

Stanfield's growth continues, rebounding from pandemic

BY JOHN TILLMAN
Hermiston Herald

The city and its businesses are growing and upgrading as they rebound from the pandemic.

Masseuse Sharron Newton, 78, moved her business, Royal Health Therapies, from a Hermiston office into her remodeled Stanfield home during the pandemic.

"It was a good move," she said. "It's interesting how Stanfield is growing, with the new housing district on the other side of the high school. A lot of houses have gone up in just six months."

The \$12 million, 41-unit Patriot Heights low-income housing project, 155 Valor Ave., was unveiled on May 16.

Newton also cites recent developments such as the general store, excavation for another housing complex on Stanfield's south side and new street lights downtown.

"When the lights are lit up, it's striking," she said. "The beautification is very nice. There's a lot of growth."

Newton moved because of the pandemic.

"There was fear," she recalled. "I lost a lot of regular clientele. Some have returned, but not all. The remodeled home office is working out."

Newton's health has declined and her home was hit by COVID-19, so she is working part time.

"It's what I consider part time," she added, "at four days a week, with three or four clients per day."

Only one or two steady clients have been unwilling to drive from Hermiston, and Newton has picked up new regulars from Stanfield.

"It's convenient working from home," she said. "If a client is half an hour late now, I'm a lot more patient than I would have been in my office in Hermiston."

Newton remodeled her house to separate an office from the private area. She has a large lot for convenient parking and easy access right off Highway 395.

"Some regular clients prefer the atmosphere at home," she commented. "I feel blessed still to be working in a physically demanding profession at my age."

Stanfield is supporting her well, Newton reported.

"The move was good for me and good for Stanfield."

HOUSING PROJECTS, BUSINESSES EXPAND

The Panoramic Ridge housing development, west of Highway 395, continued to expand, the city's fiscal year 2022-23 budget reported. Homes and lots sold out in phase four and 39 sites soon will be ready for construction in phases five and six.

The Umatilla County Housing Authority finished its Patriot Heights development this past year, providing 41 additional units of varying sizes, the bud-



Kathy Baker poses for a photo Friday, July 1, 2022, in her Stanfield business Fun Fashions, a boutique store.

Mackenzie Whaley/Hermiston Herald



Fun Fashions in Stanfield is open for business Friday, July 1, 2022, offering women's and teen wear.

Mackenzie Whaley/Hermiston Herald



Kathy Baker poses for a photo Friday, July 1, 2022, in front of her Stanfield business Fun Fashions, a boutique store.

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get continued. This brought in revenue through additional utility services and about 150 new residents for local businesses and activities. It also provided a local Head Start program and created access to additional land prime for private housing development. This project increased a city fund by more than \$200,000.

The 99-unit Bumblebee Estate housing development is under construction. It should bring in property taxes, utilities and roughly 300 new residents, the budget reported.

Dollar General and Java Junkies are both in the construction phases, aiming to open this summer. These will bring additional jobs and reve-

nue to the city, according to the budget report.

Besides these larger developments, more than 10 residential and two or three commercial lots are going through the development process, the budget stated.

VIDEOS SAVED WOMEN'S WEAR BUSINESS

Live online videos saved Kathy Baker's business, Fun Fashions Boutique, 165 Coe Ave., during the pandemic.

"When (Gov.) Kate Brown shut us down on March 15, 2020, I didn't know what to do," Baker recalled. "I'm not a big online store, just bricks and mortar."

Columbia Bank came to Bak-

er's rescue. So that women could still shop in her store, the bank backed her in picking five customers to receive \$250 each in free merchandise.

"That helped me feel comfortable," she said, "then I started doing live videos, selling on Facebook and Venmo with free delivery."

Baker also has built a small website

"I had really good customers in Hermiston, Stanfield and as far as Condon," she said. "Otherwise I would not have made it."

Producing live videos was a do-or-die operation for Baker. "I was scared to death," she said. "I didn't want to sound stupid or uneducated, but I did

it, and it worked. It saved my business."

Baker showed her clothing lines and sizes available over the internet.

"I had never seen anything like this," she said. "Sure, there had been viruses, but the shutdown was a whole different thing."

Baker had gone to New York City with her son in January 2020, and to market in Portland in February, when the novel coronavirus was circulating.

"I had to shut down in-store sales just when we were getting our trade in from market," she recounted. "I got personal emails from Kate's office ordering me to shut down, so I did. Men from the State of Oregon watched my door and the Broken Barrel (Restaurant's) for three hours, to make sure that no one came in or out. It was very eerie."

Stanfield native Baker said

growth in Stanfield has been "amazing." She also raised her family in town. She credited public works director Scott Morris and his crew for keeping city parks clean and watered and the city council and city manager Ben Bergener for lifting up the town.

"The city has come a long way," she said. "We have a great Fourth of July event. They've done such a good job."

Baker also noted the schools are packed with great teachers and staff.

"Stanfield has changed a lot," she assessed. "I'm very proud of it. I love my community. They work so hard. There was a little street sweeper on Coe and 395 this morning. I'd only ever seen those machines in big cities before. It's wonderful. They need recognition."

Summer is Baker's slow season. She said she expects business to pick up when school starts again.

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