

Hermiston students complete seventh home

By BEN LONERGAN
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — While most students were learning remotely this school year, a half dozen Hermiston High School students rolled up their sleeves and traded textbooks for tools to build a house.

“Where others did not have school, I had class everyday,” said Curt Berger, the program coordinator with Columbia Basin Student Homes. “That’s why this house is done.”

On Tuesday, June 29, Berger handed the keys to the latest home in the Hermiston School District’s Fieldstone subdivision on Southwest Angus Court to Loy and Mike Stratton, marking the end of the yearlong student-built construction project.

The Strattons, who are moving to Hermiston from Pendleton to be closer to family, said they loved working with the students and developing some of the final touches.

“I was very excited,” said Loy Stratton. “I love the great room — I love to cook so everyone will be with me there.”

Loy Stratton said she worked closely with former student builder Rylee Albert to nail down final details, such as light fixtures.

“They had most of it picked out already,” she said.

Albert took part in constructing one of the earlier Columbia Basin Student Homes and came back this year to help with design decisions and to mentor students.

“It’s been really neat being able to help people learn it because it’s such a useful skill,” she said.

Berger said he loves to get as much help from outside contractors and other mentors for students as possible to help them learn through the process.

“It’s lots of fun for us because we’re not just turning in a paper or doing an assignment — we’re building a for-real product that we’re going to sell,” said Berger. Students worked throughout



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
Curt Berger, right, hands the keys to the seventh Fieldstone Crossing student-built home to Loy and Mike Stratton in Hermiston Tuesday, June 29, 2021.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
The kitchen of the seventh Fieldstone Crossing student-built home includes an oversized refrigerator, hidden pantry and five-burner gas range.

the year to see the 2,232-square-foot, 3-bedroom, 2½-bathroom home from foundation to its recent sale for just under \$450,000.

The home features high-end finishes, such as speakers, a central vacuum system, an oversized refrigerator and hidden pantry. The

students also work with Energy Trust of Oregon and its partners to ensure the home exceeds codes for energy efficiency.

Todd Blackman, an outreach specialist with EPS New Construction, said the home tested 18% above energy code in insulation, air sealing and appliances.

“A lot of people think they build an efficient home,” he said. “But unless you test it and build it right you don’t know.”

Berger said students have their hands on all aspects of the construction process, from foundation to framing to the finishing touches.

“If we don’t do something we see it done and they get to work with the contractors throughout the process,” said Berger.

Saul Cadenas was among those who took part in this year’s project. He described the build as a

positive learning experience. He said prior to the home construction he’d worked on little projects but never imagined building a home.

“It was something new that I really enjoyed doing,” he said. “I learned a lot through the process.”

Cadenas learned how to read blueprints and apply them to a construction process, and the class ultimately inspired him to want to build his own home someday.

“It gave me more motivation to further my career and be able to get to building a home,” he said. “Take that class, it’s definitely worth it.”

In 2013, the district received a \$372,674 Career Technical Education grant and joined forces with the Northeast Oregon Homebuilders Association to train high school students in residential construction through the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilders program. Each year the district uses the sale of the home to fund the home for the upcoming year.

This year’s program only was open to Hermiston High School students due to COVID-19 restrictions, though a traditional year would be open to high school students from schools throughout the Columbia Basin, said Berger.

In addition to construction, Hermiston High students handle the architectural design and landscaping of the homes.

Bryson Bonnifer said it was a “pretty cool” experience to help assemble the framing and other aspects of the house.

“I learned everything really, it was interesting,” he said. “I really enjoyed climbing in the trusses and putting studs in.”

Bonnifer said the experience allowed him to receive a scholarship from Columbia Basin Student Homes, and he will continue to pursue an interest in construction, adding that the experience was unlike any other.

“I just toured the finished house,” Bonnifer said, “and it was pretty incredible.”

EOTEC improvements continue

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

HERMISTON — The pandemic threw a lot at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, but General Manager Al Davis feels confident in its future.

“COVID still kicked us in the gut, but we did a lot better than a lot of other venues,” he said.

Part of that was thanks to EOTEC’s outdoor areas, which were able to hold some events even as indoor conventions and dinners were canceled. The rodeo arena hosted a variety of rodeo-related events, Davis said.

To help draw more of those kind of events, the center recently installed a second arena area using fencing, some movable bleachers and irrigation. The space is on the same footprint that EOTEC’s master plan calls for an indoor arena someday, so the infra-



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
A new rodeo arena sitting between the Farm-City Pro Rodeo grounds and Burns Pavilion is among improvements to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center site during the last year.

structure can be reused after basically placing a building on top of it.

Davis said they’ve already picked up two world series events for roping later in the year that needed two arena areas, and it also has come in handy for other situations.

