

Two join field for Umatilla County Commission

By ANTONIO SIERRA
Hermiston Herald

Two conservative activists have further expanded the field for the two seats on the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners up for election in May.

HollyJo Beers is making another run at county office by challenging incumbent Position 2 Commissioner John Shafer, who is running for a second term.

Beers lists “not employed” under her occupation, but has been associated with the Oregon Three Percenters, a right-wing



Beers Bower Timmons

group. She’s also been involved in anti-COVID-19 lockdown and vaccine mandate protests among other demonstrations. A former Pilot Rock city councilor who also lived in Milton-Freewater, Beers now

resides in Pendleton, according to her filing paperwork.

The other new candidate is Jesse Bonifer, an Athena business owner and city councilor running for the open Position 1 seat on the Board of Commissioners. Like Beers, Bonifer has been involved in the Three Percenters and helped organize a campaign to pass the Second Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance in 2020.

Commissioner George Murdock holds the Position 1 seat. He is retiring from the board, leaving the seat open. Bonifer joins Susan Bower, the owner of Eastern Ore-

gon Business Source in Pendleton, Cindy Timmons, the co-owner of Marv’s Glass Shop in Milton-Freewater, and Alvin Young, the manager of Elmer’s Irrigation in Hermiston, as a part of the field vying for the seat.

If the Position 2 race stays at just two candidates, Shafer and Beers won’t be on the ballot until the Nov. 8 general election. With the candidate pool for Position 1 now at four, all candidates will be listed on the ballot for the May 17 primary election. Regardless of the results, the top two-vote getters advance to a run-off during the general election.



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

A roadside sign advertises Hermiston’s temporary daytime shelter Jan. 14, 2022, at the former Sears location along Highway 395 in Hermiston.

Hermiston shop, lean-to burn

Hermiston Herald

A fire early Friday, Jan. 28, 2022, burned a metal shop and lean-to in Hermiston.

Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 responded to the fire on Hornsby Lane at 4:37 a.m., according to the district’s post on its Facebook page. Engine 22 arrived first, and found fire burning a 30-foot by 30-foot metal shop and flames totally engulfing a 12-foot by 30-foot lean-to.

Crews knocked down the fire in the lean-to and made entry into the shop to extinguish the fire there.

The Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District and Echo Fire Department provided an engine and a water tender. There were no injuries, Fire District 1 reported, and the cause of the fire is under investigation.



Umatilla County Fire District No. 1/Contributed Photo

Firefighters early Friday, Jan. 28, 2022, handle a fire in a metal shop and a lean-to on Hornsby Lane, Hermiston.

Echo School District denies former coach’s discrimination allegations

By PHIL WRIGHT
Hermiston Herald

The Echo School district has denied it discriminated against the former coach of the Echo High School boys basketball team when he didn’t get the job to coach the girls basketball team.

Aaron Noisey in early December filed a lawsuit in Umatilla County Circuit Court alleging the district did not hire him as the girl’s coach because of his gender. He is seeking \$203,391 — \$2,391 in economic damages and noneconomic dam-

ages of at least \$200,000.

The district denied Noisey’s allegations in a response Jan. 11.

“Except as specifically admitted herein, defendant denies each and every other allegation, matter and thing set forth in plaintiff’s complaint, and the whole thereof,” according to the court filing.

The district admitted it interviewed candidates in 2020 for the position of head coach of the girls’ basketball team and Noisey did not get the job.

Noisey in his lawsuit

claimed the district wanted a female coach for the girl’s team. The district in its response reported it received a complaint from Noisey regarding the hiring process, conducted an investigation and found no gender discrimination in that process.

Following the 2020-21 school year, Noisey resigned and took a job as the head coach of the boys basketball team for the Nixyaawii Community School.

State court records show the case next has a conference call Feb. 10 for the attorneys.

COVID-19 claims lives of three more Umatilla County residents

Hermiston Herald

Umatilla County since Wednesday, Jan. 26, added four more fatalities to its COVID-19 death count, bringing the total to 194.

Umatilla County Public Health on Jan. 31 reported the latest death is a 56-year-old man who tested positive on Jan. 13 and died Jan. 27 at Riverbend Medical Center, Eugene.

Last week, the county health department reported

three deaths: a 69-year-old woman who tested positive on Dec. 6 and died Dec. 13 at Oregon Health & Science University, Portland; a 66-year-old man who tested positive on Nov. 3 and died Dec. 13 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston; and a 92-year-old man who tested positive on Jan. 21 and died the same day at Providence St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla.

