

# Umatilla man pleads not guilty in triple murder

By KRISTIN M. KRAEMER  
Tri-City Herald

Loved ones of an expectant mother killed last summer grasped hands Tuesday as the man accused of pulling the trigger walked into a Kennewick courtroom.

Francisco J. Resendez Miranda, 23, of Umatilla, made his first appearance in Benton County Superior Court for the fatal shootings of two Pasco women and a man. He pleaded not guilty to three counts of aggravated first-degree murder.

The bodies of Abigail Torres-Renteria, 23, Victoria Torres, 19, and David Perez-Saucedo, 22, were found Aug. 9 on farmland off Nine Canyon Road, southeast of the intersection with Coffin Road south of Kennewick. The women were not related.

The charges include the aggravating circumstance that Torres-Renteria was almost nine months pregnant when she was killed. Under Washington law, a murder charge cannot be filed for an unborn baby.

Relatives and friends of all three victims attended the court hearing. Torres-Renteria's loved ones wore black sweatshirts memorializing the woman with her picture.

Aggravated murder in Washington carries a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of release, or death.

Resendez Miranda was appointed two attorneys — Shane Silverthorn of Ellensburg and Michael Iaria of Seattle — because of the possibility the state may seek the death penalty.

The trial is set for March 9, though it may be rescheduled because of the complexity of the case. Resendez Miranda would have to agree to waive his right to a speedy trial.

There has been some confusion with Resendez Miranda's last name, as jail records and court documents in Oregon and Washington show different spellings and variations. His siblings reportedly spell their name as Resendiz.

On Tuesday, Silverthorn told Judge Bruce Spanner that his client's name was correct as it was written on the Benton County charging information.

Resendez Miranda was arrested Aug. 10. He was held in the Umatilla County jail until his Oregon charges were resolved and the extradition paperwork cleared the governors' offices in both states. He was taken to the Benton County jail Friday morning.

Resendez Miranda worked with Perez-Saucedo at a Wyckoff Farms property along the Columbia River in Pater-

son. Court documents show the slayings might have been in retaliation for a break-in at Resendez Miranda's apartment the night before.

Perez-Saucedo, Torres, Torres-Renteria and a fourth person had gone to Umatilla, possibly to a party, late on Aug. 8. A farmworker discovered the three bodies at 5:30 a.m. the next morning in a field, which is about 15 miles from Resendez Miranda's apartment.

No one else has been charged in connection with the triple homicide.

Benton County sheriff's officials in late August said Resendez Miranda's two brothers and father were wanted for questioning in the investigation.

Fidel Miranda-Huitron, 51, Eduardo Miranda-Resendiz, 24, and Fernando de Jesus Miranda-Resendiz, 19, all lived in the Umatilla area and are believed to have possibly left the country after the shootings.

Resendez Miranda's extradition warrant was for \$1 million bail. But Prosecutor Andy Miller said now that Resendez Miranda is in custody and facing aggravated murder, he is not entitled to any bail while awaiting trial.

Resendez Miranda also has a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement hold.

## UMATILLA

# City extends strip club moratorium

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Residents of Umatilla opposed to strip clubs won't have to worry about another one coming to town for at least six months.

The city council passed a six-month extension on its moratorium of new adult businesses Tuesday night.

Boyd Sharp, chair of the planning commission, told the council the commission needs two or three more months to finish overhauling the city's rules on what types of uses are allowed in its commercial zones. He said the commission was asking for six months to make sure the city council had time to hold public hearings after the commission submits its recommendations for approval.

"This gives you more time," he said.

In order to avoid legal trouble for targeting adult businesses protected by free speech laws, the commission is addressing concern over those businesses by creating comprehensive rules for all establishments in the commercial zone. Hundreds of categories of uses are being sorted into those that are allowed outright, those that are allowed with some restrictions and those that are allowed only if the city grants a conditional use permit.

The public hearing on the extension of the moratorium was sparsely attended, with only one comment from the public.

John Nichols, a former planning commission member who resigned after the commission approved a permit for what was at the time the city's third strip club, urged the city council to ex-



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Night Moves gentlemen's club was the third strip club to open in Umatilla.

**"We can't change things, we can't change the culture and we can't move forward unless we have more participation."**

— David Trott, Umatilla mayor

tend the moratorium.

"Please give them as much time and as much latitude as they need to do the job correctly," he said.

City councilor David Lougee, who was on the planning commission before taking office this month, said he knew how hard the commission was working and wanted to give them kudos.

"I think these are at least baby steps toward an improved Umatilla," he said before the council unanimously voted to extend the moratorium.

Also during the council meeting, City Manager Bob Ward told the council that he did not yet have an agreement to settle the ongoing zoning dispute between the city and the Port of Umatilla.

He said the "agreement in principle has not changed" but it was taking longer than expected to reach a consensus on the wording of certain items. The details of the agreement have not been made public.

"I think a settlement is still within reach, we just need to work a little bit harder to get there," Ward said.

The council also informally recognized Umatilla School District superintendent Heidi Sipe. While the council was conducting its meeting, Sipe was in the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., attending the president's State of the Union address as a guest of Senator Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon).

Councilor Mary Dedrick

said Sipe deserved some recognition for all of the time and effort she and her husband put into the school district's robotics program, which is considered one of the best in the state.

"I can't think of a better person to represent Umatilla," Dedrick said.

Before adjourning the meeting, new mayor David Trott issued a challenge to the city councilors and staff present. He said he was disappointed in the attendance at the meeting (only a couple of attendees were not city staff or news media) and urged everyone to invite one Umatilla resident to attend the next city council meeting.

"We can't change things, we can't change the culture and we can't move forward unless we have more participation," he said.

