

HHS graduate soars with agriculture award

Coleman recognized for use of drone technology

BY TAMMY MALGESINI
Hermiston Herald

For a second year in a row, Bob Coleman received the \$2,500 John F. Walchli Memorial Ag Entrepreneurs Award. The 2016 Hermiston High School graduate was first recognized in 2020-21 for use of a drone in his agricultural monitoring service.

According to a May 31 press release from board member Mike Mehren, Coleman utilizes a drone to photograph and monitor crops. The voluminous information collected, he said, is fed into a program that Coleman designed, which condenses it into practical and usable data.

"Using this technology, not only saves many man hours spent in the field but also allows correction of problems created by heat, cold, wind, disease, parasites and imprecise water use," Mehren said. "Changes can be made quickly and efficiently to improve the health and yield of each crop."

In his spare time, Coleman manages many of the crops grown on his family's farms. The young entrepreneur, Mehren said, plans to add thermal imaging to the drone, which will further increase and improve data collected.

Coleman, who earned an agricultural business degree from Oregon State University, initially began using a drone as a tool on his parent's farms. Coleman is able to view crops in about 1/10th the time that it would take a person using a vehicle, Mehren said.

In addition, utilizing advanced imaging technology reveals crop issues that aren't visible to the hu-



Mike Mehren/Contributed Photo

Bob Coleman, who utilizes a drone while operating his agricultural monitoring service, poses for a recent photo. The selection committee for the John F. Walchli Memorial Ag Entrepreneurs Award on May 31, 2022, announced the 2016 Hermiston High School graduate is the recipient for the second year in a row.

man eye. Mehren said the idea for developing the monitoring service grew when neighboring farms and others learned of its capabilities.

The John F. Walchli Memorial Ag Entrepreneurs Award, Mehren said, was created to provide support to young men and women living in west Umatilla County to achieve personal business goals in the field of agriculture. The recipient is selected based on initiative, innovation and accomplishments rather than academic performance. The winner, Mehren said, can use the cash award at their discretion; it does not have to be

used for tuition or educational expenses.

The award's namesake, John Walchli, died in September 2018. He began his farming career raising watermelons while attending Stanfield High School.

Walchli and his wife, Marge, moved to the Hermiston area, where they expanded their farming operation to include potatoes, asparagus, wheat, alfalfa, cattle and bison. Also, Walchli was known for his generosity and giving back to the community.

For more information, contact Mehren at 541-561-4762 or mehrens@eotnet.net.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

DA Primus to address dinner gathering

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus is the guest speaker for the upcoming gathering of the Round-Up Republican Women. He will discuss several topics, including the impact of increasing drug-related crimes in Umatilla County, rising suicides attributed to fentanyl, the impacts of Ballot Measure 110, which decriminalized some drugs, and trends in some urban areas of not prosecuting crimes.

The dinner event is Thursday, June 9, in the Vert Club Room, 345 S.W. Fourth St., Pendleton. The meal and social time begins at 5:30 p.m. Primus will be introduced at 6 p.m. The meal costs \$17 per person.

Those planning to attend are reminded to note the change of venue. The event is open to the public.

Born and raised in Pendleton, Primus graduated from law school at Willamette University. After a year in private practice in Salem, a position came open in his hometown. Primus was a Umatilla County deputy district attorney for three years before being appointed district attorney in August 2011. He was first elected as the district attorney on Nov. 8, 2011.

Those planning to attend need to RSVP via email at rounduprw@gmail.com or text 541-310-8582.

Area students to graduate from Oregon State

More than 7,300 Oregon State University students will graduate during ceremonies Saturday, June 11 at Reser Stadium on the Corvallis campus and Sunday, June 12 at the OSU-Cascades campus in Bend. Among those turning the tassel are students from Umatilla and Morrow counties:

HERMISTON: **Alyssa Abernathy**, Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude, Political Science; **Shandie Britt**, Master of Science, Agricultural Education; **Jasmin Chen**, Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude, Bio-Health Sciences; **Timmy Chen**, Bachelor of Science, BioHealth Sciences; **Nikkole Duitsman**, Master of Science, Education; **Diana Esparza**, Bachelor of Science, An-

imal Sciences; **Magdalena Ibarra**, Bachelor of Science, Animal Sciences; **Yulaidi Ornelas**, Bachelor of Science, Human Development and Family Sciences; **Antonio Ortiz**, Bachelor of Science, Construction Engineering Management; **Wyatt Paschal**, Bachelor of Science, Business Administration; **Erin Reason**, Doctor of Pharmacy, Pharmacy; **Kasia Robbins**, Bachelor of Science, Public Policy; **Hannah Walker**, Bachelor of Science, Summa Cum Laude, Animal Sciences; **Dale Wilkerson**, Doctor of Pharmacy, Pharmacy; **Rachael Wilson**, Bachelor of Science, Summa Cum Laude, Psychology; **Katelynn Winters**, Bachelor of Science, Summa Cum Laude, Human Development and Family Sciences; **Laura Zepeda**, Bachelor of Science, Kinesiology.