The county on Jan. 31 also reported 267 new cases,

increasing the total number of cases for the county to 20,054 since the start of the pandemic.

Morrow County added 30 cases to its total Jan. 31, according to the Oregon Health Authority, bringing its total to 2,826, including 26 deaths.

Statewide, the total number of cases as of Jan. 28 was 650,652 according to the Oregon Health Authority, and the total number of lives lost to the disease in Oregon was 6,086.

IN FROM THE COLD

Community comes together for daytime warming station

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Throughout January, area businesses, government and private citizens came together to fill a need in their community. Thanks to their efforts, homeless people received shelter during hours when there was not another place for them to go.

They recognized a need exists that had not been covered by the Hermiston Warming Station, which is open through the night. Guests check in at the little blue building at 1075 S. Highway 395 at 7:30 p.m., and they stay through the night. At 6:30 a.m., they have to leave.

Guests at the station express gratitude for the shelter and for the volunteers for their work. However, come closing time, they were out in the cold. This past winter, when temperatures dropped below freezing, existence became uncomfortable, they said.

Seeing this, multiple community-minded people stepped up to help to open and maintain a daytime warming shelter in Hermiston.

The warming shelter opened Jan. 3 at the former Sears building on Highway 395 in Hermiston. Cots, food and board games were available to people in need. At first, it was open during hours when the Hermiston Warming Station was closed. Some people traveled from one station to the other, avoiding the cold.

In recent weeks, the shelter has been open from 6:30 a.m. to noon, daily. Organizers said they lacked enough volunteers to keep it open all day. It closed for good at the end of January.

Organizers reported 37 individuals stayed at the shelter during January, and many of them stayed multiple days.

Kris Barnum was



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

A sign marks the entrance to a temporary daytime shelter Jan. 14, 2022, on the door of the former Sears building on Highway 395 in Hermiston.

among the people who helped make the shelter possible. She credited multiple people in the community for their work. Cathy Lloyd, of Stepping Stones, also thanked people for their help.

“We’ve really appreciated all of the people, the volunteers who have given hours and the people who have donated supplies, food and drink,” Lloyd said. “And the cities who have come through with volunteers, they’ve been great. People have been very positive and helpful.”

Barnum and Lloyd said Mike Atkinson, of Atkinson Staffing, was important to the station’s existence because he provided the building. He was planning renovations for the structure, but had no other use for it during January. In addition, he offered electricity and supplies.

Others helped, too. Umatilla and Hermiston city governments provided staffing during the early days of the daytime warming station. And the city of Umatilla covered the costs of cab service to the shelter.

The Hermiston Warm-

ing Station provided cots, Joe Sharon and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints sent volunteers, local businesses and individuals sent food. This was a group effort, according to Lloyd.

“People were really good about stepping up,” she said.

Two people who stepped up recently were at the daytime warming station and spoke of their time there. Michelle Sanders and Lua Seteni both were volunteers. Ready to provide for needy people, they sat at tables that were filled with food and supplies.

“I have a friend who does it, and they said they didn’t have enough people,” Sanders said.

This being the case, she decided she would help. A member of the LDS church, she said she is responsible to assist other people.

Seteni said she also is a member of the church, and she said she feels aiding others is something she should do.

“It means a lot,” she said, “to serve other people.”

ALIVE & WELL

Feel Great, Live it Up! PPP

541-567-0272

2150 N. First St., Hermiston

Specials: Jan.30-Feb.4

10% OFF Bearfoots Figurines

20% OFF Davinci Probiotic, 90 Chewable Tablets

20% OFF Respiratory Support & Defense (600 mg NAC)

\$1 PINEAPPLE CHEESECAKE SMOOTHIE

DELI SPECIAL \$7.95

Guac-A-Mole w/12 oz soup

CALL AHEAD AND USE OUR DRIVE-THRU!

WE ARE OPEN TO SERVE YOUR HEALTH NEEDS • WATCH FOR OUR IN STORE SPECIALS • FACE SHIELDS & MASKS \$5-\$7

Find it all online

...
hermistonherald.com

CONCEALED CARRY PERMIT CLASS

SATURDAY
FEBRUARY 19TH

Hermiston Ranch & Home

9AM CLASS

Multi-State \$80
Oregon Included No Fee

Oregon Only \$45

MULTI-STATE

Valid 35-States, including Washington

Shaun Curtain 360-921-2071

or email: ShaunCurtain@gmail.com | www.ShaunCurtain.com