



HERMISTON

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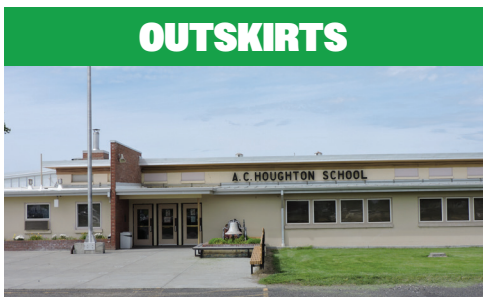
Graduation time

Photos show happy local grads. A6 & A7



Ag award

Bob Coleman takes home another Walchil title. A8



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Let's celebrate!

Newly minted Echo High School graduates take a moment to celebrate with confetti during a graduation ceremony on Friday, June 3, 2022.



Javon Curiel smiles from a gift table set up in the Echo gym. Curiel and 15 other Echo seniors graduated in a ceremony on Friday, June 3, 2022.

Local school districts boast of high levels of student success, hard earned during the pandemic years

BY ERICK PETERSON Hermiston Herald

At one upcoming ceremony, hundreds of students are scheduled to pass a major rite of passage.

Hermiston High School students are planning to gather on Thursday, June 9 for a graduation ceremony at the Toyota Center in Kennewick. It starts at 7 p.m.

According to Briana Cortaberria, Hermiston School District communications officer, 355 students were in the running to graduate on time. She added that the high school has 382 seniors, plus eight students from the district's Next Steps program.

This makes for a big crowd.

While there are things that make every graduating class unique, the students finishing high school in 2022 are extra special, according to local administrators. These students, they pointed out, endured the COVID-19 years. They adapted through lockdowns with online learning and returned to classrooms to complete their schoolwork.

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Engaging the threat

Local police chiefs explain procedures for taking on school shooters in wake of Texas massacre

BY JOHN TILLMAN Hermiston Herald

Some local police chiefs addressed their departments' procedures and training when it comes to taking on a school shooter.

Hermiston Chief of Police Jason Edmiston said no one can know how individual officers will respond when their own lives are on the line, but he was adamant about his force's protocols and training for active shooter situations.

"The lesson Columbine taught us, now almost 25 years ago, was that you can't wait to form up a team to go in, much less for SWAT, which we don't even have in Eastern Oregon. Oregon State Police SWAT takes four or five hours to get to us."

All Hermiston police officers have a master key that opens all doors in all schools, Edmiston stated.



Officers from multiple law enforcement agencies clear classrooms of victims during an active shooter drill April 13, 2018, in Boardman.

"Our officers arrive and go in," he said. "It's not practical to wait for a team to form to eliminate the threat. Create a distraction. Buy time for kids or customers to evacuate. Even if just one or two officers, we train to enter, find and engage the threat, while communicating with others."

Edmiston said if reports of officers waiting an hour for a SWAT

team prove true, it would be "a huge step back and a slap in the face. It's a black eye for all police sworn to serve and protect. The profession we've chosen means we're willing to risk a suicide mission to save lives, especially young lives. Time is life."

Hermiston police has three school resource officers. Several HPD members have received Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid

Response Training, Edmiston added. The ALERRT Center at Texas State University is widely considered to offer the best research-based active shooter response training in the nation. And the department spends \$70,000 per officer to make sure they have all the equipment they need.

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