



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

Braden Roseborough gives one last look at the plane he's just leapt out of above Ritzville on Sunday afternoon.

## Wingsuiters take to the skies over Ritzville

By CASEY MCCARTHY  
 Staff Writer

RITZVILLE — As the aircraft approached 18,000 feet on Sunday afternoon, the door opened and poured in a cold air, much different from the warm temperatures the passengers had left behind. One by one, with screams of excitement lost in the gush of air, seven people leapt out of a perfectly good airplane.

This was just one of numerous trips into the sky as wingsuiters and skydivers took advantage of the sunny weather last weekend, falling through the Central Washington sky back down toward a small airstrip off Interstate 90 in Ritzville.

Skydive West Plains hosted their first annual West Plains Wingsuit Weekend from July 17-19. Wingsuit skydivers getting started were invited to come out for coaching, lessons and safety tips.

Nikko Mamallo was one of the seven who jumped out of the plane on Sunday afternoon, far from his first jump of the weekend. Mamallo has more than 2000 career skydives, and teaches first-flight wingsuit courses as well as advanced wingsuit skills.

Mamallo, who came out and helped coach for the event, said he, wingsuit coach Braden Roseborough and Skydive West Plains team member Kara Kruse had been discussing a wingsuit event at the Ritzville drop zone for a while now.

"We've been talking about it

for a while, getting more people excited about wingsuiting," Mamallo said.

For the first time ever at Skydive West Plains, Mamallo said they had full planes consisting of only wingsuiters. While they didn't have any first time wingsuit jumps, he said the weekend really allowed for a spot for people just getting started to work on some more intermediate skills.

The event was a great chance for wingsuiters to build some confidence and excitement, Mamallo said.

"When you go to some of the larger drop zones, it's a lot easier to get lost in the mix of everything," Mamallo said. "There's so many people there, and it's not just us in the sky."

For last weekend, Mamallo said it worked out great because all of the wingsuiters could learn, and jump, in the same groups.

Kara Kruse said they were able to really start hosting jumps, and events, again in July due to COVID-19 restrictions. While she said she knows skydivers have been itching for an opportunity to jump, she said they've tried to take things slowly.

"We've been taking it easy because we had such a long layoff that we wanted to make sure we're doing everything safely and within the COVID guidelines," Kruse said. "But we're staying busy and having fun."

See SKIES, B3



Photos by Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

ABOVE: Wingsuiters practice formations on the ground before ascending for their jump on Sunday afternoon at Skydive West Plains in Ritzville.  
 BELOW: The last wingsuiter left in the plane lowers his head as he leaps out behind his six fellow skydivers on Sunday afternoon over Ritzville.



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# Sports/Opinion



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

Riders from across the state and Northwest came out to Moses Lake on Sunday afternoon for Moses Lake BMX's single-point race event.

## Moses Lake BMX hosts race event

By CASEY MCCARTHY  
Sports Writer

MOSES LAKE — Moses Lake BMX was able to host a single-point race event this weekend, attracting riders from across the state and Pacific Northwest.

Moses Lake BMX track operator Brandon Holland said they're gaining confidence in hosting events after holding their first race the prior weekend.

"With COVID in effect, it's definitely creating more obstacles," Holland said. "But, we're finding ways."

Holland said the Moses Lake track is the third track in Washington state to open up. Originally, the non-profit organization had planned for a big qualifying event this weekend, but was forced to cancel due to COVID-19 restrictions.

"With the number of attendees that would have been at the event, it wouldn't have been allowed," Holland said. "So we just dropped it down to a single-point race, and we still had a ton of support that came in from Spokane's race."

BMX riders were in Spokane over the weekend for the Gold Cup qualifier on Saturday, with some traveling to Moses Lake for Sunday's event.

Moses Lake BMX secretary Selena Holland said families and riders were really good about following all of the guidelines and protocols in place.

"I think that all the families understand, and know, what's required of them, so they're doing whatever's required to stay in compliance so that we can all race," she said. "It's kind of a good family environ-

ment. Even if they don't agree with it, people know what they have to do so we can stay racing."

Selena Holland said their first event, with about 20 riders coming out, gave them a chance to figure out how all of the guidelines and distancing would work. She said they took notes on what worked, and what didn't, so they could improve on it for Sunday's event.

Selena Holland said it's rewarding to be able to offer an "escape" for these kids who maybe haven't been able to get out and be as active as they normally would.

"You get on the track, and that's all that matters in that moment," she said. "It's worth it to us to put in that extra time and effort and work with the city and health department, watching everyone following the rules and working together."

Brandon Holland said they've had great

support from the city to help keep things going this summer. He said they've seen a huge jump in interest for the sport this year due to the downtime families have had.

"For me as the track operator, knowing that there's going to be kids enjoying it when I'm done with it, that's where it all pays off," he said.

Below is a list of top finishers in each event for the weekend races:

- 17-20 Women Cruiser: Nichole Otto, Gig Harbor, Washington
- 11 Cruiser: Damien Comeau, Snoqualmie, Washington
- 13 Cruiser: Jackson Beal, Port Townsend, Washington
- 15 Cruiser: Coleton Johnston, Moses Lake, Washington
- 17-20 Cruiser: Larry Bowman, Airway Heights, Washington
- 5 & Under Novice: Hudson Hurlbert, West Richland, Washington
- 8 Novice: Carson

Cook, Moses Lake, Washington

10 Novice: Chase Heaton, Richland, Washington

14 Novice: Isaiiah Ginnard, Ford, Washington

36-40 Novice: Airick Wright, Moses Lake, Washington

7 Intermediate: Colton Hackett, Arlington, Washington

8 Intermediate: Cody Jones, Medical Lake, Washington

13 Intermediate: Kaylee Case, Kennewick, Washington

21-25 Intermediate: Wyatt Todd, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

9 Expert: Liam Otto, Gig Harbor, Washington

11 Expert: Damien Comeau, Snoqualmie, Washington

12 Expert: Hunter Schlager, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

14 Expert: Zane Pickett, Tacoma, Washington

15 Expert: Coleton Johnston, Moses Lake, Washington

## Letters

Farmers, legislators looking out for farmworker safety

to help than those who throw stones.

