



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Brandon Artz, the director of the Hermiston Parks and Recreation Department, moves some of his possessions into his new office Monday, Nov. 15, 2021.

Familiar face accepts Parks and Rec director job

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

The new Hermiston Parks and Recreation director did not have far to move his possessions from his old office to his new one next door. On Monday, Nov. 15, Brandon Artz took a step up from his role as interim director to enjoy his first day as the regular director.

Artz had been the interim director for more than two months, as he covered for Larry Fetter, who left the parks director position when he recently retired.

"I'm excited to get started," he said.

Artz, who said he expected an official announcement later in the day, explained Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith and a hiring panel made their decision late last week. Smith affirmed the new hire in a memo to city employees.

"I feel confident that he will do a very good job and be an asset to the city for a long time," the memo states. A press release on Nov.

15 quotes the city manager's belief in Artz's "vision, energy and leadership" and describes him as "a major asset to the community."

Artz said the first "big project" for him is a groundbreaking for the Teen Adventure Park, a skate park across from Hermiston's police and fire station. He also was working on placing a large Christmas tree in downtown Hermiston for the holidays.

Artz is a graduate of the University of Idaho, he obtained a bachelor's of arts in exercise science and health and a master's degree in movement and leisure sciences. While studying for these degrees, he played football and then worked as a U of I assistant coach. He followed up this experience with more than two years of work as a recreation coordinator in McMinnville. Other work includes two years as a recreation specialist in Vancouver, Washington.

He said his experience in different positions has given

him insights into different sides to which he must be attuned. As a parks and rec director, he serves athletes and nonathletes, alike, he said, and he expressed the feeling that he could do this.

He came to Hermiston to work as the recreation supervisor, under Fetter. Working for more than four years in the department, Artz obtained mentorship from the previous director as Fetter approached retirement, Artz said.

"I got to oversee all of the recreation here in the department, and then also see what (Fetter) was doing in park development on the higher end of things," he said. "It got me ready for this position. He retired in September, and now we're off to the races."

According to the city's press release on Artz's new role, Hermiston has "15 parks that cover more than 100 acres, 10 miles of trails, and a community center that hosts more than 200,000 event and program participants annually."

Liberty Quartet performs at Hermiston Nazarene Church



Hermiston Church of the Nazarene/Contributed Photo

Paul W. Ellis, Will Arasmith, Philip Batton and Royce Mitchell of the Liberty Quartet perform Sunday evening, Nov. 14, 2021, at Hermiston Nazarene Church, 1520 W. Orchard Ave.

Umatilla Chamber of Commerce hires new executive director

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Annette Greiner is the new executive director for the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center. She started Nov. 1, after a job interview from the chamber board.

Greiner is an Oregon State University graduate with a bachelor's degree in agricultural business management and resource economics. A recent chamber press release stated she comes from "a long lineage of family-owned farms and ranches in Eastern Oregon." Her recent employment includes work at Two Rivers Correctional Institution, she said, and she has a background in healthcare management.

"I was just waiting for the right opportunity, and here I am," she said of her new position at the chamber.

Now the director, she said her first plan is to become acquainted with local business people and ask people, face-to-face, what they need and what she can help with. For instance, she can direct people toward city and county grant opportunities, she said.

A self-described on-and-off resident of the Umatilla/Hermiston area for the last 25 years, Greiner said she has seen a lot of local change. Umatilla's Main Street, in particular, has experienced great growth, she said.

"Not only with their



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Annette Greiner, the new executive director for the Umatilla Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center, is pictured Friday Nov. 12, 2021.

sidewalks and light poles, but with all the new businesses in town," she said. "I just hope, down the line, there can be more diverse commerce."

She said she envisions a future for Umatilla in which the town's residents can do more of their shopping close to home.

"It's nice when you can go downtown and get the things that you need, from local folks," she said.

