

Baker man charged with sexual assault

WesCom News Service

A Baker City man is in custody today on multiple charges of sexually assaulting a child. Miguel Angel Estudillo, 49, of Baker City, is being held at the Baker County Jail in lieu of \$437,500 bail, a Baker City Police press release stated. Estudillo was taken into custody about 5:15 p.m. Friday. District Attorney Matt Shirtcliff said today Estudillo will be arraigned

today on two counts each of first-degree rape, first-degree sodomy, first-degree unlawful sexual penetration first-degree sexual abuse. Shirtcliff said additional charges will be considered by a grand jury. Because the victim is younger than 12, if Estudillo is convicted of the crimes of rape, sodomy and unlawful sexual penetration, he could face up to 25 years in prison on each count under Jessica's Law, Shirtcliff said.

The law, named after a child victim in Florida, requires mandatory minimum sentences for certain sex crimes. It has been in place in Oregon since 2006. If convicted of the first-degree sexual abuse charges, Estudillo could face a mandatory minimum 75-month prison sentence for each crime. The Baker County Sheriff's Office and the state Department of Human Services is assisting Baker City Police in the investigation.

Brown's budget outlines her rural agenda

■ Governor wants nearly \$250 million to go toward infrastructure

The Associated Press

SALEM — Gov. Kate Brown's proposed budget includes more than \$247 million for rural infrastructure projects in Oregon and other increased spending to benefit rural residents.

The Daily Astorian reports there's enthusiasm from observers about Brown's spending plans for rural Oregon, from dams to housing to high-speed internet.

But some advocates and lawmakers worry about other parts of her budget that cut fire protection on forestland, hold steady money for community colleges and increase taxes by \$2 billion.

Despite the state's robust overall economic growth, rural Oregon has yet to fully bounce back from the Great Recession.

Rural unemployment has been declining since its peak in 2009, and the state's rural economy is less diverse, making it more vulnerable to shocks. And the populace and workforce in rural areas of Oregon are aging, according to a report last year from the state Employment Department.

Brown wants to boost funding for loan programs and for public-private partnerships to build housing for people who can't find affordable homes in the communities where they

work. Brown wants the state to borrow \$130 million through bonds to build up to 2,100 affordable homes for communities of color and in rural areas.

The governor has also proposed millions in water projects.

Brown's budget allots \$16 million to replace the Wallowa Dam, which is more than a century old and whose operators keep less water than it was built to hold to avoid a failure.

Brown's wish list includes an agricultural workforce center at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton and an industrial trades center at Klamath County Community College in Klamath Falls.

Oregon's 17 community colleges had about 280,000 students in the 2016-17 school year, according to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. They primarily serve rural areas.

But unless the Legislature raises nearly \$2 billion in new taxes for her major education revival plan, Brown's budget would reduce money that community colleges say they need to continue current operations for the next two years.

It would also cut funds to Oregon Promise, which covers tuition for certain students.

LIGHTS

Continued from Page 1A books include the names of more than 4,000 people. The Tree of Lights ceremony was started in by Pat Duffy, a former GRH Hospice volunteer. Smith-Dixon credits a big

part of the success of the program to the Fitzgerald family. The family has donated space inside Pat's Alley for the Tree of Lights each year since 1995. "It has been so wonderful to be able to hold it in the same place each year," Smith-Dixon said.

Others who have contributed to the ongoing tradition are those who have donated trees. This year's tree was donated by Bob and Carol Messinger of Summerville. Music will be performed at Thursday's ceremony by Melissa Over, Kelly Skovlin and Doug Kaigler. Verla Kirkeby,

spiritual care coordinator for GRH Hospice, will provide a spiritual reflection. People who would like to put up cards honoring loved ones can obtain them at Fitzgerald's Flowers, inside Pat's Alley, and at GRH Hospice, 2502 Cove Ave., Suite A, La Grande.

NATIVITY

Continued from Page 1A by St. Francis of Assisi in the year 1223 in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio, according to Smithsonian magazine. Nativity scenes differ from country to country, but ones with similar depictions of the entire village of Bethlehem can often be found in Southern Italy. Even with all of the extra pageantry and a re-enactment of a long-ago Bethlehem, the La Grande Living Nativity will also include a re-creation of the traditional nativity scene, with a baby Jesus, Joseph, Mary, wisemen and shepherds. In the past, the cast of the La Grande Christmas event featured Clyde the camel, which was brought to the event from Boise, Idaho. Sadly, because of the



Observer file photo

The annual living nativity event is back from a one-year hiatus. The event re-creates the small village of Bethlehem, where Jesus was born.

uncertainty of whether the church would be having a living nativity this year, the organizers were unable to reserve him in time. St. Clair said he hopes the camel will return in future years. Overall, St. Clair said he

hopes the event, which has attracted more than 2,000 people in the past, sparks a dialogue between churchgoers and non-churchgoers. "We hope it's more than entertainment," St. Clair said. "We hope that it's a

reminder for the reason for the season." The La Grande Living Nativity will be open from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Dec. 14 and 15 at the La Grande Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2702 Adams Ave.