Heather Hansen  
Executive director,  
Washington Friends of  
Farms and Forests

Farmworkers are vital to our food supply. They are also vital to the farmers who employ them. Every farmer I know who hires farmworkers cares deeply about their health and safety. There has been a shortage of farm workers in Washington state for several years. That means farmers do everything they can to keep their workers happy and healthy so they will be able to continue working and will want to return the next year.

Both state and federal government agencies regulate farm working conditions and farmworker safety. Farmworker housing is regularly inspected by government regulators. New rules were enacted to protect farmworkers from COVID-19.

Those who understand agriculture understand how important it is to take care of farmworkers. All of the people who live in the Columbia Basin should feel thankful to have strong, experienced legislators looking out for them. Rep. Tom Dent is known for working in a bipartisan manner, not only on agricultural issues, but also on early childhood education, children's mental health, wildfire prevention and more. His experience puts him in the best position to ensure that programs that benefit farmworkers and their families continue to get adequate funding.

COVID-19 has created new challenges for everyone. There is still a long road ahead. Proven leaders can do much more

Romig for commissioner

I am supporting Earl Romig for Grant County Commissioner, District 1. Earl has been a lifelong resident of Grant County with a background of community and public service. Earl started his public service by being a deputy sheriff with the Grant County Sheriff's Office. After having his career cut short in a hunting incident, he could have given up, but he did not. He started his own ag business, where he thrived and has been very successful. Earl has always had the heart for public service. I believe that he is conservative, has a great business sense and will stand up for the residents of Grant County. Being in the ag business, Earl knows how important our agriculture in the county is. I know he will work closely with the farmers to ensure their voices are heard and issues are addressed. Because of Earl's business mindset, I know that he will be a great steward of taxpayer dollars, while making sure the county can operate at a proper level. He is a big supporter of public safety and knows there is a need for it. I believe Earl Romig will be progressive and help take Grant County into the future. Please join me in voting for Earl Romig, Grant County Commissioner.

Tom Jones  
Grant County Sheriff

**GOOD NEWS BOATERS!**  
New pumpout stations available this summer.  
To find a pumpout station near you,  
visit [PumpoutWashington.org](http://PumpoutWashington.org).



*Thank You*



The family and friends of Tyler Homesley would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the community for the tremendous outpouring of support we have received during this difficult time. We have been humbled by the kind words and memories that have been shared. Tyler was an amazing young man and we are grateful we got him for the time we did. We, Tyler's immediate family, can never thank enough, the businesses and individuals who have gifted us with flowers, food, shared memories and above all your time. The selflessness of our community has inspired us all.

We wish to specifically say thank you to the EMT's and the trauma unit at Samaritan Hospital. Though you were unable to send Tyler home to us we witnessed first-hand your care and effort. You truly did all that could be done.

- Nicole, Howard, Darci, Jessica and Rylee

## LEGAL NOTICES

### PUBLIC NOTICE

The East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's August board meeting date has changed to August 12, 2020 at 10:00 a.m., and will be held by teleconference, per Governor Inslee's Proclamation 20-28, regarding the Open Public Meetings Act, all in-person public meetings have been temporarily suspended. To listen by phone, call: 1-602-610-2063, when prompted, enter conference code: 817136.

#08009/399028  
Pub: August 4, 2020

### NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

Sealed bids, plainly marked "BID FOR 3-NE ROAD PHASE 2 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT, CRP 19-08", will be received by Grant County at the Office of the Board of County Commissioners located in the County Courthouse, P.O. Box 37, 35 C Street NW - Room 206, Ephrata, WA, 98823, until 1:30 P.M., Tuesday, August 11, 2020 and will then and there be opened and publicly read for the construction of the improvements.

All bid proposals shall be accompanied by a bid proposal deposit in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or surety bond in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of

the amount of such bid proposal. No conditional bid bond will be accepted. Should the successful bidder fail to enter into such contract and furnish a satisfactory performance bond within the time stated in the specifications, the bid proposal deposit shall be forfeited to Grant County.

Maps, plans and specifications may be purchased from the Office of the County Engineer, 124 Enterprise St. S.E., Ephrata, WA 98823, upon payment of the amount of \$25.00 (non-refundable).

Informational copies of the maps, plans and specifications are on file for inspection at the Grant County Public Works Building, 124 Enterprise St. S.E., Ephrata,

WA 98823, and in various plan centers located in Washington.

The following is applicable to federal-aid projects: The Grant County Department of Public Works in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 78 Stat. 252, 42 U.S.C. 2000d to 2000d-4 and Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Department of Transportation, subtitle A, Office of the Secretary, Part 21, Nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs of the Department of Transportation issued pursuant to such Act, hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises as defined at 49 CFR Part 26 will be af-

forded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex in consideration for an award.

The Board of County Commissioners of Grant County, Washington, reserves the right to reject any and all bids. The award of this contract, if made, will be to the lowest responsible bidder.

### OTHELLO SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 147 2020-2021 BUDGET ADOPTION

The Othello School District Board of Directors will conduct a public hearing on Monday, August 10, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. via YouTube "Live" and Zoom. The links to this meeting can be found on the Othello School District Website at [www.othelloschools.org](http://www.othelloschools.org), for the purpose of fixing and adopting the budget for the 2020-2021 school fiscal year. Any person may request to join the Zoom meeting by contacting Thalia Lemus at 509-488-2659 Ext. 1003 or by email at [TDeleon@othelloschools.org](mailto:TDeleon@othelloschools.org), and may be heard for or against the budget or any part thereof. Currently, the proposed final budget is available for public review on the Othello School District Website at [www.othelloschools.org](http://www.othelloschools.org).

The improvement for which bids will be received follows:

### 3-NE ROAD PHASE 2 RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT - CRP 19-08

This contract provides for the reconstruction of 2.0 miles of two lane county road in Grant County, WA, and includes roadway excavation, embankment compaction, crushed surfacing

base course, crushed surfacing top course, HMA, seeding and fertilizing, and other work all in accordance with the attached Contract Plans, these Contract Provisions and the Standard Specifications.

#08002/396297  
Pub: July 21, 28, 2020 & August 4, 2020

Janette Bumgarner  
Executive Director of Business Services

#08003/396449  
Pub: July 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 2020 & August 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 2020

# Seat of honor

Helen Turner celebrates 100th birthday with family and friends



# Columbia Basin Herald LOCAL NEWS

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# A class unlike any other



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

A Moses Lake High School graduate flashes a smile while leaving Grant County Fairgrounds.

