

# Morrow County commissioners fire county administrator

Darrell Green is terminated in 2-1 vote on June 28

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — Morrow County no longer has a county administrator. Country commissioners at a packed public meeting Tuesday, June 28, voted 2-1 to immediately terminate the employment of Darrell Green, who has held the county administrator job for four and a half years. The county board on June 27 called an emergency closed-door meeting to consider firing Green. But Green insisted on the meeting being held in public rather than behind closed doors in executive session. Board Chair Jim Doherty at the start of the meeting explained this was about one topic — considering Green's employment. And the board would hear from only one person: Green.



The Morrow County Board of Commissioners listen Tuesday, June 28, 2022, as Darrell Green, center in the lavender shirt, gives a statement to the board about the call for his termination as county administrator. The board voted 2-1 to immediately fire Green.

Green told the board he learned in August 2021 there may have been a complaint against him and an investigation to see if he

violated nepotism rules. But no one addressed the complaint with him at the time. He told the board that in his tenure he never received

any verbal or written warnings, and even today does not have the full information about what led to this moment.

Green asked commissioners what they knew about any complaint against him. Doherty and Commissioner Melissa Lindsey

said they would not make statements on the advice of attorneys. But Commissioner Don Russell did. He said he had been trying to obtain information about the investigation for the last year, with no luck. Without knowing more, he said, he could not support Green's termination. Doherty called for the vote, and he and Lindsey voted in favor, while Russell stood against. With that, Doherty closed the meeting. The decision drew ire from many in attendance, some calling this a "witch hunt," and another shouting "recall." Morrow County Clerk Bobbie Childers was present. After the meeting she said her office has received requests for recall information, and her office has sent that information. Several people complimented Russell for his position. "I have to be able to look at myself in the mirror," he replied.



A new public "no-pay pay phone" has been installed outside the Baker County Library, 2400 Resort St., Baker City.

## Baker County Library adds public phone

Baker City Herald

BAKER CITY — The Baker County Public Library has installed a new public phone at the Baker City branch, 2400 Resort St., where users can make local calls, and out-bound-only long-distance calls up to 20 minutes, for free. "It's like a no-pay pay phone," Perry Stokes, director of the Baker County Library District, said in a press release. "Instead of dropping in coins or entering pre-paid call plan numbers, you only have to pick up the handset and dial a number." The long-distance calls are free because the phone makes calls through the library's internet connection rather than a landline. "Previously, due to cost, we had to block long-distance calls on our courtesy phone," Stokes added. "These days, that is a huge barrier to just making a simple call to a mobile phone with an out-of-area number, even though that phone owner is a local resident. But with VoIP over the internet, long-distance becomes a non-issue.

"Now we have a phone on-site that kids can use to check in with their parents when they're here at the library or in the park, seniors can use to schedule bus rides from Community Connections, and anyone can use in an emergency or to stay in touch with family and friends anywhere in the country," Stokes said. He said he's also excited about the placement of the new phone — it's outside, on the east side of Resort Street near the entrance to the library's north parking lot. "This provides enhanced privacy for callers, and less disruption to the library from loud talkers," Stokes said. The phone is under a blue hood, and the unit is made of industrial-grade stainless steel and fiberglass designed to protect against weather and vandalism. The library district spent about \$2,200 from its general fund to buy and install the phone. The district will spend about \$300 per year for the subscription that routes calls through the internet system.

## Officers catch man after kidnapping at Walmart

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton police reported arresting a Tillamook man Saturday, June 25, for kidnapping a woman and fleeing officers in a high-speed chase. Charles Frederick Seeling, 34, now is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton. Pendleton police in a press release reported local emergency dispatchers June 25 at 10:11 a.m. received several 911 calls from witnesses at Walmart, 2203 SW Court Ave., reporting a female screaming for help in a vehicle in the parking lot. Witnesses reported about what appeared to be an abduction, as a male took a female by force and sped out of the parking lot. Witnesses also provided a good vehicle description and location of travel, according to the press release. While officers were responding, the female in the vehicle called 911, screaming she had an emergency before the line was disconnected. The female called again screaming for help and stated her boyfriend was hitting her before the call

was disconnected again. The victim also was able to give her location as they were passing a business in the 1400 block of Southeast Court Avenue. She called 911 again and reported the suspect was in possession of a hammer and she was in fear he was going to use it against her. Before the line disconnected again, she gave their location as approaching Interstate 84's eastbound milepost 213 on-ramp. Officers located the vehicle on I-84 approaching Exit 216. "When officers attempted to stop the vehicle, the suspect male driver refused to stop," according to the press

release. "The suspect male took Exit 216 with Pendleton Police Department officers in pursuit on South Market Road. A high-speed pursuit continued for approximately 10 minutes." By this time, assisting units from Umatilla Tribal Police, Oregon State Police and Umatilla County Sheriff's Office were in the area. The driver abandoned the vehicle and the victim in a field at the end of Marsh Hawk Lane, then barricaded himself in a barn. After about 15 minutes of unsuccessful negotiations with the suspect male, officers entered the barn and took the male into custody at 10:59 a.m.

"While taking the male suspect into custody," according to police, "he was actively smoking fentanyl in the barn." Officers arrested Seeling for fourth-degree domestic violence assault, first-degree kidnapping, felony fleeing and reckless driving. Police also arrested Seeling for driving with a suspended license and on warrants out of Tillamook and Clatsop counties. Medical personnel attended to the victim and did not take her to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. Once all police reports are in, the case goes to the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office for consideration of charges.

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## Grande Ronde Hospital & Clinics proudly welcomes Emma Peiris, MD

Dr. Emma Peiris is a Primary Care Internist joining us at the GRH Regional Medical Clinic. She is board certified in Internal Medicine. Emma's practice focuses on general internal medicine with emphasis on older adults. She believes that building relationships with her patients and their families allows her to provide outstanding medical care. She enjoys guiding patients through the medical system and making sure they understand her recommendations and the recommendations made by their other doctors. A passion for rural healthcare and love for the outdoors brought Dr. Peiris to GRH. During her free time, she enjoys spending time with her family doing outdoor activities and playing complicated board games.

**Please help us welcome Dr. Peiris and her family to our community!!**



Emma Peiris, MD

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