

Hermiston event toasts another great year



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Bottles of Sno Road Winery's 2019 cabernet sauvignon line a table Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021, during the Hermiston Downtown District's Cork & Barrel wine and beer tasting event on Festival Street in Hermiston.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

People gather Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021, on Festival Street in Hermiston for the Hermiston Downtown District's Cork & Barrel wine tasting event.

Irrigon Chamber of Commerce seeks big things for small town

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

With the slogan "cultivating community," The Irrigon Chamber of Commerce seeks to build partnerships and improve businesses throughout the town. The chamber hosted an informal meet and greet Sept. 30, to let people know the chamber is there and ready to serve.

Brenda Shockman, Irrigon Chamber of Commerce executive director, said chamber board members had planned a bigger promotion of their services prior to the pandemic. A year ago, they had wanted to have a celebration of their new office.

Also a visitor center, the chamber's office is at 420 NE Main Ave., near the town's city hall.

The chamber has occupied the building since November 2020, Shockman said, but board members did not feel comfortable promoting its presence until recently. Now, as the chamber is settled and they believe the end of the pandemic is in sight, they feel the chamber is ready.

Local government officials and other visitors joined Shockman and chamber board members for the recent event.

Shockman said one of her goals with the chamber is to attract new volunteers to greet visitors. She also said she wants to help Irrigon businesses as they strive to grow. She has many contacts, she said, and she



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

The Irrigon Chamber of Commerce on Sept. 30, 2021, opened its new chamber and visitor center at 420 N.E. Main Ave., Irrigon.

thinks she can be helpful by introducing people to one another.

Irrigon is growing, Shockman said. The coming arrival of Dollar General is one sign of the town's growth. Each new business brings new jobs to town, which excites her.

A former local teacher, with many years in the area, she knows the area well. She grew up in Irrigon and lives there now.

She recognizes people are sleeping on Irrigon. The town does not attract the businesses or the people who overlook it for other Eastern Oregon cities. Many locals, she said, who still know Irrigon as "the place with some fruit stands."

She points to new services, such as the new pavilion, as a sign the town is "growing and growing in the right direction," she said, and is the sort of place people should want to be.

"We're getting more visi-

ble," she said.

She also wanted to add new members to the chamber, perhaps even members who are outside of Irrigon. Many Irrigon residents work and shop at businesses in Hermiston, Umatilla, Boardman and other nearby towns. It makes sense, she believes, for those businesses to join the Irrigon Chamber of Commerce. A new chamber website, www.irrigon-chamber.com, shows people how they can participate in the chamber and in the town. Job opportunities, advertising and local news are just some of the things that can be found on the site.

Nearly 70 members are in the chamber.

They welcome anyone to visit the new office, though visitors should notify the director prior, because there are not yet official business hours. The phone number is 541-571-0599. The email is irrigonchamber@irrigon-chamber.com.



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Irene Miller and family members pose for a photo at her birthday party Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021, at the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center, Hermiston.

Hermiston woman, loved ones celebrate 100 years of life

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Hermiston resident Irene Miller and many of her loved ones celebrated, Saturday, Oct. 9, as Miller neared her 100th birthday. She who would turn 100 two days later, enjoyed a party Saturday at the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center, Hermiston.

In addition to partying with her family, who travelled from locations as far as Colorado, friendly passersby also wished her well. Miller greeted friends for a "drive-by celebration," in which people drove past the senior center, stop briefly and then shouted out a greeting to the new centenarian. This was done to limit potential COVID-19 exposure.

At the party, Miller's loved ones boasted of her health and strong mental capacities.

"I keep telling people I'm an S.O.S — slower, older and smarter," Miller said.

She said she has two secrets to good living: a sense of humor and a positive attitude.

Miller said she had been looking forward to her 100th birthday for about 10 years. It meant a great deal to her, she said, to be in the company of her three daughters, their husbands, their children and grandchildren. Short a couple of close family members, who were not able to be at the party because of a COVID-19 scare, there were more than 20 attendees.

"I love this town," she said, because Hermiston is a good place to raise children. It also has given her many opportunities to be active. At the party, she spoke of her involvement in the hospital auxiliary,

the parent-teacher association and the First Methodist Church. She also was a leader in her daughter's groups — Camp Fire Girls, Bluebirds and 4-H — when they were children.

While Miller listed a few of her accomplishments and community work, other partygoers mentioned her other activities. She, along with her family, sponsored two foreign students. Also, she donated 23 gallons of blood, worked for Habitat for Humanity and was president of the senior center board. She even helped to create the Harkenrider Senior Activity Center, people said.

She remains active, as she enjoys playing cards and bingo with friends, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She also embroiders, crochets and knits, creating hundreds of items that remain treasured objects.

"She is so full of love,

and joyfulness and laughter," said Judy Lovins, one of Miller's three daughters. "We love her so much."

"I love her deeply," said Edna Jean "Tara" Miller, another of Miller's daughters. "She's such an inspiration, just in terms of her sharp mind, her soul, her kindness, her sense of humor and her service."

The "baby" of the three daughters, Kathy Crowley, complimented her mother for being "always there" for her and all of her family and friends.

"I enjoy her humor, her love and her beauty," Crowley said. Her mother has taught her how to be positive, driven and sportsmanlike.

They are not alone in loving Miller, according to the trio of daughters. They said this celebration would have included 150 more people if not for COVID-19. At Miller's last big birthday smash, two years ago, visitors packed the senior center.

As a social person, Miller has loved these large gatherings. She also loves going to Seattle Mariner games and traveling, things she has not been able to do lately. But she has, been able to keep active with some of her favorite things, as she still meets friends for cards.

Ruth Ford, who often plays cards with Miller, was one of the people who drove past the senior center to offer birthday greetings. They have known each other 40 years.

"She's not like a 100-year-old," Ford said, as Miller keeps score and shuffles when they play pinochle and canasta. The centenarian even frequently wins these games.

Miller's loved ones said they are looking forward to her next birthday party.



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Irene Miller, of Hermiston, looks for well-wishers during her 100th birthday party Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021.

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SATURDAY.....English 5:00pm
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SÁBADO.....Inglés 5:00pm
.....Español 7:00pm
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If interested please go to fuzzballrescue.com and fill out an application. If you are not able to adopt, but would like to foster or donate, visit fuzzballrescue.com or you can mail in donations to Fuzz Ball Animal Rescue, PO Box 580, Hermiston, OR 97838