“When we do barrel rac-

ing, it’s our warmup pen,” he said.

Davis also pointed out other recent improvements, including additional irrigation and new trees.

“We’re greening it up,” he said.

The trees are fast-growing varieties, he said, but people comparing the old

fairgrounds on Orchard Avenue to EOTEC need to remember the big shade trees there came from decades of growth.

Indoors, EOTEC is serving a cooling station for the community this week. Davis said the center recently held its first wedding and first Quinceañera in more than a year, and he is optimistic more of those sorts of events will begin to come back as COVID-19 restrictions lift.

During the pandemic, indoor use of EOTEC was mostly limited to small meetings for groups that wanted to have more social distancing than their building allowed.

“We would have like 10 people in the great room, sitting in opposite corners,” he said.

The Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center is planning to host the Umatilla County Fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo Aug. 11-14.

Man dies from heat stroke in Hermiston trailer park

By BRYCE DOLE
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — The first person in Umatilla County to reportedly die from a heat-related illness amid the record-breaking heat wave was a man who suffered heat stroke in his trailer in Hermiston on June 24, according to Umatilla County Medical Examiner Aimee Rogers.

James Anfeldt, 47, of Spokane, was found by his 6-year-old son who was living with him in a trailer at Panelview RV Park, according to Rogers. The boy thought his father was sleeping all day before he requested help from a neighbor, she said.

The Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office responded to the report of a little boy requesting medical assistance that day, according to sheriff’s Lt. Sterrin Ward. The boy, soaked in sweat, flagged down the deputies at around 6:30 p.m., officials said.

Deputies found Anfeldt

dead on the floor of the trailer, Rogers said. By that time, Anfeldt’s trailer had reached about 130 degrees.

Rogers said he likely died the night before.

Anfeldt had been working as a construction worker in Pendleton and had hypertension, Rogers said. She said she suspects he suffered external hyperthermia due to working long hours in the heat that exacerbated an electrolyte imbalance and contributed to his death.

Temperatures in Hermiston and Pendleton on June 24 were in the 90s, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

Anfeldt was one of 95 heat-related deaths the Oregon State Medical Examiner reported during the heatwave that has scorched the Pacific Northwest the past week. According to the Oregonian/OregonLive, he is the first identified victim of the heatwave in Oregon.

BRIEFS

Two hospitalized after hazmat issue at hotel

HERMISTON — Two people were hospitalized after firefighters and hazardous materials personnel responded Friday, July 2, to a report of five people who fell ill at a motel in Hermiston.

The report said five people were struggling to breathe and were possibly vomiting, according to the incident commander.

Officials have yet to determine what caused the incident, which occurred at Comfort Inn & Suites, but a hazmat team was called to identify a substance, according to a post on the Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 Facebook page.

Two people were transported to Good Shepherd Medical Center but are in “stable condition,” the post said. Officials evaluated multiple other people but determined they didn’t require more treatment.

Dog park coming to Boardman

BOARDMAN — Construction is underway for a dog park in Boardman.

Boardman Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Torie Griggs said the park will be about an acre on Front Street at its intersection with Olsen Road.

The Boardman Community Development Association is paying for the park. The association uses enterprise zone funds to support community improvement initiatives that in the past have included homeowner incentives, wayfinding signs, broadband infrastructure and a disc golf course. The association holds meetings to gather input from community members.

“This has been a community want for probably the last five years,” Griggs said. She said the park will have a parking area that also can be used for the multi-use field next door. It will fea-

ture a “holding area” where dog owners can choose to enter an area for small dogs and an area for large dogs. Amenities will range from water stations for the dogs to activities, such as rings to jump through and platforms.

The park will be open to members of the public, including travelers who may be enticed to stop in Board-

man for the parks.

“Their kids can stretch their legs at the splash park, their dogs can stretch their legs at the dog park and they can check out the SAGE Center,” Griggs said.

The park will open once grass has been planted and grown thick enough, she said.

— EO Media Group

Kids aged 4-7 years weighing 55 lbs or less
24 contestants will be chosen from a blind draw

MUTTON BUSTIN' SIGN-UPS

EOTEC
RODEO MERCANTILE
1705 E Airport Rd
Hermiston, OR 97838
JULY 14, 2021
Sign up - 6:00 pm
Draw - 6:30 pm

Child and parent/guardian must be present for sign-ups and weigh-in.
Insurance documents must be signed.

CONCEALED CARRY PERMIT CLASS

SATURDAY JULY 17TH
Hermiston Ranch & Home
9AM & 12PM CLASSES

Multi-State \$80
Oregon Included No Fee
Oregon Only \$45

MULTI-STATE

Valid 35-States, including Washington

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