## Unique graduation for Moses Lake High School Class of 2020



Connor Vanderweyst/Columbia Basin Herald

Cars line the parking lot of Moses Lake High School as graduates wait to get their pictures taken and receive diploma holders.

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER and CASEY MCCARTHY  
 Staff Writers

MOSES LAKE — In a lot of ways, there was no precedent for the Moses Lake High School graduation of 2020. The traditional ceremony at Lions Field was canceled, one of the many canceled events under the restrictions imposed by the state to combat the COVID-19 outbreak. District officials found an alternative, one that tried to take social distancing and the restrictions on crowd size into account. “Wrapping up the weird year in a weird way,” senior James Smith Jr. said. His classmate Kaleb Kowallis had a slightly different take. “Finishing a unique year in a unique way,” he said. “Definitely unique,” Gabriel Lucio said. Seniors and their families gathered at Grant County Fairgrounds and staged a parade through town. Students picked up a diploma holder and posed for pictures at one of six sites around the community. The diplomas are being mailed to students later. Alecia Haws admitted to mixed feelings.

### More inside

- Graduates in Ephrata ‘make history,’ page A4
- Quincy grads parade through town, page A5
- Royal celebrates Class of 2020, page A6

### More photos

See a gallery of Friday’s graduation celebrations at [www.columbiabasinherald.com](http://www.columbiabasinherald.com)

See MLHS, A3

## Hundreds peacefully march through Moses Lake to protest

By EMRY DINMAN  
 Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — More than 300 people, most from Moses Lake but a few from as far afield as Seattle, attended Sunday’s Black Lives Matter march and vigil in Moses Lake. The event started with a number of speeches at the Paul Lauzier Memorial Athletic Park, as attendees gathered by

the baseball diamond, while middle school counselor Dana Santos, who helped advise the event’s young organizers, registered people to vote. Speakers included members of the local Martin Luther King Jr. Committee, Police Chief Kevin Fuhr, Mayor David Curnel and event organizers, touching on their personal experiences of racism and their hopes for change.

The event was organized by five women from Moses Lake in their early twenties: Jade Kelly, Baleigh Sampson, Kagan Collins, Serina Sabedra and Madalyn Babak, after Sampson and Kelly attended a protest in Seattle. There, they said, they experienced unwarranted police violence against peaceful protesters but



Emry Dinman/Columbia Basin Herald

Protesters stretched for the better part of a mile as they marched down South Pioneer Way towards East Wheeler Road.

LOCAL

**Finances**  
 Longterm impact of coronavirus on PUD uncertain. **A2**

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# Air club shares the skies

Moses Lake Experimental Aircraft Association chapter celebrates 50 years



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## Governor's office: Currently no plans to push Grant County to Phase 1

By EMMY DINMAN  
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — The office of the governor does not currently have plans to push Grant County back to Phase 1, external relations director Nick Streuli said in an interview Wednesday.

The comments came in response to a Wednesday article in the Herald quoting Moses Lake Mayor David Curnel, who said in a Tuesday city council meeting that the governor's office had stated that Grant County was at risk of losing its Phase 2 status if it didn't level off its COVID-19 case rate. On Tuesday, Curnel indicated that the county was given a month to show improvement.

In a joint conference call Wednesday with Curnel and Inslee press secretary Mike Faulk, Streuli said that there was no timeline or threat made that, if the county didn't level off its rate of new cases, it would be pushed back to Phase 1. After Curnel reiterated that he had been given that timeline, Streuli stated that there had perhaps been a miscommunication, and that he and other officials were suggesting that they would check back in with county officials in a month, not penalize them.

The state's conversations with local and county officials have been cordial and collaborative, not threatening, Streuli said Wednesday.

"One of the items we've openly discussed with these counties is if moving back a phase or partial phase would be helpful," Faulk wrote in an email before the conference call Wednesday. "In most cases, these counties have said it would not be and instead we've focused our efforts on reinforcing messages around masking."

When pressed, Streuli acknowledged that counties with high rates of coronavirus cases could be pushed back in the state's four-phase reopening plan, saying that has always been a possibility. However, he rejected claims that any timeline had been set or plans made to do so with Grant County.

County Commissioner Tom Taylor, who another commissioner said had been on the earlier call with Curnel and Streuli, could not be immediately reached for comment to share his recollection of the conversation.

Emmy Dinman can be reached via email at [edinman@columbiabasinherald.com](mailto:edinman@columbiabasinherald.com).



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

Smiles are all around during a game of "Pat-A-Cake" on the front lawn on Wednesday afternoon in Moses Lake for Gevin, left, and Kerry Aronsohn. Kerry said she's fortunate to be able to be at home during the day for her three children as they begin virtual learning again soon.

## School year approaches

### Special education parents working to find best options

By CASEY MCCARTHY  
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — Parents and families are preparing children as the school year nears. Parents of children dealing with special needs face a number of challenges as they seek the best option for this fall.

Kerry Aronsohn is a founding board member of the Down Syndrome Society of Grant County (DSSGC) and recently stepped down as president after serving for six years. Aronsohn said she has three school-age children getting set to go back this fall, including her 11-year-old Gevin, who has Down syndrome.

She said she and her husband elected to have all three go with online learning this fall after listening in on school board meetings. Expecting that a few COVID-19 cases would shut down, she said she didn't want to risk her chil-

dren going back and forth between different formats.

"Rather than deal with all the change, we'd rather start out online instead of having our kids go from one thing to the next and get caught up in that mess," Aronsohn said. "We thought we'd just start with what would eventually happen." Her son's compromised immune system also led to the decision of having Gevin start the year from home.

A big concern in not having her son at school are the peer relations and face-to-face interaction he's missing out on, Aronsohn said.

After a few months of virtual learning in the spring, she said she felt like her son was starting to shut down a bit, which was concerning.

"I do feel like that is a major part of education, and it will definitely be missed," Aronsohn said. "For me personally, I'm

planning on engaging him in other social situations where he's going to have peer interaction, and things like that, but it's definitely a concern."

Aronsohn said she is brainstorming ways she might be able to meet some of the needs for the social interactions her son is missing out on and hopefully have more of a routine at home for him to get accustomed to.

Being a board member of the DSSGC, she said it's beneficial to have that network of people to interact with and to discuss ideas or concerns.

"I think it can play a crucial role in networking and definitely in being able to reach out to people with those relationships that you form with other people," Aronsohn said.

