



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Hermiston High School graduates pose for a class photo at Kennison Field before the Hermiston High School Honor Walk on Thursday, May 27, 2021.

**Honor:**

Continued from Page A1

Roberto Gonzales plans to attend Blue Mountain Community College to study art before eventually transferring somewhere else to complete a bachelor's degree in fine art.

He said during the first semester it was harder to stay motivated and turn in work when his teachers weren't in the room with him. He got to finish the year in person, though, and looks forward to what's next.

"It's exciting, but I'm very nervous," he said of

graduating.

The Honor Walk was a precursor to graduation, which will take place on Thursday, June 3.

Students will gather at 5:30 p.m. in the Purple Gym at Hermiston High School to hear speeches, which will also be live-streamed on the Hermiston School District website and HSD Communications YouTube channel.

After the speeches, students will be brought into the main commons area a few at a time to walk across the stage and receive a diploma, with six guests of their choice in attendance.



Hermiston High School graduates take to the streets of Hermiston for the school's Honor Walk on Thursday, May 27, 2021. Graduation is set for Thursday, June 3.

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**Funland:**

Continued from Page A1

He showed up with other Kiwanis Club members, and said it was exciting to see the playground almost complete after the service club had contributed financially to it.

Patricia Alder, who sat on the steering committee that helped design the new Funland and fundraise for it, brought her family out to help with the work party. She said she was very pleased with how the playground was turning out after all the work the committee put into designing it.

"It's been fun to watch the dream come to fruition," she said.

Her daughter Cosette Alder, 6, was using an oversized sponge to help her dad clean off part of the extensive playground.

Cosette said she was sad when the old, wooden version of the playground burned down, but not now that she has seen the new one. She said she was most excited to play on the pirate ship section.

"It's a really nice playground," she said.

Ethan Jemmett, 12, and Dallin Smith, 13, were working in the covered wagon and teepee section of the playground after explor-

ing it. Ethan described the playground as "huge," and said he really liked it.

Dallin said his favorite parts were a giant spider web of ropes for climbing, the three big slides and the tunnel to crawl through. He said he used to play tag on the old playground all the time and he is looking forward to playing it on the new one.

"There is way more stuff to go on," he said.

The playground features a variety of climbing equipment, tunnels, slides and poles, broken up into sections that reflect different themes. A pirate ship being attacked by a kraken dominates one corner, but most of the features were designed to reflect Hermiston's history.

The structures will be complete almost exactly 25 years after the original Funland Playground opened on June 9, 1996. That ini-

tial wooden structure, built to mimic a castle, was the brainchild of Jerry and Kathy Blankenship. According to the *Hermiston Herald* at the time, it took 1,920 volunteers about 9,000 hours to build it, using 32,394 feet of lumber and 504 pounds of nails.

That structure burned down in a suspected arson in 2001, and was rebuilt in March 2002. That structure burned down in another suspected arson on May 8, 2019.

The new playground is made of metal and compressed plastic, with a soft rubberized surface underneath. City officials hope moving away from wood will deter another fire. The playground was also designed to be more open and difficult for troublemakers to hide in, and will be watched over by a new camera system with a live feed.



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Volunteers clean play structures at the newly renovated Funland Playground in Hermiston on Thursday, May 27, 2021.

**Happy 11<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Kynlee!**

*Wishing an amazing girl a birthday as fabulous as you are!*

May all your wishes come true.

We think of you all the time.

*Love - Grandpa and Grandma Powell*

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