

# Drone technology gets nod with Walchli ag award

Echo middle schoolers also receive recognition

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
Hermiston Herald

The winner of the second John F. Walchli Ag Entrepreneurs Award for 2020-21 is Bob Coleman of Hermiston.

According to a press release from board member Mike Mehren, Coleman has started an agricultural monitoring service using a drone. A 2016 Hermiston High School graduate, Coleman received an agricultural business degree from Oregon State University.

Coleman initially began using the drone as a tool on his parent's farms until neighbors and others heard about its capabilities. Coleman is able to view crops in about 1/10th the time that it would take a person using a vehicle, Mehren said.

The drone also measures details about a crop that



Kellan and Logan Smith, who operate a livestock enterprise, received special recognition during the second annual John F. Walchli Ag Entrepreneurs Award for 2020-21.

Mike Mehren/Contributed Photo

can't be viewed from a vehicle. It's equipped with an infrared lens that observes aspects about crops the

human eye cannot detect.

Also, Coleman developed a program that converts the raw data into

usable information. For instance, the drone is capable of detecting excess water or dry spots, Mehren

said, such as from an individual sprinkler head that's not working. In addition, plant growth and health are monitored as well as weeds, disease or parasites. Fertilizer needs also can be determined.

"The drone is an amazing tool that he has been able to adapt to crop conditions and needs," Mehren said.

Also receiving recognition for their livestock enterprise were Kellan Smith and Logan Smith. The brothers, who attend middle school in Echo, raise sheep, hogs and cattle on their parent's ranch, Mehren said. They show, sell and purchase animals from all across the Pacific Northwest. The boys raise money for their enterprise by selling locker meat, showing and selling their stock and working on their parent's ranch.

"They are amazing kids," Mehren said.

The John F. Walchli Ag Entrepreneurs Award is

designed to provide support to young people under the age of 25 living in west Umatilla County to achieve their goal in the agricultural world. It's based on initiative and drive to succeed rather than academic performance. The winners, Mehren said, can use their award where it is needed, rather than for tuition only.

The award's namesake, John Walchli, died in September 2018. He began his farming career raising watermelons while attending Stanfield High School.

He and wife, Marge, eventually moved to the Hermiston area, where he expanded his farming operation to include potatoes, asparagus, wheat, alfalfa, cattle and bison. Walchli was known for his generosity to friends and neighbors, and giving back to the community.

For more information about the award, contact Mehren at 541-561-4762 or mehrens@cotnet.net.

## BRIEFS

### SHIBA offers help with Medicare enrollment

Each October, open enrollment begins for Medicare Advantage and Part D prescription drug plans. Medicare plans and coverage for prescription drugs change each year, so it is important for Oregonians who are enrolled in Medicare to evaluate their plan options and make changes during open enrollment.

Open enrollment for the 2022 Medicare plan year began Friday, Oct. 15, and continues through Dec. 7.

The Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance program with the Oregon Department of Human Services is available to help Oregonians understand their Medicare options and benefits, provide enrollment guidance and answer questions related to Medicare benefits.

Local SHIBA counselors are available to help and can be found by visiting [www.SHIBA.Oregon.gov](http://www.SHIBA.Oregon.gov) or calling toll-free 800-722-4134. To accommodate COVID-19 safety precautions, SHIBA counselors are providing telephone and limited in-person support.

### County seeks applicants for fair board vacancies

Umatilla County is looking to fill two vacant positions on the Umatilla County Fair Board of Directors.

One position on the board is vacant and another will be vacant soon, according to a press release from Angie McNalley, the fair manager.

All Umatilla County residents are eligible for the positions. An applicant from another county also would be eligible for the director position with the approval of the fair board.

Applications are available at the Umatilla County Human Resources office on 216 S.E. Fourth St., Pendleton. They also are available on the county's website, [www.umatillacounty.net](http://www.umatillacounty.net), or on the fair website, [www.umatillacountyfair.net](http://www.umatillacountyfair.net).

Applications must be

delivered to the Umatilla County Courthouse or to [hr@umatillacounty.net](mailto:hr@umatillacounty.net).