While there's always stress facing the unknown, Aronsohn said she feels like she and her husband will get more comfortable

as things go along. She said she is trying to keep a positive outlook, but added there is always the concern of how her children will cope with and respond to the learning at home.

Denise Ketola, of Ephrata, is the current president of the DSSGC and is preparing for her daughter, Benita, to return to school for her junior year. Ketola said she feels very fortunate that the special education program in Ephrata will be able to have her daughter in person to begin the fall.

"She is going to start half-day afternoon in person," Ketola said. "She's going to be picked up by the bus, and she'll be there for three hours. That is just our dream at this time in our life where everyone else is virtual."

She said her daughter's eyes lit up when she heard she'd be riding the bus again soon. Ketola said

See PARENTS, A4

## Moses Lake School District faces likely budget pinch, layoffs

By EMMY DINMAN  
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — With around 6 percent fewer students expected to enroll with Moses Lake School District this school year, the district faces the prospect of having approximately \$5 million less to work with in its upcoming budget, Superintendent Josh Meek said in a Wednesday interview.

Though the district anticipated a budget impact amid the coronavirus pandemic and had looked for ways to reduce costs ahead of the school year, Meek

said that layoffs are likely.

"We were able to get ahead of that a little bit by not hiring some positions, leaving some vacancies open, doing creative things to avoid pressure, but it's going to have to involve some reductions in staff," Meek said.

It's still too early to say what positions or how many will be cut, Meek added, as the district works to balance



Meek

additional responsibilities, including screening students as they come into classrooms and managing various learning models, with the need to reduce costs.

Around 500 fewer students than projected are enrolled for the upcoming school year, Meek said. Approximately 200 of them were previously enrolled students who indicated they didn't plan to return to the district and were enrolled in an another form of schooling, such as home or private school.

In addition, fewer students are coming into kindergarten

this year, with many parents likely choosing to wait another year before their children enroll, Meek added. However, while it depends on many factors, Meek said he believed most of the departing students would re-enroll with MLSD once the pandemic ended.

Many programs and extra-curricular activities, including sports, are going to be put on hold, but there hasn't been much discussion about cutting those programs altogether to help balance the budget, Meek said. In fact, while some activities such as band or drama may not

be possible in person, some staffers are looking at ways to provide some modified version of those activities that complies with health protocols, he added.

"We have lots of different groups trying to get creative to keep activities going," Meek said. "I know one of our band directors is looking at, 'so I can't meet face to face, what is a way to keep people connected with music virtually?' There's a lot of creativity going on behind the scenes."

Emmy Dinman can be reached via email at [edinman@columbiabasinherald.com](mailto:edinman@columbiabasinherald.com).

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Samaritan to buy equipment for new hospital. **A2**

### OPINION

**Guest column**  
Remember freedom on Patriot Day. **A4**

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Opening a water park has become unexpectedly complicated



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# Ready for takeoff

Main runway reopens after \$21.5 million project to level surface

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE  
 Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — It's not a walk the three Port of Moses Lake commissioners — Stroud Kunkle, David "Kent" Jones and Darrin Jackson — take very often.

"Now you can see to the end of the runway," Jones said as he strolled across the brand-new asphalt of Grant County International Airport's main runway on Tuesday.

They walked to a spot, smack in the middle, where Air Force C-17 transports on training flights, or giant 747 freighters hauling cherries, would need to cross in order to land and take off.

"The Grant County International Airport runway 32 Right is open for business," added the port's executive director, Don Kersey.

The 13,500-foot-long main runway was closed in December to allow workers to remove a roughly six-foot high hump that blocked the view from one end of the runway to the other. While this wasn't a problem for the U.S. Air Force in the 1950s, the hump violated Federal Aviation Administration's rules.

In the end, workers removed and repaved roughly 4,000 feet of runway at a cost of \$21.5 million — most of it paid for by FAA and well under the original engineering estimate of \$26 million, according to Airport Director Rich Mueller.

"A lot of dirt moved, a lot of concrete moved, a lot of steel moved," Jackson added.



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

Port of Moses Lake Commissioners, left to right, David "Kent" Jones, Stroud Kunkle and Darrin Jackson stand on the new refinished main runway of the Grant County International Airport.

While the work went on, the airport was open, as it has four runways.

The main runway reopening was supposed to have been greeted with much greater fanfare. Runners were supposed to run the nearly

10-kilometer length of the main runway — one end to the other and back — in early June, and the second annual Moses Lake Air Show was to have regaled audiences the Friday and Saturday before Father's Day.

But with the COVID-19 outbreak, it was not to be. Even the formal opening of the runway was delayed a week because the contractor paved it initially with the wrong

See RUNWAY, A3

"The Grant County International Airport runway 32 Right is open for business."

— Don Kersey,  
 Port of Moses Lake executive director

## Fairgrounds improvements proceed

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER  
 Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — Construction crews were installing insulation in the Agriculture Building at Grant County Fairgrounds on Tuesday in one of a number of projects underway or near completion at the fairgrounds.

Fairgrounds manager Jim McKiernan said the ag building is getting a new facade, a new heating and cooling system, new doors and interior upgrades, at a cost of about \$90,000. The interior upgrades will allow the building to be used year-round, McKiernan said. Exterior upgrades will give it a look similar to other exhibitor buildings.

Workers also have



Cheryl Schweizer/Columbia Basin Herald

Construction worker Gerardo Medina installs insulation in the agriculture building at the Grant County Fairgrounds Tuesday.

See WORK, A6

## Fireworks allowed at certain times in Quincy, Ephrata

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER  
 Staff Writer

EPHRATA — John Adams, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, wrote to his wife, Abigail, that the anniversary of the signing should and would be celebrated with fireworks. Adams was right about the fireworks, but he thought the nation's birthday would be celebrated on July 2.

Independence Day — July 4 — is celebrated with fireworks displays, including huge shows in the sky put on by professionals and people setting off smaller fireworks at ground level. The fireworks sold to the public are called "common fireworks" in municipal regulations.

There are regulations governing where and how those fireworks should be used, differing from city to city. Some cities allow residents to set off fireworks within the city limits, Quincy and Ephrata among them.

Fireworks are allowed in Ephrata from June 28 to July 4 during certain hours.