SPEECH

Continued from Page 1A stress-inducing than parliamentary debate. Parliamentary debate teams are told their topic just 20 minutes before competition begins. A key to succeeding in these circumstances is quickly assembling an outline that information and strategic points are plugged into, the superintendent said. This is easier said than done since parliamentary debate teams are not allowed to access the internet. "All they can have is a dictionary, a notebook and something to write with," Pettit said. He explained that dictionaries are needed to allow teams to define words in the debate's question to the satisfaction of both teams. The goal is to have the teams agree on a single meaning of words that may have multiple definitions. "Every debate invites word play. You have to define words," he said. Cove High School's team put its debate organizational skills to the test at a practice session Wednesday. Pettit gave the team a topic — "Should the electoral college be abolished?" — and then the students had 20 minutes to prepare an outline of their arguments after which a debate began. Pettit does not know if

students will ever have to debate the electoral college issue in formal competition, but he chose the subject for Wednesday's practice because it is the type of question students will argue. "The debate questions (in formal competitions) are about current issues. It is important that students keep up with what is going on in the news so they will be ready," the Cove superintendent said. Cove students also compete in speech competitions known as "radio." Students must read a written text while sitting down and looking directly at their text. Gestures and facial expressions are unimportant for only vocal delivery counts as one reads. "You are not allowed to make eye contact with judges," Pettit said. "It supposed to be just like someone giving a radio broadcast." Taggart is among the students who compete in the radio category. He said the timing element can be tricky. Taggart noted he had competed in a radio competition earlier this year but because he added humorous commercials to his presentation, it ran past the time limit. Sophie Pettit also participates in radio competitions. Pettit, a star sprinter and jumper on the Cove High School track team, said she

feels more pressure competing in races than in speech and debate because in track you have direct control of the final result. "In track, your performance is all that counts. In debate and speech, it is subjective," the Cove senior said. Pettit competed in speech and debate as a freshman and a sophomore at Monument High School in Grant County before transferring to Cove in 2017 when her father was named superintendent there. She said some of her best speech and debate memories involved the fun she had with her friends on road trips. "That was the most memorable part of the experience," she said. Cove High School is one of very few schools in Northeast Oregon with a speech and debate team. Other schools with teams include Pendleton and Pine Eagle high schools. The absence of teams means Cove must travel far to get to tournaments. It competed in its inaugural competition Oct. 27 at Tillamook High School and will participate in January at Pacific University in Forest Grove. Students had to wear costumes at the Tillamook

tournament for it had a Halloween theme. "It was the right setting for our first-year team. (The Halloween theme) made it more relaxing and fun," Earl Pettit said. This will not be the case at Pacific University, where Cove will compete at the Hap Hingston Forensics Invitational. "That will be much more business-like. It will be more stressful," the Cove Superintendent said. This is Pettit's fourth year as a speech and debate coach. He led Monument High School's speech and debate team from 2014 to 2017 before moving to Cove. Pettit's teams advanced to the state tournament twice and had three district champions in individual events. He started a speech and debate team at Cove High School after seeing how well it was received in Monument. Pettit said he believes the bond of friendship developed among members of a speech and debate team is amazingly strong because everything done involves such a cerebral process. "There is nothing like the camaraderie of a speech and debate team."



Cherise Kaechele / The Observer

The teams are given a topic with just 20 minutes to prepare arguments. They are not allowed to use the internet, but are given a dictionary.

Storage Solution
www.CountrysideSheds.com

Countryside SHEDS
CCB #149931

Free Solar Shed light with purchase of new Shed

"More Than Just a Shed"
Look at a Side-By-Side Comparison

Ownership Option?	Yes	NO
Customization?	Yes	NO
Can I sell it when done?	Yes	NO
Moveable?	Yes	NO
Location?	Your House...	Across Town

See our display lot at
10102 S. McAllister Road Island City
(541) 663-0246 or toll free (800) 682-0589
Locally owned and operated for over 20 years

STEM
Perfect gifts for hungry minds

Hobby Habit

"Just for the fun of it"
411 Fir Street • La Grande
Mon-Sat 10-5:30 • Sun 12-4

aging Together...

Through Holidays
Past, Present, & Future

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the Residents & Staff of Grande Ronde Retirement - the Valley's only Premier assisted living community.

GRANDE Ronde
Retirement & Assisted Living
1809 Gekeler Ln. • La Grande
541-963-4700

November is National Hospice Month

Join Grande Ronde Hospital in honoring our hospice care team

You're Safe in Our Hands

Know Your Hospice

Did you know GRH Hospice is the only local hospice care provider that is not for profit?

Did you know GRH Hospice has served Union County families for more than 30 years?

Did you know GRH Hospice is the only local hospice care provider that consistently ranks higher than the national average across all Medicare measurements and metrics?

Check us out—www.medicare.gov/hospiceCompare

NATIONAL HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE MONTH - NOVEMBER 2018

MyHospice

GRH Hospice
963-CARE (2273)

A Program That Works. A Benefit That Matters.