### Benefit to support Mendiola family

An afternoon of family fun will serve as a fundraiser for the Mendiolas. The Hermiston family recently lost two family members.

The benefit event features a cowpie cornhole tournament, pork loin sandwiches and DJ music. In addition, people can watch afternoon games on NFL Red Zone and buy raffle tickets for cornhole LED boards.

The event is Sunday, Oct. 24, 1 p.m. at 33838 E. Spearman Road, Hermiston. Entry is \$20 per person, with teams being drawn for. The first place prize is \$300. For questions, call/text Greg at 541-969-0677.

### Library offers pumpkin decorating kits

The Hermiston Public Library has the perfect Halloween activity for families — pumpkin decorating.

People are invited to stop by the library to pick up a free Take N Go pumpkin decorating kit. While supplies last, they will be available beginning Tuesday, Oct. 26.

Located at 235 E. Gladys Ave., the library is open Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday/Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 541-567-2882.

### American Legion & Auxiliary meet monthly

American Legion & Auxiliary, Hermiston Post 37 meets the first Monday of each month, 7 p.m. at Agape House, 500 W. Harper Road, Hermiston. The next meeting is Nov. 1. A light refreshment is provided.

All veterans are welcome. The organization pays for first-year dues for new veteran members who join the American Legion Post. The same arrangement

is offered to all new members of the Hermiston American Legion Auxiliary Unit.

For more information, call 541-720-1815 or 541-571-5816.

### Morrow County Planning Commission seeks volunteers

Morrow County needs people to represent the Boardman and Ione area on the Morrow County Planning Commission.

Volunteers are appointed to a four-year term ending December 2025. At the end of the term, there is the option for reappointment for another four-year term.

The planning commission meets once each month with the option of in-person or remote participation with video technology. The commission holds hearings on a variety of land use applications. It also reviews changes to the county's subdivision and zoning ordinances and the

comprehensive plan. Additionally, the commission guides staff on other long-range planning projects related to land use.

"Being part of the planning commission is a unique opportunity to learn about Oregon's Land Use Planning Program and influence how it is implemented in Morrow County," according to a press release from the county.

For more information, visit [www.co.morrow.or.us](http://www.co.morrow.or.us), or call planning staff at 541-

922-4624. To apply, submit a letter of interest to the Morrow County Planning Department, P.O. Box 40, Irrigon, OR 97844, or by email to [gnairns@co.morrow.or.us](mailto:gnairns@co.morrow.or.us) by noon Dec. 3.

The next commission meeting is Tuesday, Oct. 26, 7 p.m., in the Riverfront Center, Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman. Zoom meeting information is available on the commission's meeting agenda on the website.

— EO Media Group

# \$60,000

## GEMS OF THE JUNGLE

SPIN TO WIN UP TO

### \$6,000 CASH OR FREEPLAY

DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES! FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS, 7-10pm | SUNDAYS, 4-9pm

## GRAND PRIZE DRAWING SUNDAY, OCTOBER 31, 9pm

# \$40,000

## BINGO

OCTOBER 23-24

### \$1,000 Awarded Per Game

Get your tickets online at [wildhorseresort.com](http://wildhorseresort.com)

**BUY-IN \$200**  
For Both Saturday and Sunday

Limited seats available, social distancing guidelines in effect. Buy-in at the door for \$125 only if seats are available.

## HOT SEATS AND TREATS

Win up to

### \$500 FreePlay & Candy Treats!

Two Winners Every 30 Minutes!

Sunday, October 31, 10pm-Midnight

CASINO • HOTEL • GOLF • CINEPLEX • RV  
MUSEUM • DINING • TRAVEL PLAZA • FUNPLEX

800.654.9453 • PENDLETON, OR • I-84, EXIT 21  
[wildhorseresort.com](http://wildhorseresort.com) • Owned and operated by CTUIR

Management reserves all rights to alter, suspend or withdraw promotions/offers at any time.



**WILDHORSE**  
RESORT & CASINO

03860.TT.10.21



## PRIORITIES

A hundred years from now it will not matter what My bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove... but the world may be different because I was important in the Life of a Child.