See FIREWORKS, A2

LOCAL

**Ups and downs**

Mattawa restaurant works through restrictions. **A2**

LOCAL

**Drug case**

Grand Coulee man sentenced to 10 years. **A3**

SPORTS

**Spuds' skipper**

MLHS grad takes over baseball program. **A7**

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# Sports



Othello running back Sonny Asu carries the ball out of the backfield on Saturday afternoon against Clarkston at Huskie Stadium.

Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

## Othello outruns Clarkston, 34-19

By CASEY MCCARTHY  
Staff Writer

**OTHELLO** — After a heartbreaking loss to Shadle Park the week before, the Othello High School Huskies (2-2) football team came away with a 34-19 victory over Clarkston High School at Huskie Stadium in Othello Saturday afternoon.

Sophomores Sonny Asu and Julian Alegria led a rushing barrage for the Huskies on offense, finishing with 323 combined rushing yards. Asu scored the first of three rushing touchdowns just minutes into the first quarter.

Asu converted a big pass play on fourth down to set up Alegria for a touchdown in the second quarter, bringing Othello's lead to 13-7.

On the defensive side, Alegria managed to block a Clarkston punt in the third quarter with Ezra Gonzalez recovering the loose ball. After being backed up by penalties near the goal line, Sonny Asu tore away for a big run to score again.

A Clarkston rushing touchdown cut the deficit to 19-13 at the start of the fourth quarter. Alegria and Asu would each find the end zone once more time in the final 12 minutes for the win.

Asu led in rushing with 227 yards on 28 attempts, while Alegria finished with 95 yards on 14 attempts. Alegria also added a tipped pass that was intercepted.

Asu said after the game he owes almost all the credit for his success to his offensive line.

"They open up the gaps," Asu said. "It was a tight game in the beginning. We all came together during halftime and we knew what we needed to do to pull out



Othello running back Julian Alegria rumbles forward against Clarkston.

Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald



Othello's Ethan Medina (40) combines with a teammate to tackle the Clarkston ball carrier Saturday.

Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

this win." Asu said the footwork drills he and Alegria do both on and off the field have helped them see their cuts and hit the gaps their line creates for them.

"I think we've got a really good chance at going to state next year," Asu said. "The confidence is really up there. I'm feeling really good about this season."

Alegria said it's important to go into the game with a mindset that "you're going to kill" and be ready to make the

big play. As a running back and defensive end himself, Alegria said he looks up a lot to former Othello standout RB/DE Isaiah Perez.

"He was a really good runner and defensive player, so I just want to learn from him and keep going this season, try and get some wins," Alegria said.

Othello defensive coordinator Kevin Hale said coming back with a win after losing to Shadle Park is a credit to the players.

"Last week, we lost

our heads there a little bit at the end," Hale said. "But today, they just kept coming, kept coming. We made our mistakes there, but a tribute to the boys, they just kept going after it and we ended up with the win."

Having a strong rushing performance from the two sophomore backs helped Othello on both sides of the ball, Hale said. He added it kept the defense fresher by keeping them off the field for long stretches of the game.

Hale said the defense's tackling could have been better and is something he will focus on in practice.

"I felt like we were in pretty good position for the most part on defense, but we've gotta be better tacklers," he said. "We can have a shutdown defense if we can fix that one thing."

Othello will host North Central High School Friday night at Huskie Stadium for one of three games left on the schedule.

Casey McCarthy can be reached via email at [cmccarthy@columbiabasinherald.com](mailto:cmccarthy@columbiabasinherald.com).

## Weekend prep roundup: Royal thumps Wenatchee, 54-6

By CASEY MCCARTHY  
Staff Writer

### Football

#### Royal 54, Wenatchee 6

Knights quarterback Caleb Christensen finished with 290 yards passing, four touchdowns and no interceptions. Luke and Derek Bergeson combined for 180 yards receiving in the road win on Friday night. Derek Bergeson led the defense with seven total tackles.

#### Ephrata 22, Chelan 20

The Tigers scored 13 in the fourth quarter to comeback for the win against Chelan over the weekend. Gavin Burns threw for 113 yards and three touchdowns in the win. Kyle Hendrick led the receiving crew with five catches for 50 yards receiving and the score.

Tyler Lybbert scored a touchdown on offense and grabbed an interception on the defensive side for Ephrata.

#### Other scores:

Moses Lake 13, Eastmont 35  
Lind-Ritzville 32, Kettle Falls 6  
Warden 6, Okanogan 40  
Wahluke 6, Brewster 38

### Girls soccer

#### Othello 1, Pullman 0

Janelly Verduzco scored the winner off an assist from Hailee Guzman on Senior Night for the Huskies.

#### Royal 4, Liberty Bell 0

Forward Meadow Saenz nabbed the hat trick in the win over Liberty Bell on Saturday for the Knights. Chenoa Louie added the fourth goal, with Blake Jensen and Cynthia Raygoza adding assists in the win.

#### Wahluke 4, Tonasket 1

Ana Andrade scored three for the Warriors in the win over Tonasket over the weekend. Alondra Lozano added another goal to her tally for Wahluke.

#### Warden 1, Brewster 0

Arely Rangel put in the game-winner for the Cougars over the weekend and help put an end to a three-game skid for Warden.

#### Moses Lake 3, Ephrata 1

Moses Lake's Natalie Bunch scored a pair of goals for the Chiefs with Olivia

Waites adding the third as Moses Lake evened the season series with Ephrata at 1-1. Lynette Sanchez picked up an unassisted goal for the Tigers on Saturday.

### Volleyball

#### Warden 3, Wahluke 2

After taking the first set, Wahluke fought back to take a 2-1 advantage on Saturday before the Cougars were able to take the final two sets and match. Warden won the final set, 15-11. Jlynn Rios led the Cougars in digs, Nataly Campos led in assists and Averie Golladay led Warden in solo blocks.

#### Warden 1, Brewster 3

Warden fell 25-23 in the fourth set, falling just short of forcing a decisive fifth set against Brewster on Saturday. Averie Golladay led the team in solo blocks, Jlynn Rios led in digs, Celety Egia led in aces and Nataly Campos led in assists.

#### Moses Lake 3, Quincy 1

The Chiefs won the final three sets to take the match against the Jaks on Saturday afternoon. Kallie Randall finished with a team-high nine kills, adding a pair of digs and two aces. Sam Shelton added seven kills. Teagan Wiltbank led the Chiefs with 28 digs.

