

Hermiston FFA plans trip to national competition

Eighteen students go to Indianapolis

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Three teams of Hermiston High School FFA students are leaving next week to compete in the 94th National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis.

Sandy McKay, Hermiston High School agricultural science teacher and FFA advisor, is in his second year with FFA. He said the school's FFA is able to send youths to national competition every two or three years. "It's no small feat," he said.

To qualify for nationals, students must get through district competition, state competition and regional competition. For Hermiston students, reaching Nationals meant going head to head with students from states throughout the American west.

Hermiston is sending three teams. Two of those teams won in regionals and will advance in Indianapolis. In all, 18 students will travel to Naptown.

The Hermiston teams are

"advanced" teams — sophomores, juniors and seniors. Of the 29 categories in FFA, these students are competing in "career and leadership events." There are different rules and goals for these events, helping students with job skills.

The first team is the "nursery/landscape team," and students in this team placed fifth in regionals.

"It's still a great accomplishment," McKay said, though the team will not advance. They were, technically, in a national round by virtue of this year's unusual situation.

Another team is "agricultural issues," a seven-person team that puts on a skit on an ag issue. The topic is an issue at the forefront of technology — vertical farming.

In traditional farming, people grow crops outdoors in fields, but vertical farming is growing crops indoors, often in unused factory buildings. Farmers use hydroponics to grow crops indoors. Grow lights and artificial irrigation are needed in vertical farming.

Another Hermiston team



Kylie Temple/Contributed Photo

From left, Hector Leal, Alexis Leathers, Cidney Estes, Grant Hills, Kylie Temple, Gretchen Barton, Abigail Conner and Elizabeth Doherty, members of Hermiston High School's FFA group, pose for a photo ahead of next week's National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis.

will take the stage at nationals to debate the pros and cons of switching to vertical farming.

The third team, in the "agricultural communications" category is a four-person finals-qualified team. Students in this competition put themselves into the role of consultants and develop a written media plan in

front of a panel of judges. They will have to convince judges to hire them for their services.

Kylie Temple, a 16-year-old junior, is one of the students planning on going to nationals.

"I'm beyond excited," she said.

Though she has been in the FFA since her freshman

year, 2021 is her first year traveling to the big competition. COVID-19 ended her dreams of this competition previously, as she had qualified but was not able to go.

She has heard many stories of the competition and said she would like to talk to people from all over the U.S.

She is a little nervous,

she said, but she is confident she will do well at nationals and even gain useful experience. Temple said she wants to have a career in agriculture business and marketing.

"I cannot ever see myself leaving the agricultural industry," she said. Her trip to nationals is one step toward further work in that industry.

DEQ seeks comments on Echo water quality permit

Hermiston Herald

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is seeking public comment on the city of Echo's proposal for a new water quality permit for its wastewater treatment facility.

The state environmental agency issued the notice Monday, Oct. 18. According to the document, DEQ intends to issue Echo a new water quality permit so it can manage domestic wastewater from the community in evaporative lagoons and discharge seasonally to the Stan-

field wastewater treatment plant. Part of the review process is an opportunity for public comment.

Echo operates a wastewater treatment facility at 33245 Bowman Road that consists of three wastewater stabilization lagoons undergoing a solids removal and upgrade project to add aeration. The city discharges its treated wastewater to the Umatilla River under a national pollution permit.

The city needs a new Water Pollution Control Facilities permit because once the upgrades are

complete, the city will send winter discharge via pressurized pipeline to the city of Stanfield under an agreement between the two cities.

Echo will terminate the existing wastewater permit and cease direct discharge to the Umatilla River. The facility is designed to serve a population of 885 people and receives domestic wastewater from residential sources and commercial establishments.

The DEQ last inspected Echo's facility on Aug. 24, via virtual inspection and issued a warning letter for

failure to submit several required reports on time.

The proposed permit prohibits discharge to waters of the state and requires the city to have a DEQ certified operator supervise wastewater treatment and disposal operations.

According to the notice, the DEQ will hold a public hearing if it receives a written request for one within 14 days of mailing or posting the public notice from at least 10 people or from an organization representing at least 10 people.

The department will consider and respond to all comments received and may modify the proposed permit based on comments. DEQ gives equal weight to written and oral comments.

You may submit your comments by mail, fax or email to:

Patty Isaak
Oregon DEQ
800 S.E. Emigrant Ave.,
Suite 330
Pendleton, OR 97801
Fax: 541-278-0168
Email: patty.isaak@deq.state.or.us
All comments are due

Nov. 23 by 5 p.m. Comments also become part of the public record.

To view information about this proposed permit, including the application, permit fact sheet and underlying documents, contact Isaak, a DEQ permit coordinator, to make an appointment to review the documents in person.

The DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English. Call the DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us for more information.

State reports 14 workplace outbreaks in Umatilla, Morrow counties, marking second week of decline

EO Media Group

PENDLETON — Fourteen workplaces in Umatilla and Morrow counties reported outbreaks in the Oregon Health Authority's most recent weekly report.

It was the second straight week where workplace outbreaks declined in the county as infection is slowing slightly across the region and state. Most of the facilities reported a few extra cases, and several reported no changes

since last week's report.

The state publishes an active outbreak in nursing homes if the facility reports more than three cases. The outbreak is considered resolved if no new cases are reported within 28 days of the last case. The local assisted living facilities with COVID-19 outbreaks are:

- Regency Hermiston Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, Hermiston, 33 cases and one death since July 15.

- Willowbrooke Terrace, Pendleton, 21 cases and one death since July 30.

- Cascade Valley Assisted Living & Memory Care, Milton-Freewater, nine cases since Sept. 2.

- Ashley Manor — Sage, Umatilla, 12 cases since Sept. 27.

- Juniper House, Pendleton, eight cases since Oct. 1.

The state publishes a workplace outbreak when five or more cases are

reported at a facility with 30 or more workers. An outbreak is considered resolved if no new cases are reported within 28 days of the last case.

- Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, 62 cases since July 21.

- Walmart Distribution Center, Hermiston, 51

cases since April 26.

- Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution, Pendleton, 28 cases since July 12.

- Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla, 23 cases since July 15.

- CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, 15 cases since Aug. 19.

- First Coast Security, Hermiston, 11 cases since Sept. 16.

- Lamb Weston Packing Center, Boardman, 11 cases since Aug. 18.

- Union Pacific Railroad, Stanfield, 10 cases since Sept. 20.

- JVB Dairy, Ione, eight cases since Sept. 18.

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