewide, the Nov. 11 report showed 6.8% of COVID-19 cases have been hospitalized and 1.5% have died. As of Nov. 17, the state has reported 58,570 cases of COVID-19.

Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports there have been more than 11 million COVID-19 cases since the start of the pandemic and 246,232 deaths. In the past seven days, the CDC reports, the country has reported 47.5 new cases per 100,000 people.

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