

Veterans:

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An honor guard member for American Legion Post 37, Hermiston, Hill said he is not accustomed to talking about his Army days.

"It was a million-dollar experience," he said, "but I'd hate to have to spend a million dollars to do it again."

Artz said he hopes next year's event can include more people. Pre-pandemic, the Veterans Day Breakfast did not try to limit the number of attendees, he said.

Patriotism on parade

The Echo School District organized the Veterans Day Parade & Assembly in downtown Echo, beginning with a parade in the morning and an afternoon assembly honoring former servicemen and women.

While waiting for the parade to pass, Melissa Doherty spoke of the importance of the holiday and reflected on her own military service.

Doherty, the Hermiston High School dean of students, was in the U.S. Army from 1997 to 2003, she said. She was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the Echo school assembly Thursday, Nov. 11. She said she planned to speak to children about the reasons for joining the military, including her own motivations. This happened already, why is it written as a future plan?

Doherty said she joined the Army for the money could earn for college. A person could make \$75,000 a year for college, she said, which allowed her to obtain a master's degree. But military service also comes with less tangible benefits, she said, such as learning senses of duty and honor.

As she watched the procession, other people stood alongside the parade route, many cheering the participants.

Shannon Tacy, Echo teacher and FFA advisor, marched with her students, whom she called an "excellent group of patriots." She said she was not a veteran, but she expressed she was indebted to service people.

John Cox, of Echo, also was in the parade. Cox, who has family members who served in the Vietnam War and World War II, was dressed as Santa Claus and waved a United States flag.

"This is a nice way for us to express our appreciation," he said, as he walked the parade route.

Raymon Smith, Echo School District superintendent, who has been with the district for 11 years, said approximately 300 students, the entirety of the district's children, were involved in the parade. He said the day's events were intended to instruct children.

In addition to the parade, service members from each branch of the military were scheduled to appear at schools to talk to children. Students were encouraged to welcome family mem-



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Melissa Doherty, a former captain in the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps, speaks Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021, at the Echo School's Veterans Day assembly.



Kathy Aney/Hermiston Herald

Russell "Spike" Piersol, a member of the American Legion, places a POW MIA flag at the start of a Veterans Day breakfast on Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021, at the Hermiston Community Center.

bers to the event.

Smith said he told students of his father, who served in the Vietnam War and was disrespected upon his return to America.

"It's important for kids to remember that," he said. "That's why we have our kids here today, not just use it as a day off of school but to use it as an opportunity to educate kids about the importance and history of service in this country."

Celebrating in Pendleton

Pendleton High School students lined the fields outside their school with dozens of United States flags on Wednesday, Nov. 10, in a gesture of appreciation and support for local veterans.

Roughly a dozen leadership students took part in the activity celebrating Veterans Day. They walked along the roads, staking the small flags into the ground while laughing and chatting on the clear, sunny fall afternoon.

This was one of several local Veterans Day events to recognize those who served.

Students with family members who served in the armed forces shared what the federal holiday means to them. Sauren Garton, a senior at the high school, said she felt it was important to recognize the people who fought for the country.

"I'm about as American as they get," Sauren

Garton, a senior at the high school said. "I think it's really important that kids get reminded that we didn't get all these things for free."

Curt Thompson, assistant principal at Pendleton High School, said placing the flags instills in students a sense of pride in their country after years of political division.

"Things like this are a good reminder to all of us that we're all part of the same country and we need to be working together and support each other," Thompson said.

Sam Jennings, a senior leadership student and track athlete, said serving in the armed forces is an important part of his family. He struggles to count how many of his family members have served, but estimates there are at least six.

"It's nice to have a day for them, to honor their willingness to serve," Jennings said. "They deserve it."

Jennings said the flags this year are a step-up from efforts the school has made in the past to show support. He said he gladly would have dug trenches and staked 10-foot flags, "but this is just as good."

Rylee Demianew said the flags are a physical reminder for students leaving school that Veterans Day isn't simply a day off. To her, it's a day to show veterans the students are thinking of them.

during Thanksgiving and similar holidays where supplies go fast as the holiday approaches and the deadline for putting the turkey in the oven looms.

For now, the store is well stocked for the upcoming feast, according to Shaffer.

"It was really easy to get what you needed before all this stuff happened and before — I call it a logistical nightmare, but you know all the logistic issues that everyone is experiencing — before that we'd have pretty big item counts, big ads so people could come in and get a good deal on whatever they need for dinner and stuff like that, so it has changed," Shaffer said. "If you commit to something like we did this year — if you have to reorder it, that's where you may run into an issue because everybody else is reordering, especially for the season."

Shaffer said he has had to order months in advance for key items, especially

Supply chain issues have cropped up from a myriad of pandemic-related minutiae, such as labor and raw material shortages — including dock workers and truck drivers — to low production yields and increased costs of goods as shipping costs skyrocket due to increases in fuel and container prices.

That means when orders finally arrive at grocery stores, the contents might be less than what was ordered, or the order itself would be delayed.

"It's hard to plan around, I'll put it to you that way," Shaffer said.