#### Moses Lake 0, Chelan 3

Jalyn Valdez-Torres finished with a team-high six digs for the Chiefs, while Sydney Macdonald led Moses Lake with three assists on Saturday.

#### Ephrata 3, Omak 0

Hayden Mills finished with nine kills and seven digs for the Tigers in the sweep over Omak on Saturday. Addison Mills led Ephrata with 11 kills while Lindsay Addink finished with 31 assists and three blocks.

#### Ephrata 2, Eastmont 3

Ephrata fell 8-15 in the final set of the five-game match against Eastmont. Hallee Moore led the team with 16 digs, while Addison Mills finished with a team-high eight blocks.

#### Other scores:

Wahluke 3, Brewster 2  
Othello 0, Pullman 3  
Royal 0, Lake Roosevelt 3  
Royal 0, Manson 3

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## Backyard escape

### Sand Scorpions, others bust loose at the dunes

By CASEY MCCARTHY  
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — Dust clouds and the roar of motors filled the air at Moses Lake Sand Dunes over the weekend as the Sand Scorpions ORV Group hosted its first major event of the year. Sand Scorpions members, and many others, have found refuge on the dunes this summer with other events and areas under tight limitations.

Sand Scorpions President Rich Archer started coming to the dunes with his dad in 1968. Today, his children and grandchildren join him out at the dunes in what has become a family affair.

"Every time we've gone out there, we've taken the kids," Archer said. "I've been involved in professional racing pretty much my whole life, and it all revolves around those sand dunes. I do all my driving practicing out there, and honestly, the reason we started this whole group was to encourage these kids, give them a place to try it."

Archer said kids can come out to the dunes with their parents and just make a few laps around the track to see

if it might be something they would be interested in. He said some kids fall in love with it and some don't, but they have a chance to give it a shot.

Watching the kids enjoy their time at the events is just as much fun as the races, he said.

"You see the big guys in their big trucks running around playing in the mud, and you turn around and there's a little guy playing in the mud with a toy truck," Archer said. "They're doing the same thing. They learn early and they enjoy it, something they love to do."

On top of all of the recreational motor sport activities the dunes provide, Archer said, there's an assortment of activities that bring people out each summer, including swimming, fishing, boating and camping.

"Hunters, fishermen, everybody uses that area," he said. "The cool thing about that is the fishermen will give it up to us to use for those three months in the summer. And then at the end of the year, we clean it up."

As the reservoirs go down in the summer months, the Sand Scorpions and other recreational vehicle enthusiasts make full use of the rolling dunes and ponds.

See SAND DUNES, B4

"Everybody's getting stuck, everybody's sweaty, everybody's helping each other, pulling each other out."

— Justin Gilbert,  
motor sports enthusiast



Casey McCarthy photos/Columbia Basin Herald

**ABOVE:** A face full of mud couldn't hide the joy for Kelly Thorpe, who made the drive over from Everett to the Moses Lake Sand Dunes for the Sand Scorpions' event on Saturday.

**BELOW:** Sand Scorpions President Rich Archer makes his way around the track on Saturday afternoon at the offroad group's first major event of the summer, the annual Off Road Race Around the Bowls.



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

Spectators and racers watch from the grass above the track as Justin Gilbert sprays mud and water into the air, sliding around the course on Saturday at the Moses Lake Sand Dunes.

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Shawn Dodge, right, processes the specimens and associated medical records, generating a barcode to attach to the test which helps staff and health officials keep track of coronavirus transmission. Stephanie Sieloff, left, then takes a test to the diagnostic tools used to detect coronavirus antigens.

Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

## Facilities plan recommends remodeling Quincy MS within 8 years

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER  
Staff Writer

QUINCY — Quincy School District patrons should be thinking about remodeling or replacing Quincy Middle School sometime in five to eight years, according to one of the recommendations in a new master facilities plan presented to the Quincy School Board on Aug. 25.

Superintendent John Boyd said district officials wrote a facilities improvement plan about 15 years ago, "that we were able to execute."

The updated plan is designed to provide some guidance as the district continues to grow, Boyd said.

The previous plan included a new Quincy High School, remodeling Quincy Junior High into an elementary school and upgrading the district's elementary schools.

The former junior high was remodeled into Ancient Lakes Elementary. The junior high students moved into the former Quincy High School, which is now Quincy Middle School.

The new facilities plan recommends remodeling and modernizing at the middle school within the next four to eight years, specifically the former high school shop areas. An alternate recommendation is to build an entirely new middle school on the same property, keeping the existing school in operation while the new one is under construction.

Other projects are recommended in the short term, the next one to three years, and one of them already has been completed.

The plan recommended finding a new location for Quincy Innovation Academy, currently housed in a repurposed building downtown. Board members have approved an agreement to buy the former Quincy Valley School property with the intention, Boyd said, of moving the Innovation Academy and distance learning programs to that site.

See TEST A3

See QUINCY, A3

# A new test in town

Confluence Health provides some patients with rapid COVID-19 tests

By EMRY DINMAN  
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — Confluence Health clinics, in Moses Lake and elsewhere in the state, have begun providing a less-intrusive type of coronavirus test that produces results in minutes, rather than days.

It's called an antigen test, and this particular type is nearly as accurate as the slower, more invasive test it's replacing, said Dr. Jason Lake, chief medical officer at Confluence Health, in a recent interview.

Since the early days of the pandemic, coronavirus tests provided in Washington have typically been polymerase chain reaction tests, or PCR tests, which can detect with near certainty whether or not a person is sickened with COVID-19. Both Confluence's antigen test and other PCR tests are conducted with a nasal swab, but the more widely used PCR test is pushed much further back into the nose, which can cause discomfort.

Those tests are considered the gold

standard in accuracy, Lake said, but they require sophisticated equipment that isn't available in most hospitals.

Instead, the tests are sent away to labs across the state, where health officials have reported that they can get results back in 24 hours at the best of times or it could take longer than a week at the worst.

Antigen tests are considerably quicker. In less than 30 minutes, a nurse can walk out to a patient's car, verify their information, conduct the test, walk the swab up to the in-house lab and get results.

However, while positive antigen tests are considered accurate, negative results are often considered less reliable, according to guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But not all antigen tests are created equally, Lake said.

"The problem with antigen testing as a category, there's a wide variability in reliability with different antigen tests," he said.

