

ARREST

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four family members and two friends with him in his shop yelled at the two masked men who then fled the scene.

The two individuals ran to and entered a white sedan — later identified as a 2005 KIA Spectra — parked west of the gun shop. Gorte's daughter, Randi Jo Shafer, then stood in front of the sedan in an effort to stop it from leaving. Its driver, identified later during an interview with Oregon State Police detectives as Spalinger, attempted to run over Shafer, Gorte said, but she leaped onto the hood of the sedan before being thrown off as the vehicle's driver sped away. Shafer's foot was injured as a result, according to arrest documents.

As the sedan's driver raced out of the parking lot, Gorte's son-in-law fired three shots at it with a pistol. Gorte said he believes at least one of the shots may have hit the sedan.

Gorte's son-in-law got into a vehicle and began following the sedan but pulled back when a Union County Sheriff's deputy, responding to a 911 call from the store, took over the chase toward Imbler.

Gorte said he thinks the two masked individuals and their driver were responsible for the earlier break-in and were attempting to rob the store a second time.

The chase and gunfire

According to arrest documents, shortly after fleeing the gun store, Spalinger switched out from the driver's seat with Romine,

who then drove the vehicle to Hunter Road where it was located by pursuing law enforcement near Booth Lane.

"When the vehicle passed me, I saw three occupants in the vehicle; a male in the driver's seat and a second male in the back seat and a third person in the front seat," Union County Sheriff's Sgt. Travis Schaad wrote in the arrest document.

Schaad attempted a traffic stop, but Romine failed to yield and continued at speeds of approximately 105 mph.

The pursuit ended up on Summerville Road, where Union County Sheriff's Deputy Dane Jensen reported shots were fired from the sedan, which shattered its rear window. One or two bullets hit Jensen's patrol vehicle, which caused it to overheat.

The Observer Publisher Karrine Brogoitti was at her Imbler home on Summerville Road when the suspects sped past. She heard the sound of the speeding vehicle long before it flew by the picture windows of her living room.

The pursuit continued through Imbler onto Striker Lane before turning north on Grays Corner Road. They took Rinehart Lane to Indian Creek where the vehicle crashed at the bridge on Indian Creek Road near Dutton Road.

Romine, Spalinger and Montez fled from the vehicle into the dense brush and vegetation. As a result, additional law enforcement was called to the scene and a perimeter was set up.



A law enforcement officer stands near a bridge over Shaw Creek outside of Elgin on Sunday, July 17, 2022. Multiple law enforcements agencies were in the area searching for a suspect after an attempted robbery in Island City followed by a high-speed chase that involved gunfire.



Bullseye Muzzleloader's and More, a store on First Street in Island City, was the site of an attempted burglary on Sunday, July 17, 2022, that turned into a high-speed chase and a manhunt for three suspects on foot outside of Elgin.

The Northeast Oregon Regional SWAT Team and the Oregon State Police SWAT Team responded to the area and ultimately located and arrested Spal-

inger and Romine late on July 17.

Romine was arrested for reckless endangering and for misdemeanor and felony fleeing, while Spalinger

is in jail for first-degree assault, hit-and-run with injury, recklessly endangering and misdemeanor fleeing from police.

"Spalinger admitted they knew the police were attempting to stop them when I turned on my overhead lights on Hunter Road," Schaad wrote in his report. "She stated Romine was driving at this time, which corresponds with what I saw when the vehicle passed me at Booth and Hunter Road."

The fallout

The owner of Bullseye Muzzleloader's and More said he has been overwhelmed by the expressions of support his family is receiving on social media.

"It makes you feel like

people care, for sure," Gorte said.

Gorte, who has owned his shop for almost 10 years, said he finds it hard to believe something like this occurred in a place like Island City.

"You would not think this could happen in a small town," he said. "Things have changed and not for the best."

Gorte said he is relieved nobody suffered any major injuries. His daughter received medical treatment at Grande Ronde Hospital, according to police documents.

"I'm glad that nobody has been hurt," he said. "My daughter's foot will heal."

Gorte lauded the work law enforcement officers did to apprehend the three suspects.

"Our police force did an exceptional job," he said.

Gorte said he does not feel relieved of all the stress he's been under, though, because a lot of work is ahead as he pushes to get his store back in order following the break-in, but he said he does feel better.

"I'm more hopeful," he said.

The court has appointed attorneys for Spalinger and Romine. La Grande's James Schaeffer is representing Spalinger, and Canyon City's Kathleen Dunn is the attorney for Romine. They have hearing pleas scheduled for Aug. 15 and Aug. 22, respectively.

According to arrest documents, Montez is being represented by Rick Dall of La Grande. His plea hearing is set for Aug. 17.

HEN PARTY

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and a journal — called the "Log of the Ladies" — that was written by participants. One picture shows the women standing in front of their horses wearing coordinated outfits of button-downs, ties, and jodhpurs tucked into knee-high boots.

