

Service:

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“The needs of the districts have changed over time, to where my skill set more closely matched the most recent job description,” she said, noting that her knack for legal research is particularly useful when applying for modernization grants.

With a system of feeder canals, ditches and lines that date back to 1906, Kirkpatrick and her team are working to modernize the district’s infrastructure, improve water delivery and supply for Hermiston residents and surrounding farms.

The Hermiston Irrigation District serves 1,286 patrons and approximately 10,000 acres of irrigated land in and around the city of Hermiston. It’s become one of the most lucrative agricultural regions in Oregon.

Irrigated crops such as vegetables, grains, alfalfa hay, pasture and grass seed dominate the area’s agricultural production, bringing along with it a substantial livestock industry. One of the region’s most lucrative crops is watermelon, with around 45,000 tons produced annually.

One of the district’s largest ongoing projects is piping the B-Line. According to Kirkpatrick, the project will save an estimated 2,000 acre-feet of stored water from Cold Springs Reservoir every year.

Kirkpatrick dubbed the most recent modernization plans as the biggest highlight of her 20 years at the district. After hearing conversation about piping the B-Line for the last two decades, it’s been a long time coming.

“To finally see that come to realization is very exciting for me,” she said.

The B-Line project is in the scoping period and soon will transition into the public commenting period, when the public, patrons and other entities can learn more about the potential project.

Kirkpatrick noted this coordination period is an important step in maximizing the project’s benefit for the community. The district also has discussed installing new fiber optic lines and fire hydrants as the project progresses through more rural portions of the district.

“It’s a good time to install new utilities in that same area,” she said.

The district also has completed other modernization projects, including converting hundreds of acres of from flood irrigation to sprinkler systems. Projects such as this have resulted in significant water savings and efficiency improvements within the region.

The district also participates in the Umatilla Basin Project, an effort that began in the 1980s to restore instream flows and improve conditions for threatened and endangered fish. The project supplies water from the Columbia River for the Hermiston district, in exchange for the district leaving an equal amount of water in the Umatilla River.

Kirkpatrick also serves on many local boards and committees, including on the executive board of the Oregon Water Resources Congress.

This year, she began her first term on the city of Hermiston’s planning commission. Kirkpatrick said she felt the position gave her the chance to help coordinate land use planning in the city with the urban modernization efforts of the district.

“It just gives me a really good opportunity to be in the room and make those connections,” she said.

Looking forward, Kirkpatrick said she hopes to continue modernizing the district’s systems, with an emphasis on efficiency and water conservation.

“I think it’s just really exciting to see the city continue to grow,” she said, “and to see the district continue to provide the resources that our farming community needs.”

Perkins:

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continued to affect him. Still, he described himself as a happy, optimistic person who tried to share his positivity with others.

He wed Jeanne R. Otis in Pendleton in 1970. He credited his wife with encouraging his pleasant outlook. From the beginning of their relationship, he said, she was a steady influence.

Perkins worked as an electrician for Union Pacific Railroad at Hinkle from 1976 to 1986, then as an electrical supervisor for Ash Grove Cement in Durkee. He retired in 1998, Burns Mortuary of Hermiston reported.

Perkins served as mayor of Stanfield from 1980 to 1984 and as Local International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers No. 112 president from 1984 to 1986. A member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he described himself as a religious man who believed in community. He also worked as a volunteer firefighter and was active in Milton Lodge No. 96 of the Masons and Shriners



John Perkins, as Santa Claus, throws the switch to light the Hermiston Christmas tree Dec. 2, 2021. Perkins, who had pancreatic cancer, died July 27, 2022, at the age of 70.

and rode motorcycle escort in the Oregon Food Bank’s caravan.

He was a member of Oregon Motorcycle Riders Association and the Veterans and Friends of Oregon motorcycle clubs, organizing poker runs and raising money for Shriners Hospital. Perkins loved riding motorcycles, camping, fishing, crabbing, boating and photography.

He obtained his high school diploma and walked in cap and gown with the Hermiston High School Class of 2010, he said.

He served as Santa for 13 years, 2008-21, through-

out Umatilla County, the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla.

Perkins picked up the mantle of Santa to honor his father-in-law, Roy Otis, who had been Santa but died. His wife, Jeanne Perkins, made him the costume he still wore. It is a suit made with love, he said.

Other trademarks of the role were his prior to becoming Santa. The white hairs, he said, started coming in while he was a high school student, and the beard was fully flushed out before he ever put on the Santa outfit.

Playing Santa through the years, he has toured the region, appearing in and

around Hermiston, even going to Walla Walla. The role crept into his daily life, he said, as children recognize him as Santa year-round.

He first noticed something wrong in March 2021, when he saw a bruise on his belly, he said. It grew, so he saw a doctor. After tests, Perkins learned he had stage four pancreatic cancer, he said. Chemo weakened him, he admitted.

“I made a commitment to the city of Hermiston, and I will do everything I can,” he said before the tree lighting. “I would be happy if I can do this.”

Perkins was in the midst of stage four pancreatic cancer on Dec. 2 when he lived up to his commitment and brought Santa Claus to Hermiston’s Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Perkins is survived by his wife of 51 years, a daughter and son, three grandchildren, a sister and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, stepfather and brother.

His funeral service is scheduled for Aug. 4, at 10 a.m. at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 850 S.W. 11 St., Hermiston.

Art:

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“As we’ve heard said so often, for a community the size of ours, there is truly such large-scale work taking place,” Rosenberg said. “It’s impressive to see.”

The hard work that Lava-dour has put in has not gone unnoticed by community members either.

“These types of world-wide artists don’t just stumble across us on the map,” Rosenberg said. “Roberta and her team should be commended for their hard work and dedication, to not only the community but the passion behind what they do.”



Pat Mazzera/McEvoy Foundation for the Arts

Mexican-born American artist Enrique Chagoya poses for a Portrait at McEvoy Foundation for the Arts in San Francisco. The Pendleton Center for the Arts is hosting Chagoya and an exhibition of his works starting Friday, Aug. 5, 2022.

Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia - ARE YOU AT RISK?

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“Hearing loss, left untreated can lead to serious problems such as loneliness and isolation.”

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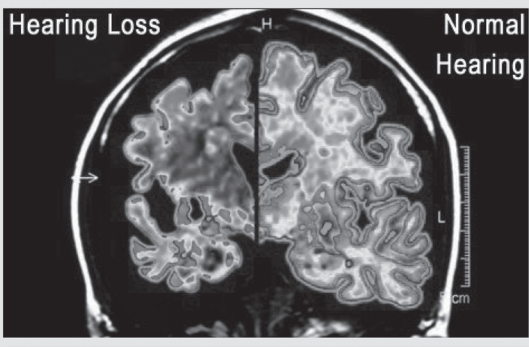
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