Those issues exacerbated an already vulnerable system. Still, the grocery stores remain optimistic about the upcoming holiday.

"It's not like it was last year," Huffman said. "I think it will be good. I think everything will be good."

Erick Peterson contributed to this story.



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Brodie Messenger, volunteer, stands at the door of the Hermiston Warming Station on Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021.

Warming:

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are usually people who are older and more susceptible to COVID-19. And there goes your workforce."

She said CAPECO "could not build a year-round shelter system on a volunteer base."

The Pendleton Warming Station faces the same problem as its Hermiston counterpart. Dwight Johnson, executive director of Neighbor 2 Neighbor, the nonprofit that operates the station, said it will not open this year. Instead, the Pendleton Warming Station will offer motel vouchers to people in need as the weather grows colder.

Johnson cited COVID-19 concerns and volunteer shortage for not opening the congregate shelter.

He said many of his volunteers are older people who are not volunteering now because of the pandemic. Right now, he has 100 volunteers, 20-25 active. Pre-pandemic, he had 40-45 active volunteers, which still made operation "challenging."

A volunteer's perspective

Messenger said, when he started volunteering, he was looking for a way to help his community.

"I saw it on Facebook, where they needed volunteers, and I had time, so I tried it out and actually really enjoyed it," he said.

His favorite thing about his work is listening to the stories of the station's guests. Through their stories, the guests have given him new perspective on life, he said. Where some people may see them as dangerous, Messenger expressed he has come to learn otherwise. He said he has gained empathy and understanding, as he has discovered that people are more or less the same, homeless or otherwise.

He said it is common

CONTACT INFORMATION

Anyone who would like to volunteer to the Hermiston Warming Station can email hws1075@gmail.com for more information.

for volunteers to visit with guests, as also they distribute toiletries, food and other resources. Volunteers may also launder clothes.

A guest's experience

Messenger said the Hermiston Warming Station opens at 7:30 p.m. Guests have to ring the doorbell, and a volunteer lets them in. From there, guests fill out paperwork, if it is their first visit, and they listen to a reading of the house rules, he said.

They pick their bedding, set up their bed and store their possessions in a tote, he said. Guests then may use the bathroom and laundry machines to clean, and they can get something to eat from the kitchen, he said.

There is room in the station for sleeping — one men's room, one women's room and a third room for a family or overflow. The men's room can fit eight men and the women's room can fit four, Messenger said and the intake area has space for further overflow, if needed. The maximum occupancy is 24, but it would be uncomfortable for more than 18 guests to spend the night, Messenger said.

Messenger said the station on a typical night serves 11 guests. He said he remembers one time in which the station was too crowded for a guest. Two years ago, he said, one person had to be turned away.

False perceptions play a role

The Hermiston Warming Station is experiencing not only a shortage of volunteers but of funds. Grants and donations cover the station's expenses. Donations, though, are low, he said, but he said he was not sure the reason.

Roads:

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to Portland-area projects, including the Interstate 5 widening in the Rose Quarter and a new Columbia River crossing shortly after the infrastructure bill passed through Congress.

Morgan said cities such as Hermiston and Pendleton are in a "federal grant donut hole;" too big to qualify for infrastructure loans under the U.S. Department of Agriculture but too small to compete with large cities applying for high-dollar grants.

And while ODOT's work with surface roads makes it a natural fit to distribute federal funds for road work, Morgan said he didn't know how funds would be distributed for other key infrastructure pieces, such as under-

ground utilities.

"There's no ODOT equivalent for drinking water," he said.

Morgan said Hermiston has a number of infrastructure projects it could fund with additional federal money, including the Gettman Road/Railway Alternative Transportation Enhancement, or GRATE project, which aims to connect Highway 395 and Highway 207 by replacing a bridge, building a new road, widening existing road and enhancing a railroad crossing. The total cost of the project is roughly \$8.6 million, but it's broken out into four phases so the city doesn't need to work on it all at once.

In a newsletter to public officials, Umatilla County Commissioner George Murdock also sounded a note of caution. While mentioning Umatilla County's

public works director was optimistic the infrastructure bill could help locally with bridges and surface transportation, Murdock was concerned some of the bill's allocations were too large for a county the size of Umatilla and smaller communities might have trouble matching grant program created through the bill.

And with the bill covering other types of infrastructure, including public transportation, broadband internet and wildfire management, Murdock said the county would need to wait to see how the bill would apply locally.

"In short, we have learned it will be good for Umatilla County, but comparing over half a billion dollars in new investments with what we are likely to see in Oregon and Umatilla County is very likely an illusion," he wrote.

Markets:

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residents in frontier towns, including John Day or Prairie City, might have to travel further to fill their shopping cart for the upcoming holiday. Grocery stores report that while ordering has been a challenge, the staples for a Thanksgiving feast have yet to cause any concerns.

"Before, I was able to buy pallets of certain things like condensed milk — when it comes to those really big staples, a lot of it is on an allocation that you can't buy big amounts like that because they wouldn't be able to service everybody," said Mike Shaffer, operations manager for Chester's Market in John Day. "As far as staples go, we're sitting pretty good."

Shaffer said he has had to order months in advance for key items, especially

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