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## HERMISTON

# Two fights lead to three arrests during the weekend

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

A Hermiston man landed in jail after he threw another man down a flight of stairs. Hermiston police Chief Jason Edmiston said that was one of three people his officers arrested for assault during the weekend in two unrelated fights.

Noble Allen Clinton Craig, 19, of Hermiston, faces charges of fourth-degree assault, a misdemeanor, and third-degree assault, a felony, for a fight Saturday night.

Two Hermiston officers a little after 10 p.m. responded to the Best Western Hotel, 2255 S. Highway 395, Hermiston, for a fight in progress with injuries. Edmiston said Craig fought with a female, and both claim the other struck first.

The officers, according to the police report, determined

Craig threw the female to the ground and struck her with a closed fist on the right side of the head. She suffered swelling and told police she was light headed, but she declined to go to the hospital.

Two males joined the fracas to get Craig off the female. That's when Craig pushed one male down 14 steps, knocking him out. The two males also told police they hit Craig, and that could be why he suffered a black eye. But officers put the cuffs on Craig because he was the primary aggressor.

Craig is no longer in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

Hermiston police arrested two more people a few hours later in another fight.

Edmiston said police Sunday at about 1:50 a.m. found Angelo Vince Corpus Jr., 19, and Angelina Regina Corpus, 21, both of Hermiston,

were part of a larger group that assaulted three people at the Midway Tavern, 1750 N. First St., Hermiston.

After the assault occurred, the group fled on foot while the victims remained on scene, and police caught Angelo and Angelina Corpus on Northeast Second Street and East Oregon Avenue. A witness identified the pair, Edmiston reported, and police booked them into the Umatilla County Jail, on one count each of third-degree assault. Edmiston said the felony occurs when one assailant aids

another in the attack. Edmiston also said officers arrested Angelo Corpus for carrying a concealed weapon — "a spring-assisted knife in his right front pocket."

Edmiston said officers still needed to find out how Angelina Corpus and Angelo Corpus are related, and detectives Tuesday picked up video footage from the tavern. The Hermiston police chief also credited the Midway for doing a good job of policing problems, particularly inside the establishment, but this incident took place outside.

# PARK: King hopes project will be done by end of the year

Continued from 1A

As a part of their deal with the office, the committee will have to pay an archaeologist \$600 per day to be on site for the duration of the excavation. If human remains or an historical object is found during the excavation, work crews could be forced to fill in the ground without completing the project. That scenario would also waste the city's money, as Parks and Recreation Department staff will be used for labor and equipment.

The committee's Plan B is a separate site on the park's north side, which is outside the boundaries of the cemetery. King said the back-up site is less ideal because the area is more congested and would require a smaller shelter.

She said the proposed west side shelter would resemble picnic shelters at Community Park and Kiwanis Park.

In the end, the risks weren't enough to deter the council from unanimously approving the shelter on the west side of the park. King said she hopes the project will see completion by the end of the year.

Other topics discussed during the meeting included:

- The city approved spending \$58,000 to employ a new utility for meter reading purposes.

According to a report from Public Works Director Bob Patterson, the city previously outsourced meter reading services to Metereaders LLC of Portland.

After the Metereaders employee serving Pendleton left the company, a representative told the city that Metereaders would no longer service Pendleton because the city was considering switching to an automated meter reading system.

Staff also requested \$20,000 for new meter reading equipment that will be required if the city transitions to an automated service.

Besides equipment costs, the new employee will have a net cost of \$1,700 due to the city no longer contracting with Metereaders.

The council approved the expenditures 6-1 with Councilman Tom Young voting against it and Councilwoman Becky Marks absent.

Young said he could hire several employees for the cost of hiring the new meter reader.

- The council unanimously approved annexing the 13 acres that comprise the Pendleton Sanitary Service facility.

The annexation was a part of a deal made in October to change the service's franchise fee rate. The estimated \$18,000 in

property taxes the city will receive will help offset \$70,000 Pendleton loses from restructuring the fee.

- Pendleton, Adams, Pilot Rock and Umatilla County could join forces to bring in a grant to help homeowners restore their houses.

The council unanimously approved an intergovernmental agreement with those entities to jointly apply for a \$400,000 grant.

In Round-Up City, that grant money would go toward the city's Restore Pendleton program, which helps low income homeowners repair their dwellings.

- Municipal Court Judge Jeff Wallace's contract was unanimously renewed by the city council.

According to his contract, Wallace makes \$27,900 per year.

- After making significant changes to the Pendleton Convention Center Commission, the council appointed seven new members to the restructured advisory committee.

The council appointed Susan Bower from the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Tim Hawkins from the Round-Up Association Board of Directors, J.J. Spriet from Happy Canyon Co., Pat Beard from Travel Pendleton and Councilman Neil Brown.

The commission's two at-large positions went to individuals from the business community — Virgil's at Cimmiyotti's owner Jennifer Keeton and Knights Inn owner Surya Das.

Due to poor attendance, the council dramatically restructured the commission in August, cutting the number of positions from 11 to seven. Mayor Phillip Houk has previously said he will direct the commission to seek out larger conventions to accommodate the \$897,000 east side expansion to the center.

Two new members were also appointed to the City Bond Advisory Committee.

McCormack Construction Co. Vice President Tyson Furstenburg and F & H Computers owner Alan Feves were both appointed. With the city aiming to put a bond issue on the November ballot, Houk said more appointees would come in the future.

The council appointed Jackie Engur to take Furstenburg's spot on the Planning Commission. Her application states she spent the past 10 years working for the planning and licensing department of the London borough of Camden in the United Kingdom.

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## SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: [community@eastoregonian.com](mailto:community@eastoregonian.com) or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

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