



Hermiston's woman and man of 2021 named

By PHIL WRIGHT
Hermiston Herald

A pair of beloved Hermiston community members March 2, took the stage to receive the honors of Woman of the Year and the Man of the Year for 2021. Many of Hermiston's top community members were present in one room for the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce's 52nd Annual Distinguished Citizens Award Gala that recognized local people and business for their contributions in 2021.

Woman of the Year

The Woman of the Year Award went to longtime community volunteer Alberta Wilkerson. Presenter Shirley Parsons, past Woman of the Year recipient, said Wilkerson has been an active participant

in the greater Hermiston area for more than 47 years. "Her life represents a life of serving others, sharing her talents, gifts and time to both children and adults," Parsons said. "Always striving to make her community a better place, helping those in need and adding a touch of beauty along the way." Her community involvement includes more than 20 years of service as a leader in 4-H, participation with Bloomer Girls Garden Club, volunteering with Relay for Life and at the Hermiston Warming Station. Wilkerson worked on the Funland Playground construction and rebuilds, was involved in Special Olympics and even opened her home to two interns of the Hermiston Herald. And she has participated each year with I Love My City.



Photos by Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
Alberta Wilkerson, left, and Steve Williams, right, accept the Woman of the Year and Man of the Year awards on March 2, 2022, at the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce's 52nd Annual Distinguished Citizens Awards at the Hermiston Community Center.

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Broadcast excellence

Armand Larive students earn national recognition for TV program

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

On the afternoon of March 1, a middle school teacher and a handful of students busied themselves with the production of a TV broadcast.

They set up lights, turned on a teleprompter and took to their spots. When everyone, and everything, was ready, a young producer cued her anchors, and they began presenting the news.

"Good morning, Bullpups," one student anchors announced.

Thus, Armand Larive Television, the student-created program of Armand Larive Middle School, Hermiston, started another show.

ALTV produces and broadcasts morning student announcements, which it transmits to all of the school's students in their classrooms. On occasion, ALTV live-streams Bullpup sporting events. The students also create a monthly storytelling show in which they interview interesting people and present these interviews in in-depth stories.

"You can call it a middle school version of '60 Minutes,'" Rob Doherty, Armand broadcasting advisor and teacher, said of the storytelling programs.

Recently, ALTV did more than present the news; it became the news. The Student Television Network Convention awarded ALTV with second place in the Broadcast Excellence competition for a Christmas program.

The episode included stories on Christmas spirit, women in science and foster parents who are making a difference.

"This is a big deal," Doherty said of the placing.

ALTV's history began in 1997, starting as a school club that created weekly announcements for students. It has undergone changes since, growing in recent years. Doherty is the broadcasting advisor and teacher, and he said the second-place victory was the highest placing ever for ALTV. He said he has more 150 students a day involved in the program. These students rotate in and out to study and practice journalism, the advisor said.

In addition to adding students, ALTV has accumulated technology. Doherty said in 2012, ALTV only had one camera. Now, it has 12, as well as additional other equipment — microphones and a formal setup for our show.

The shows, dating to 2012, are available to watch on the ALTV website, altv.us.

Doherty expressed pride in his students, who not only created an award-winning product; they did it on their own.

"I didn't help the students put that show together," Doherty said of the particular program that won second place. "They did it entirely

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Splicing together a new PARTNERSHIP



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Students watch as Demond Lofton, of Sumitomo Electric Lightwave, teaches the proper use of a visual fault locator during a fiber optic splicing course Thursday, March 3, 2022, that Amazon Web Service and Blue Mountain Community College offered in Hermiston.

Amazon teams up with BMCC on tech focused course

By ANTONIO SIERRA
Hermiston Herald

Amazon Web Service attempted inconspicuousness when it first came to Umatilla and Morrow counties by operating under a pseudonym. Now the web giant is openly trying to build goodwill in the Columbia Basin, and in its latest endeavor has partnered with Blue Mountain Community College on a fiber optic splicing course.

On the afternoon of Thursday, March 3, Demond Lofton of Sumitomo Electric Lightwave was demonstrating an optical time domain reflectometer — a device that tests fiber cables. As Lofton joined two fiber lines, a red light glowed from the center.

A student asked the instructors what would happen if they looked directly at the lasers being emitted by the lines. While the human eye was supposed to naturally avert it's gaze, trying to intentionally stare at the light was not encouraged.

"Again, don't look into the eye of the laser," Lofton said to laughs from the class.

In an interview, Michael Punke, vice president of public policy for Amazon Web Services, compared fiber optic splicing to a middle school project where students worked with copper wires to conduct electricity. As the world becomes increasingly reliant on



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Demond Lofton, of Sumitomo Electric Lightwave, demonstrates a visual fault locator Thursday, March 3, 2022, at Blue Mountain Community College in Hermiston.

the cloud to store digital data, Punke said skills such as splicing together fiber optic lines are coming into higher demand.

The reasons behind why a group of students from the Umatilla Indian Reservation wanted to take the course varied.

Colton Star said he'd worked in sales and construction but was interested in the course as a way to explore a new career path. Mollee Minthorn had experience in programming and coding and

thought fiber optic splicing could be another asset to her skill set. Vivan DeMary is semi retired and self-identified as a tribal elder but still liked the idea of picking up new skills she could bring back home to the tribes.

"I feel like this is the future," Star said.

It was a sentiment shared by Punke, who said Amazon intends to establish itself in the community in part by offering training that could land them jobs in the tech industry.

"This is a 21st century industry," he said. "It's going to be a 22nd century industry. We very much hope to be long term members of the community."

Large tech companies largely are associated with urban areas, such as the San Francisco Bay and Seattle. But these companies have sought rural communities for their data centers, where they can find large quantities of water to

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