While it is still possible to get a negative result from the test and in fact

be infected with the coronavirus, it's unlikely, and worth the faster results, Lake added.

The quicker turnaround hasn't necessarily meant Confluence is conducting more tests than it had previously, Lake said.

Their antigen tests are in most cases still only available for presurgical patients, symptomatic Confluence employees and people who need a negative COVID-19 test before they can travel to certain states with travel restrictions, such as Alaska and Hawaii, said Confluence nurse Cheryl Adams. That might change come flu season, however, when the test could be adapted to detect both types of virus simultaneously, said Gregg Fletcher, vice president of Grant County clinics operations for Confluence Health.

But faster results can already have some important impacts, especially for presurgical patients, Lake said.

"Before, oftentimes we had to test three or four day prior to surgery,"

## Lawyer leaps past the bar, starts practicing in Moses Lake

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE  
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — Damiano Cacchiotti found out he'd become a lawyer in a text message.

"I was having dinner with my fiancée when my buddy texted, he went to Gonzaga, and he said 'Dude, we're lawyers,'" Cacchiotti said.

Normally, someone finds out that they've become a lawyer when they receive the results of their bar exam. Cacchiotti, who graduated from McGeorge Law School in Sacramento, California, this spring, said he was preparing to take the bar in September.

"I actually came back in March," he said. "My school went online, so I came back and did online school for the rest of the semester, did a virtual graduation, and started studying for the bar."

But on June 12, the Washington Supreme Court granted "diploma privilege" to any graduate of an American Bar Association-accredited law school who was registered for the state's July or September 2020 bar exams — meaning they could become lawyers in Washington without having to pass, or even take, the exam.

"You can choose to take it, but that's up to you. I waived it," Cacchiotti said.

Washington is one of only four states, along with Utah, Oregon and Louisiana, to give temporary diploma privilege to 2020 law school graduates in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Wendy Ferrel, a spokesperson for the Washington State Supreme Court, this year's diploma privilege only extends to graduates of ABA-certified programs who registered for the bar exam. Everyone else still has to take the exam.

"It was limited in scope," Ferrel said.

But it doesn't change that they are lawyers in good



Charles H. Featherstone/Columbia Basin Herald

Dano Law Firm's Damiano Cacchiotti is one of a number of new lawyers this year who did not have to take the state bar exam.  
See LAWYER, A3

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Shortfall

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# On the front line

Public works employees also serve as first responders



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## Beach closed

Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

A beach area in Steamboat Rock State Park near Electric City closed permanently Jan. 1 to provide resource protection, said Julie McPherson, outdoor recreation planner for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Washington State Parks and the Bureau of Reclamation worked together, with the parks posting signs and enforcing the closure with patrols.

## Help for students

Schools could offer emergency waivers to graduation rules

By ANGELICA RELENTE  
 Herald Legislative Writer

State legislators are looking to create a permanent waiver program for graduating public and private high school students in case of a local, state or national emergency.

House Bill 1121, co-sponsored by Rep. Alex Ybarra, R-Quincy, would allow the Washington State Board of Education to authorize public and private schools to offer emergency waivers from graduation requirements, according to the bill's text.



Ybarra

Students are eligible for the waiver if their ability to complete graduation requirements was hindered by an emergency, according to the bill's text. Before considering the waiver, the school must show a "good faith effort" by supporting students' attempts in meeting the graduation requirements.

The SBE is required to adopt rules, like having eligibility criteria or limiting the number and type of credits it can waive, according to the bill's text. School districts must also have a plan that details how students can request or reject a waiver.

Last year, legislators approved Engrossed House

See STUDENTS, Page A3

## Soap Lake seeks funds for new basketball court

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE  
 Staff Writer

SOAP LAKE — It looks like Smokiam Park in Soap Lake will get a new basketball court.

According to Soap Lake Mayor Alex Kovacks, the city of Soap Lake has received a \$211,000 grant from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office to build a new basketball court right next to the skate park in the lakefront Smokiam Park.

The grant funds approximately 90% of the project, Kovacks said. The city is busy raising the remaining sum, roughly \$25,000, needed to complete the basketball court.

"It's pretty exciting news," Kovacks said. "The budget's a little tight, so we need input and donations."

According to Kovacks, the city has kicked in \$9,000 from the parks and recreation department and \$5,000 from

tourism funding. Donations totaled \$3,000 on Tuesday morning.

"We're getting close," Kovacks said, adding he hoped to have secured the remainder and fully fund construction of the new basketball court prior to the city council's next meeting, Feb. 3.

"I'm hoping to update the council on where we are so far," he said.

Soap Lake originally submitted the grant application in 2018, but while the basketball court was deemed eligible, the RCO did not fund the project at the time, Kovacks said. The office, however, did list the basketball court as an alternate project, and funded it in 2020, he added.

Kovacks said the addition of the basketball court is part of a larger plan to make Smokiam Park a greater venue for young people to hang out, skate and play.

"We'd also like to see

See SOAP LAKE, Page A2



A display along SR-17 in Soap Lake encourages support for the city's drive to raise \$25,000 to help build a new basketball court in Smokiam Park.

Charles H. Featherstone/Columbia Basin Herald

## MLIRD passes \$1.6 million budget, seeks home for giant dirt pile

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE  
 Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — Do you need some dirt?

The Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District — still — has about 50,000 cubic yards of dirt it dredged from the bottom of Moses Lake in 2019, sitting on land between the lakeshore and East Broadway, near state Route 17.

"It's a pretty good sized pile," said MLIRD Board of Directors President Bill Bailey.

According to Bailey, the original plan was to donate the dirt to the Port of Moses Lake, which planned to spread it on several fields the port irrigates to grow crops near the Grant County International Airport.

The dirt is the property of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Bailey said, and because of that, it cannot be sold.

It can only be given away.

"We've tried to give it away," Bailey said. "But whoever takes it has to haul it."

As part of its \$1.6 million 2021 budget, passed unanimously by dis-



Charles H. Featherstone/Columbia Basin Herald

Some of the 50,000 cubic yards of dirt the Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District dredged from the bottom of Moses Lake in 2019 sits near the intersection of East Broadway and Third avenues.

trict directors at an online meeting Wednesday, the MLIRD has allocated between \$200,000 and \$300,000 to haul all that dirt to the Port of Moses Lake — assuming the port still wants it.