BOARDMAN: **Marvin Calvillo**, Bachelor of Science, Civil Engineering; **Ricardo Escobedo**, Bachelor of Science, Kinesiology; **Tania Mendoza**, Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude, Public Health.

HEPPNER: **Benjamin Ewing**, Doctor of Philosophy, Education; **Kevin Murray**, Bachelor of Science, BioHealth Sciences.

IRRIGON: **Isaac Estrada**, Bachelor of Science, Marketing; **Ethan Greer**, Bachelor of Science, Summa Cum Laude, Construction Engineering Management; **Corbin Tegner**, Bachelor of Science, Computer Science.

LEXINGTON: **Alex Lindsay**, Bachelor of Arts, Cum Laude, History.

STANFIELD: **Brianna Cornejo**, Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude, Digital Communication Arts.

UMATILLA: **Giovani Armenta-Garcilazo**, Bachelor of Science, Construction Engineering Management; **Daniel Cisneros**, Bachelor of Science, Computer Science; **Tristan Cole**, Bachelor of Fine Arts, Cum Laude, Graphic Design; **Ashley Durning**, Master of Science, Agricultural Education; **Jonathan Macias**, Bachelor of Science, Summa Cum Laude, Computer Science; **Nancy Ortiz-Ochoa**, Bachelor of Science, Magna Cum Laude, Human Development and Family Sciences; **Armando Rodriguez**, Bachelor of Science, Biology; **Skyler Stokoe**, Bachelor of Science, Cum Laude, Business Administration; **Jesus Tejada**, Bachelor of Science, Chemical Engineering; **Yatziry Uriarte**, Bachelor of Science, Psychology.

Established in 1868, the number of 2022 graduates is the second highest in the university's history, behind only 2021. For more information about commencement events, visit www.oregonstate.edu/commencement.

COLUMN

Project PATH will bring proactive answers to the homelessness issue



DAVID STOCKDALE
COMMUNITY VIEW

Every city and county in the state of Oregon is impacted by homelessness, and the impact is growing each year.

People without housing are less likely to have access to health care, employment and education. They are more likely to suffer from chronic mental and physical health effects like substance abuse disorders and disability, and are at a higher risk of abuse and violence.

They are also members of our communities. We have a responsibility to provide access to services in accordance with state guidelines and our own guiding principles.

The societal cost of homelessness is broad and too large for a single entity to solve, but also too diverse and individualized for a one-size-fits-all solution. Breaking the cycle requires collaboration and investment.

That is the mission of Project PATH (Practical Assistance through Transitional Housing), a joint effort among Hermiston, Umatilla, Stanfield, Echo and Umatilla County. We have been granted \$1 million from the State of Oregon to launch a pilot project, and we are intent on getting the best return on that investment by focusing our efforts on a single sustainable program for the west end of the county.

The first step was a historic joint public meeting on May 23 where the city councils of Herm-

iston and Umatilla and the Board of Umatilla County Commissioners discussed the project and took public testimony. It was important that we start off on the right foot and gather feedback from elected officials and the public. I write this with the support of my colleagues Hermiston City Manager Byron Smith and Umatilla County Commissioner Dan Dorran.

The next step is to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to find a community partner that can best provide the services we need. A shelter or warming center is a temporary solution, but a transitional housing program that connects its residents to health care, education, employment and stable housing is a long-term answer that will improve lives.

The City of Umatilla will be able to annex a two-acre property on the corner of Lind and Bessel roads to locate the project. A coalition of the represented governments will review the submitted RFPs. Umatilla, Hermiston, Stanfield, Echo and Umatilla will create an Inter-Governmental Agreement to act as oversight of the project as it develops.

We look forward to engaging with applicants to help develop a program that addresses not only the needs of the homeless community, but the concerns of residents. Security, staffing and measures of success are all an important part of the strategic plan we will develop after awarding the contract.

Ultimately, this project is about using public resources in the way they are intended. Public parks and rights of way were not built to be used as temporary housing, and public safety officers are not equipped to treat mental health disorders. We

have resources within our community that can provide these services, and with proper planning we can make the most of them.

This is a work in progress, but we are making

sure Project PATH lives up to its name and creates a way forward for homeless residents seeking a healthier, safer and more stable lifestyle.

■ David Stockdale is the Umatilla city manager.



Curb cuts matter.

Being able to move around freely in our communities matters to our health and well-being. Healthy places have curb cuts in sidewalks, which make movement easier for those of us who use wheelchairs or strollers – or will use them someday. Curb cuts are just one example of how healthy places lead to healthier lives.

Discover more at: PlaceMattersOregon.com

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Place
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LIFE IN CHECK™
CONSUMER DRUG TAKE-BACK

TIME TO CLEAN OUT YOUR MEDICINE CABINET!

Help prevent drug misuse, and protect our water supply from improper drug disposal.

Safely Dispose of Unused or Expired Medications

Find a disposal location near you at safemedicinedrop.com