

## UPDATES

### Hermiston School District covers supplies

By NICK ROSENBERGER  
STAFF WRITER

HERMISTON — Hermiston parents have enough to worry about as they send their children back to school in a few weeks, but paying for all their school supplies will not be one of them. When students reenter the classroom they will have nearly all their basic supplies covered — from scissors to glue sticks to notebooks.

The only thing Hermiston School District Superintendent Tricia Mooney asks students to bring? A backpack, lunch bag and water bottle.

“As far as the supplies that students need to complete instructional tasks,” Mooney said, “we are going to supply all of those.”

All supplies will remain in the classroom, however, so students still will need some materials at home to complete homework or independent projects.

In addition to providing elementary and middle school supplies, Hermiston School District also will be waiving pay-to-play fees for grades six through 12. Mooney said while she expects the \$85 athletic fee per sport to be discontinued going forward, families still have to buy some equipment.

“We just want to offer this opportunity for our kids and not have that be a barrier at all,” Mooney said.

These two changes, school supplies and athletics fees, come from two separate funding streams, Mooney said. The school district’s general fund will cover the athletics

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Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Members of the Umatilla County Fair Court wave to paradegoers from atop a float Saturday, Aug. 7, 2021, at the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade in Hermiston.

### After 18 months of being cooped up due to the pandemic, Umatilla County Fair paradegoers were ready, excited to be doing things again in person

By NICK ROSENBERGER  
STAFF WRITER

With the honk of a horn and a smattering of applause, the Umatilla County Fair Kick-Off Parade returned for 2021.

Veterans led the procession, which commenced rolling a little after 6:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 7, along Seventh Street, turning onto Hermiston Avenue, looping around city hall and finishing on First Street and Locust Avenue.

Thousands of attendees from all over the county lined the streets, clapping and cheering as participants passed. Some had come a day early to snag a spot for their folding chairs, and many already lined up downtown Hermiston well in advance of the official start on the other side of town.

After a year and a half of being cooped up inside due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many paradegoers were ready and excited to be doing things in person again, despite increasing COVID-19 case numbers from the delta variant.

“It’s a bigger turnout this year, I think

because of COVID last year,” said Linnea Grotz, who set up a chair outside of her friend Pam’s house right on the parade route. “The energy is awesome.”

All along the route children with plastic bags collected candy thrown out by those going past in a multitude of colors, outfits and rides — from horses and carriages to classic cars and beefy trucks burning rubber.

Sour Patch Kids and Tootsie Rolls dotted the clear blue sky as the local youths hollered and tried to snap up the best sweets. Bouncy balls, beach balls and even a water bottle added to the mix of projectiles chucked out windows.

For some, it was a continuation of a family tradition going back generations. For others, such as Jayden Yeigh and his friends Ryan, Abel and Elvis, the parade was a way to kill some time and enjoy the last two weeks of summer vacation before the school year started.

While they were disappointed the Optimus Prime tractor-trailer didn’t show up this year, they still managed to grab some candy and thought the watermelon they’d been given was the best part.

“It’s been great to get out with people,” said Gary Hall, a Navy veteran who said he and his wife, Roma, have been coming to the parade for about 30 years.

Roma mentioned they had gone to larger parades in Honolulu and San Francisco while Gary had been stationed there, but that she liked Hermiston’s better.

“I like to come and watch the people,” Roma said. “You see the funniest outfits and the funniest hairstyles. It’s just fun to watch the people.”

### Fair offers COVID-19 vaccines

Ever since the pandemic canceled last year’s fair, locals have been eager for the upcoming week’s events. And the packed schedule suggests another fun-filled fair.

The fair’s main gates will open to the public at 10 a.m. Aug. 11. The Davis Shows Northwest Carnival opens each day at 2 p.m. and will run until 11 p.m. All the while, the 4-H/FFA competition will occur in different areas of the fair, with the grand champion market animal selection announced at the Burns Pavilion at 6 p.m. The livestock exhibition also will occur in the three barns on the northeast end of the fairgrounds. The Farm City Pro Rodeo begins at 7:45 p.m. at the FCPR Arena. And Stone in Love, a Journey tribute band, caps the night with a performance on the Wildhorse Main Stage at 9 p.m.

In addition, attendees can receive free COVID-19 vaccines at two sites in the event center throughout the event. People who receive the vaccine will have their choice to either receive two \$10 fair food vouchers or a free carnival wristband. There will also be a COVID-19 testing site at the fairground.

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# TRCI inmates get to make a splash



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

Members of an inmate work crew from Two Rivers Correctional Institution help clear flood-damaged material from a home at the Riverview Mobile Home Estates in Pendleton Feb. 12, 2020. Ten adults in custody at the state prison in Umatilla get to participate in an outing the morning of Aug. 20, 2021, at the Hermiston Splash Pad. The events are part of the Oregon Department of Corrections efforts to help inmates break cycles of criminal behavior.

### State corrections uses the Oregon Way to humanize inmates, break criminal cycles

By BRYCE DOLE  
STAFF WRITER

UMATILLA — Ten inmates from the minimum security section of Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla are heading for a day in the sun outside prison walls.

The group gets to visit the Hermiston Splash Park for two hours the morning of Aug. 20, an event in partnership with the city of Hermiston, Hermiston Parks and Recreation and the Hermiston Police Department.

The outing is part of TRCI’s continual implementation of the Oregon Way, the Oregon Department of Correction’s program to

help reintegrate inmates into society by having them spend time with their families beyond prison walls. The effort hopes to break what the state describes as a multi-generational criminal cycle.

“We do have offenders that have engaged in crimes and will not be released from prison because they’re not safe and the community isn’t safe,” said Mandy Perry, assistant superintendent at the prison. “But we have to understand that we have an even larger population that is going out into our communities. They’re becoming our neighbors. They’re becoming our baseball coaches. They’re going to reintegrate back into our society, and we would be failing if we didn’t provide opportunities to rehabilitate them and get them prepared for the community.”

In an email, Hermiston

Police Chief Jason Edmiston said, “I wouldn’t say we are a partner in/with this event TRCI is holding, but we are going to participate.”

He said the prison did not ask for his officers to provide security but “wanted to know if we could make an appearance since many children of inmates are hesitant to engage with police officers proactively and positively.”

“I am aware of the politics in play with this program and my intent was solely to engage the children in a positive atmosphere because law enforcement would love nothing more than to see crime cycles broken,” Edmiston said, adding that his department is lending a hand despite being down six officers. “For officers, there is nothing more disheartening in this profes-

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