



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**A firefighter drops a firework into a launcher while setting up for the Stanfield Independence Day fireworks show Sunday, July 4, 2021.**

**Fireworks:**

Continued from Page A1

“You have to ensure they’re well seated so that you get the maximum height out of the fireworks,” he said.

After the fireworks were loaded, the group ran a piece of tape over the top of each launcher so one can easily see which fireworks have properly fired.

With an hour or so to go until the show, Whelan gathered the crew of roughly 15 firefighters and began giving directions on where fire trucks should be stationed to respond to any potential spot fires.

“My favorite show is one that goes off with no one getting hurt,” Whelan said.

The fire trucks dispersed throughout the area, and Whelan gathered a folding chair, hard hat and earplugs from his truck and set up to watch the display. Whelan counted down the minutes until 10 p.m. before Ramsey hit the button to start the show’s introduction electronically.

As the initial volley of shots came to a close, firefighter Eldon Marcum began lighting the next volley of fireworks by hand. Whelan craned his neck



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**Fireworks explode over the football field in Stanfield in celebration of Independence Day on July 4, 2021.**

to look at the fireworks directly overhead.

Roughly 23 minutes later the display came to a close, the final firework igniting a small brush fire on the hillside

above the field. Fire crews quickly doused the flames as Whelan and Ramsey celebrated.

“It was a success,” said Whelan. “No major fires, and no one got hurt.”



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**Children and parents on Sunday, July 4, 2021, explore the new Funland Playground during the grand opening of the park in Hermiston.**

**Funland:**

Continued from Page A1

in the completion of the project. While some lighting, fencing and sod construction remains, Fetter said it was “exhilarating” to be able to see children on the playground once again.

“I’ve been looking forward to this for two years,” he said. “It’s a great day to celebrate.”

Also to come is a monument and fence recognizing the project’s donors. In addition to a \$752,000 insurance payout from the previous playground, the Funland Fundraising Committee, in partnership with the Hermiston Parks and Recreation Department, set out to raise an additional \$810,000 toward the playground’s \$1.75 million price tag. The city acknowledged the support of the Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions clubs as well as others who helped fundraise for the project.

The new Funland is the third iteration of the playground, originally built in 1996. The first playground burned down in 2001 and its replacement burned down in May 2019 in a suspected case of arson.

Due to Funland’s history



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

**Alex Julian, 11, flies out of the end of a slide Sunday, July 4, 2021, at the grand opening of the new Funland playground in Hermiston.**

with fires, the city of Hermiston has said the new structure was built with fire-resistant materials and features surveillance cameras to further deter vandalism.

Greg Collins explored the playground with his daughter during Sunday’s event. Collins, who said he helped with some of the final construction of the playground, said the playground was unlike anything he’d seen before.

“I think it’s amazing,” he

said. “I have never seen a park on this scale.”

As a parent, Collins said he felt the park offered a variety of engaging play areas and said he would have loved to have something similar as a child. He said he thought the park would become a frequent destination for his family and others in the community.

“The other parks in Hermiston,” Collins said, “are going to be feeling a bit empty.”

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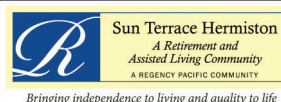
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