The three sisters want to keep the spirit of the Hen Party alive by donating the documents to a library or university.

Part of the family's effort to memorialize the Hen Party has included using a grant from Oregon Humanities, a nonprofit, to hire an outfitter and reenact a

typical Hen Party trip. Along with her husband — who worked on a 2004 oral history project featuring the Hen Party — and several other collaborators, Over rode along the trails traversed by the women and cooked the food from their menu. They videotaped the experience and want to use the footage for, say, a documentary.

Birnie was born in 1885 in Island City. Her grandfather, Stukely Ellsworth, was a lawyer and early Oregon settler who served on the board of the Oregon and California Railroad and helped establish the University of Oregon. In 1910, she married George Birnie, a jeweler. In a 1956 article in the La Grande Observer,

Birnie said, "I was accused of marrying George just so I could go on a pack trip. That's how we spent our honeymoon."

Around 1935 — it's unclear when precisely the group formed — Birnie began leading the women-only trips into the mountains. In 1943, Birnie's husband "invited himself," according to The Observer, but was only "tolerated" for two days; Birnie put him in charge of wrangling the horses. Though the main point of the party was simply to get outside, sightsee and live off the grid, Birnie — who operated a jewelry store with her husband in La Grande — helped her friends gain autonomy long before women's liberation.

"Wives were supposed to do what their husbands wanted them to do, the way the men wanted things done," said Gerda Brownnton, a Hen Party member, in her oral history interview. "Much to (my husband's) surprise, after I went on a horseback trip with Jean Birnie, I was telling him how to do things."

Planning for the annual summer Hen Party trips began the previous November. The equipment they took was minimal but also afforded them pleasures, like the cast-iron and enamel pans they packed for baking cakes and making buckwheat pancakes.

As the years went by, these trips into the Wallowa Mountains

became multigenerational. The sisters' mother, Martha McKennon Reece, was a Hen Party member. When Birnie died in 1974 at the age of 88, the party had dissolved, but the legacy still lives on through her friends and family.

Over's daughter, Casey Jane Reece-Kaigler, whose New Orleans-based band the Lostines is named for a river in the Eagle Cap Wilderness, uses the "Log of the Ladies" journal as a guide whenever she hikes in the mountains.

"She taught most of these women how to do all of it," Reece-Kaigler told me. "Step out on their own and do it without their husbands — pretty cool, especially for that time."

B2H

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Kellen Tardaewether said. "This is the biggest case that the council has ever seen?"

Fourteen parties filed those exceptions. Though numbers have changed since 2020, the remaining exceptions were reviewed in the Proposed Contested Change Order. The PCCO, completed May 31, reviews the appeals on the project and offers a solution for them.

The time frame already has passed for any remaining parties to file exceptions against the project, so now Tardaewether and her team can examine the case at hand. The siting analyst said this is one of the "biggest, most complicated" cases she's ever seen.

The council will go over and review the PCCO at its July 22 meeting. Tardaewether said the next meetings will help the council reach its final decision. There is not a scheduled time for any meetings after July 22, but the decision should come in two to four months.

"For those very curious about what will happen, just know we really are working on it," Tardaewether said.

The opposition

Jim Kreider is one of the 37 exceptions noted by Tardaewether and one of the driving forces against the B2H line. He and his wife, Fuji Kreider, spearhead the Stop B2H Coalition, a group that believes Idaho Power Co. can look into other options rather than put the line through the Eastern Oregon area.

Located outside of La Grande, the Kreiders said they know the area best, claiming Idaho Power has connected the residents of La Grande on this issue.

"It's become a hotbed of resistance," Jim Kreider said.

The group has met with state leaders such as U.S. Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, discussing different ideas.

One of the main points of contingency is the perceived effect of the climate. The group claims clearing out for the project will destabilize soils and increase the risk for endangered species, all while being louder than safety standards for many households.

These complaints have not subsided for either the Kreiders or their many other part-

CONTROVERSIAL TRANSMISSION LINE

The proposed route for the 500-kilovolt Boardman to Hemingway transmission line has been the cause of much opposition, and the Oregon Department of Energy's Energy Facility Siting Council meets Friday, July 22, 2022, in Salem to discuss the project.

Oregon Department of Energy/Contributed Graphic

ners in the coalition, though others have waned.

"During the period, rulings, and motions, it wore people down," Fuji Kreider said. "That's their technique, to wear us down."

Among the swath of complaints, both the Kreiders and the coalition list several other options for the line, including burying it underground and increasing the production of other transmission lines out of state.

The superhighway

Sven Berg is the communications director at Idaho Power. He said the company has dealt with other opposition groups in the past — especially from Eastern Oregon — but they have come to understand each other.

Idaho Power is one of the operators of the B2H and owns 45% of the line. Along with PacifiCorp, the companies hope the line can become a "clean-energy superhighway."