What's more, she said, she would like to help make Umatilla a destination for people out of town. She said she wants outsiders to know, "Umatilla is not just a county — it's a town."

Mark Ribich, chamber board president, said he is pleased with Greiner and her hiring. He said she has

strong organizational skills that will help the chamber and local businesses "get to a better place."

As the executive director, Greiner will manage the chamber and oversee the visitor center, Ribich said, and her primary responsibilities will be offering support to member businesses, providing them with resources they need.

The chamber, Ribich said, will be transitioning into something a bit different, where it will be focusing on something other than distributing masks, hand sanitizer and new guidelines related to the pandemic. It will be coordinating other activities, and he said he thinks Greiner is the right person for the job.

Umatilla County restaurants can apply for some pandemic relief

Hermiston Herald

Restaurants in Umatilla County enduring the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic can apply for some financial help.

Gail Nelson, Umatilla County economic development and tourism coordinator, announced in a press release her department has established the COVID-19 Restaurant Relief Grant to provide one-time, short-term financial support to restaurants impacted by the pandemic.

These funds are CARES Act funds passed down from the federal government to the state of Oregon and now to Umatilla County to help restaurants.

"The purpose of these grants is to provide some additional relief to restaurants that were forced to cease indoor operations and

provide take-out or outdoor seating only during the 'Extreme' category ranking period," Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer stated in the press release.

Oregon has passed along \$100,000 to Umatilla County to disburse to restaurants in grants of \$5,000. Applications are available now, and the window to apply closes Nov. 29 at 9 a.m.

"Grant recipients will be selected through lottery drawing," according to the press release. "Checks processed and distributed before the end of the calendar year."

To qualify for the grant, a restaurant must have its headquarters in Umatilla County and operating within the county; employ 25 or fewer full time equivalent employees; and must have been in business and operating prior to March 1, 2020.

The county will accept only one application per business entity, and non-profit organizations are not eligible.

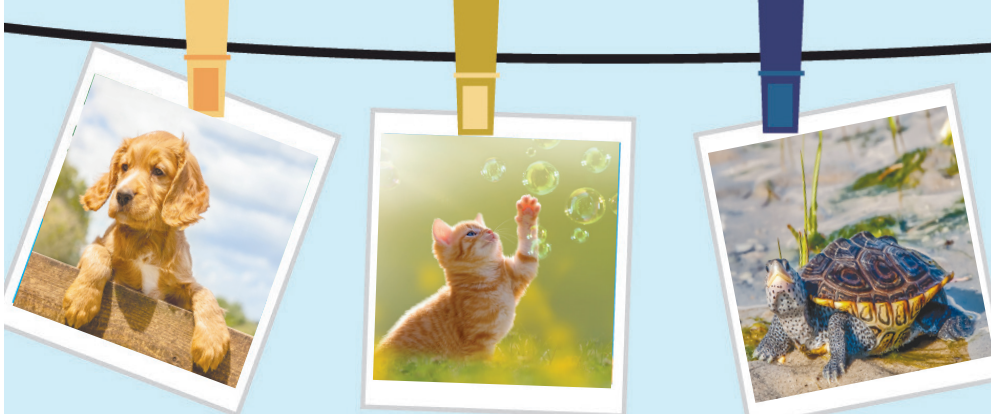
To apply, go to www.umatillacounty.net/grants and click on the Restaurant Relief Grant button on the website's home page. Complete and submit the application online. If you do not have computer access, you can pick up a paper application at each community's city hall and return the completed application to that city hall by the Nov. 29 deadline.

The drawing for the grants will be on Nov. 30.

The county will notify successful grant applicants via email and ask them to submit a completed W9 form before mailing grant award checks.

Email questions about the program to grants@umatillacounty.net.

Cutest Adopted or Rescue Pet photo contest



Submit your photos and be entered for your chance to win a \$30 gift certificate to a local restaurant of your choice

View Rules and Prize information at hermistonherald.com/pet_contest

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