"It's kind of a rough deal," Bailey said. "We spend \$1.4 million to get it out of the water, and we're looking to spend another \$300,000."

The Port of Moses Lake still wants the dirt, according to Executive Director

Don Kersey.

"Yes, we would take it," Kersey wrote in an email to the Columbia Basin Herald.

Moving dirt is the only major project in the district's 2021 budget, though the \$1.6 million also includes \$60,000 for lake treatments and \$100,000 for continued research into Moses Lake's ongoing

See DIRT, Page A3

## Grant County Fair for this year is being planned

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER  
 Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — The 2021 Grant County Fair will have a livestock show and sale, but what else will happen during fair week is still to be determined.

What might and might not be allowed by August, the traditional month for the fair, was discussed during a meeting of the Grant County commissioners Tuesday.

The COVID-19 outbreak caused the 2020 fair to be canceled, although fair officials sponsored a livestock show for 4-H and FFA participants. Fairgrounds manager Jim McKiernan said in a separate interview he is skeptical the 2021 fair will be what he called "a normal fair."

"We're all seeing signs it's not going to be a normal year," McKiernan said. The outbreak "is not going away this year, that's for sure."

Circumstances could change before fair time.

"It's very fluid right now,"

See FAIR, Page A2

LOCAL

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 Sheriff's office warns of impersonators. **A2**

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 McConnell slams president for 'lies' to angry mob. **A3**

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**Basketball**  
 Warden girls hope to pick up where they left off. **A4**

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# Signs of fall: Pumpkins!

Mickle Farms pumpkin patch keeps growing



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## Grant County does better with sales tax revenue

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER  
Staff Writer

EPHRATA — With three-quarters of 2020 in the rear-view mirror, Grant County is collecting more sales tax than it did in the same period last year. But the county government's income picture is not all sunny.

Grant County Treasurer Darryl Pheasant said sales tax collections are 12 percent higher in the first nine months of 2020 than they were in the first nine months of 2019.

Also, the real estate excise tax, collected on real estate sales, is 9 percent higher through the first nine months of 2020 than the same period in 2019.

The county government's increased revenue from sales and real estate taxes has helped offset a revenue decline from the cancellation of the concert season at the Gorge Amphitheatre. The county collects a fee on tickets and other sales at the Gorge. Pheasant estimated the lack of a concert season will cost the county about \$1.4 million.

"We have a big hole to fill," he said.

Property tax revenues are slightly lower than the budget projection, he said. More county residents have been paying their property taxes on time in 2020, so the county has collected less in interest and penalties on delinquent accounts.

With historically low interest rates available these days, the county's investment fund is generating less than the budget projections. Pheasant said it has been a struggle to find investments that yield sufficient return.



Casey McCarthy/Columbia Basin Herald

Kekuni Robello attempts the kick flip off the halfpipe at the skate park in Moses Lake on Tuesday afternoon. The Rotary Club of Moses Lake is working on raising funds for renovations and a possible remodel for the park in the near future.

## Ramping up to a remodel

Rotary Club raises funds to renovate skate park in Moses Lake

By CASEY MCCARTHY  
Staff Writer

The Rotary Club of Moses Lake is currently raising funds for its annual community service project, with eyes set on the skate park in Moses Lake this year.

The club has raised about \$31,000 for the project and plans to launch a GoFundMe page to go toward the club's ultimate goal of raising \$300,000 for the remodeling. A large chunk of that money was raised from the recent joint golf tournament with the Rotary Club and

the Kiwanis Club of Moses Lake.

The Kiwanis Club donated half of its money raised from the tournament toward the skate park remodeling project, making \$6,700 each from the Kiwanis Club and Rotary Club. Rotary Club President Steve Ausere said he was thankful for the Kiwanis Club contributing so much to this community project.

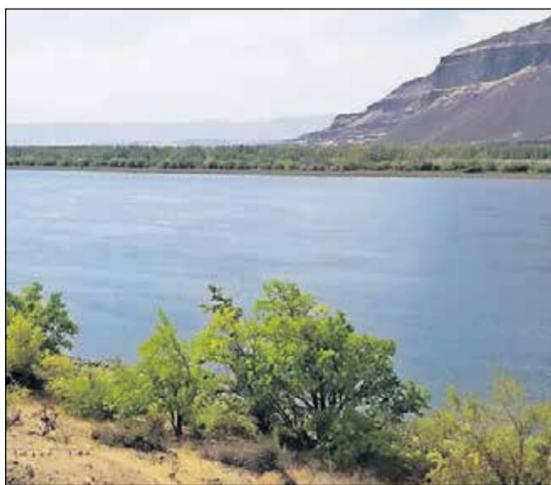
Another \$6,800 was funded through the Rotary Foundation, with the final \$11,000 being raised from an auction put on by the club.

The city of Moses Lake has applied for a capital budget request to go toward the project as well, but Ausere said they are still waiting to hear on that.

As president of the Rotary Club this year, Ausere said, he was tasked with coming up with a project.

"I have friends that have kids who come down to the park, and I was down here with him and his son who was out skateboarding," Ausere said. "He looked at me and said, 'Somebody should do

See ROTARY, Page A3



File photo

A collection of federal agencies have agreed on a plan for managing the Columbia River's dams and water.

## Columbia River management plan completed

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE  
Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After an in-depth review ordered by President Donald J. Trump nearly two years ago, the federal agencies responsible for overseeing the Columbia River have agreed on a management plan that will balance power generation and the needs of wildlife.

In a 94-page Record of Decision issued Monday, senior officials with the Bureau of

Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bonneville Power Administration agreed to manage the Columbia River's dams and water in a way that will both optimize electricity generation and provide enough spillage for salmon and lampreys while also ensuring that Pacific Ocean orcas have enough to eat.

"Federal water infrastructure makes our way of life possible throughout the West," said Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., in a press release.

"Central Washington boasts one of the most productive agricultural regions in the country, and our farmers and ranchers would not be able to produce food and fiber for the world without a reliable supply of our most precious resource: water."

The Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision is the final step in the Columbia River System Operations National Environmental Policy Act process,

according to the press release.

The announcement of the plan signed Monday was met with favorable comments also from Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., Jaime Herrera Beutler, R-Wash., Rep. Russ Fulcher R-Idaho, and Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore.

In October 2018, Trump ordered a review of all western water projects to "address water infrastructure challenges in the western United

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