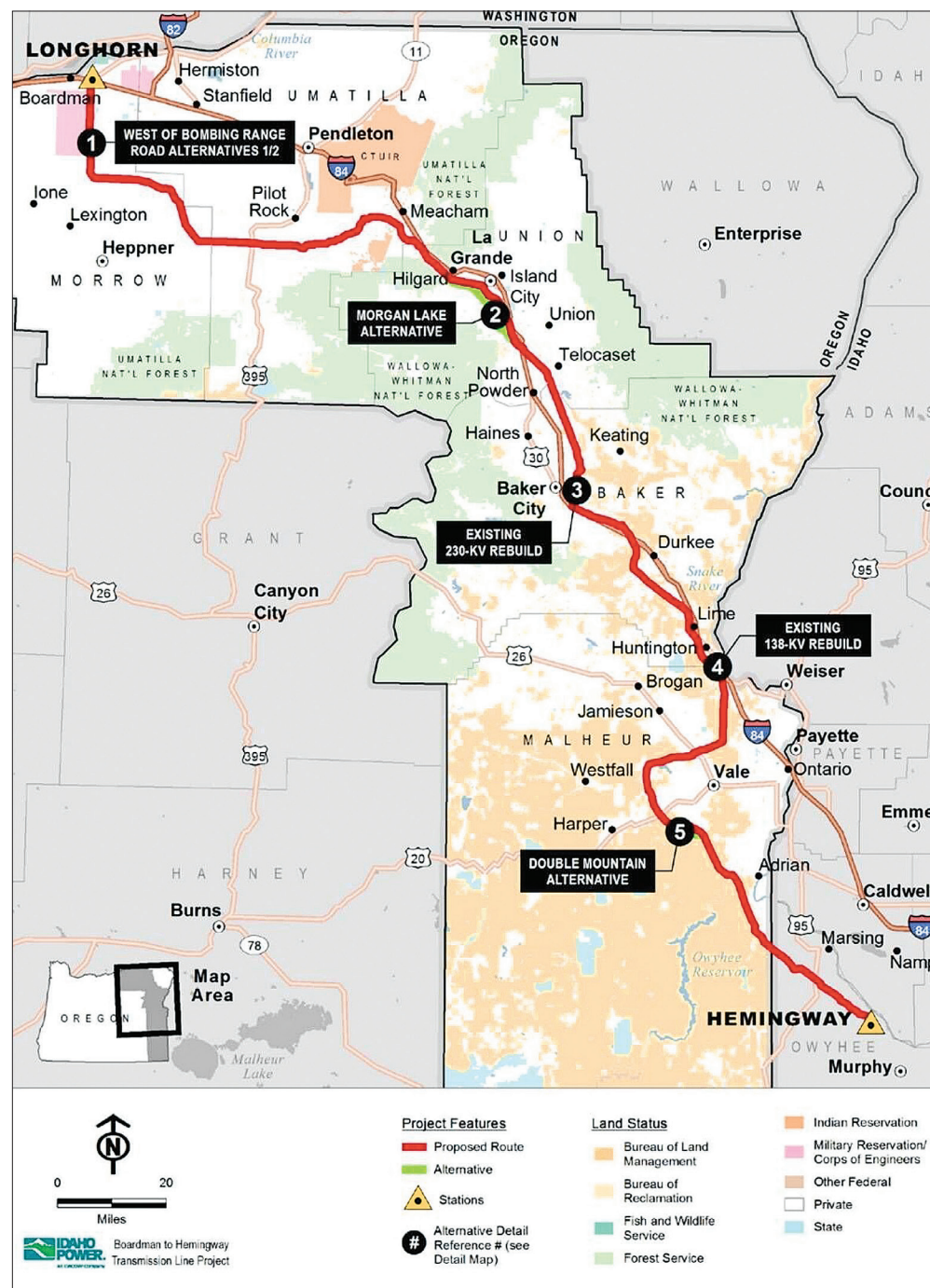
During the winter months, Berg said, customers in Portland need more power to handle the peak. Another goal for the company is to increase the nation's Western grid, something increasingly important as both wind and solar power continue to rise.

"We have to build the grid for peak need, not average need," Berg said. "We have to keep homes and businesses at room temperature."

Even with opposition to the project, Idaho Power's goal has not changed since its filing in 2018. In fact, its tenacity toward the project has only gotten stronger.

"The more we study, the more we are convinced that this is the best option for the Pacific Northwest," Berg said.

With a response from the DOE in the coming months, Berg said Idaho Power is sticking to its plan of a 2023 start date. He said he hopes that by October the company will get a building permit across to the Oregon side of the project.



HOW TO PARTICIPATE

The July 22 Oregon Department of Energy's Energy Facility Siting Council meeting is from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The Boardman to Hemingway transmission line is one of many items on the docket for the council, with others ranging from wildlife protection to carbon dioxide emissions.

Attending the meeting is available online. People who want to participate may address the council during the public comment portion and at other designated agenda points. For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/energy/facilities-safety/facilities/Pages/Council-Meetings.aspx.