

## New warehouse may bring 75-100 jobs

Meyer Distributing plans to open Penney Avenue site in December

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

A new warehouse starting construction in Hermiston is expected to hire 75 to 100 people once it is completed later this year.

Meyer Distributing, a distribution company headquartered in Jasper, Indiana, received a building permit from the city of Hermiston in March to begin work on a new \$11 million warehouse. Meyer Distributing CEO Jeff Braun said he expects the warehouse to begin operations in December 2021.

According to its website, the family owned company is “a leader in spe-

cialty products marketing and distribution” and uses strategically placed warehouses around the country to distribute auto parts, sanitation supplies and lifestyle products.

After the Hermiston warehouse opens near the end of 2021, Braun said the company expects to hire between 75 and 100 people by the end of 2022. He said starting wages for all positions will be at least \$15 an hour, and the company will likely begin hiring in November of this year.

The Hermiston warehouse will house inventory ready to be shipped to customers in the region. Braun said the building will be 169,080 square feet, and the building permit filed with

the city values it at \$11,111,618. It will be at 975 E. Penney Ave., in Hermiston’s southern industrial area, about one-half mile west of Ranch & Home.

Braun said the company’s headquarters of Jasper, Indiana, has a population of approximately 16,000 people in a county with a population of about 43,000 people.

“We are aware of how important an impact a company like ours can have on the local community and look forward to being a good partner with the city and its citizens,” he said in an email.

For more information about the company, visit [www.meyerdistributing.com](http://www.meyerdistributing.com).



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Meyer Distributing, a distribution company headquartered in Jasper, Indiana, plans to construct a new \$11 million warehouse at this site located at 975 E. Penney Ave. in Hermiston.

### UPDATES

## Umatilla County moved to moderate risk level

HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla County will move to moderate risk level for COVID-19 on Friday, April 9, according to an announcement from Gov. Kate Brown.

The change from high to moderate loosens some restrictions on businesses and gatherings. Restaurants, for example, can now offer indoor dining at 50% capacity or 100 people, whichever is smaller, instead of 25% capacity or 50 people. Indoor entertainment venues, such as movie theaters, as well as recreational facilities, such as gyms, can also move to 50% capacity or 100 people, whichever is smaller. Retail stores can operate at 75% capacity instead of 50%.

Morrow County remains at low risk for at least another two weeks.

The change for Umatilla County to move to a lower risk category comes as most counties in Oregon are seeing their COVID-19 cases begin to trend upward instead. This week six counties moved from moderate to high risk, and five more counties were put in the “warning period,” giving them two weeks to get their numbers back down again before they are switched to a higher level.

While risk levels had previously been based on case counts and test positivity rates, Brown said Oregon Health Authority will also begin including hospitalization numbers in the count to present a more accurate picture of risk to the community as vaccinations protect more people from severe cases of COVID-19.

On Tuesday, April 6, Umatilla County announced its 83rd death of a person with COVID-19. The county reported the patient was a 47-year-old male with underlying conditions who tested positive Feb. 2 and died April 3 at a hospital in Portland.



Umatilla Chamber of Commerce/Contributed Photo

The owners of Acapulco Mexican Food show off their 2020 Business of the Year award in front of their business.

## Small town spotlight



Umatilla Chamber of Commerce/Contributed Photo

Marcelino Cruz, second from right, owner of Novedades Cruz convenience store, accepts the 2019 Citizen of the Year award from the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce.



Umatilla Chamber of Commerce/Contributed Photo

The Banner Bank staff at the Umatilla branch accepts an award for 2019 Business of the Year.

## Umatilla recognizes its ‘distinguished citizens’

By JADE MCDOWELL  
NEWS EDITOR

There were plenty of congratulations to go around on Friday, April 2, as the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce handed out its Distinguished Citizen Awards for 2019 and 2020.

Salud Campos, executive director for the chamber, said after last year’s awards banquet was canceled at the last minute due to the initial COVID-19 lockdowns, the chamber wanted to make sure those who would have been recognized still got their award. She visited those awardees, as well as a new group honored this year, to hand them their plaque and offer congratulations.

“They were thrilled,” she said.

Some winners said they were honored, while others described themselves as humbled or surprised, she said. After a long year for everyone, Campos said it was nice to be able to recognize the good in Umatilla.

“I want to thank everyone who has kept our businesses going during the pandemic and shop-

ping locally,” she said. “We’re a small community, but we support each other a lot.”

### 2020 award winners

Janet Nagy Leitch was honored as Umatilla Citizen of the Year for 2020.

Leitch, a 1966 graduate of Umatilla High School, is president of the Umatilla Alumni Association and secretary of the Umatilla Museum and corresponding historical foundation.

“She has been involved in Umatilla her whole life, and her years of service are appreciated by all and an example of community service for all to learn from,” the chamber’s nomination of her stated.

Acapulco Mexican Food was named Umatilla Business of the Year for 2020.

The food truck cooks “delicious, authentic Mexican dishes,” according to the chamber, and are known for their homemade tortillas, tortas, burritos and fish tacos.

“Owner Margarito Corcuera plans to get more involved in the

See Awards, Page A9

### INSIDE

**A3** ▶ All Oregonians age 16 and up will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine starting April 19

**A6** ▶ The Farm-City Pro Rodeo is planning a rodeo for 2021

**A7** ▶ The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce has purchased a new building

**A8** ▶ Hermiston Parks and Recreation holds Flashlight Easter Egg Hunt