

SPRING WELCOME

Hermiston High School greets guests with conferences

By ERICK PETERSON • Hermiston Herald

Hermiston High School students showed off their talents and education at conferences March 30 and April 1 at their school. Music, clubs, technology and more were all on display.

Hermiston School District Superintendent Tricia Mooney and Hermiston High School Principal Tom Spoo were among the administrators who met visitors at an entrance. They opened the doors for people to come face to face with enthusiastic teenagers and their proud teachers.

"This is a little bit different than what we've done in the past," Mooney said. "Spoo has put in countless hours to shift what had been traditionally a parent-teacher conference to what we're calling a 'Spring Welcome.' It's about all of the resources available in our community and for our kids, as well as a highlight of all of the amazing programs at Hermiston High School."

She added that she was happy for students to meet community members and create bonds that could lead to new activities.

"Yes, you come for conferences," Spoo said. "At the same time, there's a lot else going on. There's a career fair going on, a job fair and more."

He said this was the first "true" conference, coming back from coronavirus lockdowns. Previous conferences, such as student-led conferences in fall, were scaled back. This one, he said, included more activities and people.

"This is exciting," he said. Spoo was especially enthusiastic about simulators at the conferences, which showed students the experience of working with heavy equipment.

There were several employers and organizations represented with booths at the conferences, including the Hermiston School District, Amazon, Umatilla Electric Cooperative, Oregon Migrant Education Program and Good Shepherd Health Care System.

Alexandria McClure, junior, was one of the students performing at the conferences on April 1. Setting up her keyboard, she was getting ready for a musical performance.

"It's always a lot of fun," McClure said of her upcoming performance. In addition, she said she was excited to participate in other things offered at the conferences. The conference's job fair, she said, was of particular interest, as she wanted to obtain employment. Earning money so she could buy a car and help pay for college was important to her, she said.

Meanwhile, Helen Cooley, senior, was setting up tables for the FFA. Cooley, who is involved in FFA and business clubs, said she was looking forward to showing adults things being done at her school. Students, she said, had created a business to sell T-shirts and other goods with Hermiston High School branding.

"I'm excited," she said of the opportunity to show off her clubs.

Working alongside Cooley, Felicity Bequette, sophomore, said she was an FFA member, too. Not only did the conferences give her the chance to show her club to others, they also allowed her to help attract people to the FFA.

"I have a sister who is an eighth-grader," Bequette said. "She'll come and look at it and see if she wants to join."

As the students demonstrated themselves on setting up for the conference, FFA Advisor Sandy McKay said he was very proud of them.

"They're an amazing group of kids, and they've been very successful in recent years," he said. He added that he was glad to be able to have visitors meet the students.

Ryker Browning, junior,

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— Tricia Mooney, Hermiston School District superintendent

passed out cubes of Tillamook cheese.

"I like having the opportunity to participate," he said. "It's fun cooking with my classmates and representing my school."

Another group of students said they are glad to represent their school, too. Members of the school's health care program displayed their understanding of CPR.

Meekah Vandecar, sophomore, said it was her first year in the program, and she has learned how to take vital signs and talk to patients. She said she wants to become a midwife.

Elle Uzzell, senior, said she has been in the program for three years, and she wants to become a physical therapist. Recently, she has learned life-saving techniques, such as CPR. Also, she is learning how to draw blood.

"It's a fun program," Daisy Wolverton, sophomore, said of health care at HHS. "I've learned a lot."

Wolverton, who was at the health care booth with Vandecar, Uzzell and other students, said she was happy to show people what she had learned, including facts on nutrition.

Coy Estes, sophomore, said he was enthusiastic about demonstrating his learning, too. A participant in the welding program, Estes was showing other people a welding virtual simulator. He talked to people about his achievements as a welder.

"I can do about anything," he said. "I can do MIG, oxy-fuel, oxy-cutting, plasma cutting, blueprints. Right now, I'm working on TIG, which is our most difficult."

Over at another simulator, Jackson Ryan, freshman, was discovering what it is like to drive heavy equipment. Meanwhile, his mother looked on with interest.

"This is the only reason we're here," Heather Ryan said. She added that she was glad her son could have this experience.

Representing Hermiston Parks and Recreation, Kaleigh Leighton, senior, worked at a booth, trying to attract other students to work for the department. She said it was an exciting night and her booth and others give students many activities to explore. Hopefully, she added, they would learn more about potential jobs and clubs to enter.

Mya Hayden of Hermiston Parks and Recreation also staffed a booth. She said she met many students, heard their stories and saw their activities, and she said she was impressed.

"They are good, and they have a lot of potential," she said.



Alexandria McClure, junior, sets up her keyboard March 30, 2022.

Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald



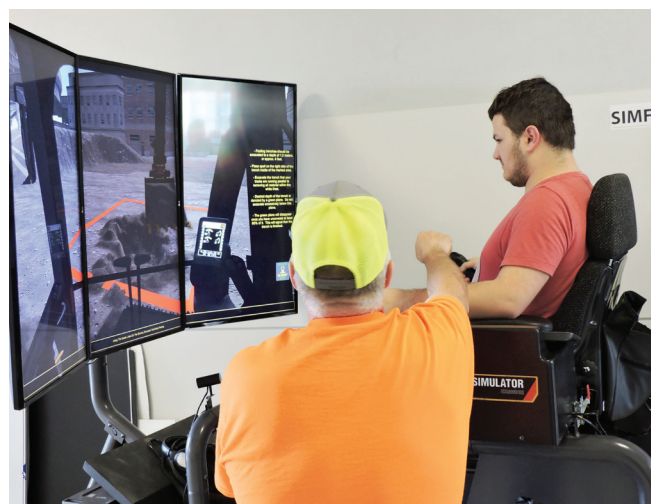
Jazz musicians play March 30, 2022, at Hermiston High School.

Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald



Helen Cooley, senior, arranges plants at Hermiston High School's Spring Welcome March 30, 2022.

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Jackson Ryan, freshman, learns how to drive heavy equipment with the help of virtual reality technology March 30, 2022.

Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald



Ryker Browning, junior, passes out cheese on March 30, 2022.

Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald



Elle Uzzell, senior, practices CPR March 30, 2022.

Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald



Deborah Wryn conducts soloist Lainey Bird, Hermiston High School senior, and other choir members at conferences March 30, 2022.

Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald



Coy Estes, sophomore, demonstrates virtual reality equipment March 30, 2022.

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