

BRIEFLY



Police chase zooms through town

MILTON-FREEWATER — A police chase Thursday sped through Milton-Freewater neighborhoods and ended with the arrest of a Pendleton man. Milton-Freewater police Chief Doug Boedigheimer reported Abel Ramirez Matamoros Jr., 34, is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on misdemeanor and felony charges.

Boedigheimer in a written statement said an off-duty Milton-Freewater officer at about 2:20 p.m. was southbound into Milton-Freewater on Highway 11 when he saw Matamoros driving a maroon 2005 Dodge Durango northbound at a high speed “and in an erratic manner.” The officer called an on-duty Milton-Freewater officer about the driver.

That officer responded onto South Main and saw the Durango speeding into town off Milton Hill. The cop changed directions to northbound and hit his patrol car’s overhead lights, but the Durango kept going and the chase was on.

Boedigheimer reported the pursuit exceeded 50 mph in a residential zone, traveled onto South Mill Street and ended in the parking lot of Papa Murphy’s Take ‘N’ Bake Pizza, 137 S. Columbia St., Milton-Freewater. The chase lasted no more than five minutes.

Two off-duty cops also responded, as did a police supervisor. The group ordered Matamoros from the Durango, according to the chief, and took him into custody without further incident.

Matamoros faces charges of felony eluding police in a vehicle and misdemeanors of reckless driving and recklessly endangering another person. He also is in jail for failure to pay fines.

Power failure caused by tree trimming

HERMISTON — Traffic was backed up on Highway 395 at noon on Friday after power was cut to traffic signals, homes and businesses across Hermiston.

Umatilla Electric Cooperative announced the failure was caused by “an individual cutting tree limbs” near Northwest Ninth Street and West Madrona Avenue.

By 12:43 p.m. electricity was restored to all but 16 customers around the source of the outage.

The cooperative urged people to use caution when trimming trees near power lines. Customers can call UEC or Hermiston Energy Services to determine if it is safe to cut the limbs themselves. If it is not, UEC or HES will perform the work.

Student-built home open to tours on Monday

HERMISTON — Anyone interested in Hermiston School District’s homebuilding program is invited to see the students’ handiwork up close when

the class hosts a tour of the program’s first house on Monday.

Tours of the house, located at 895 West Angus Court next to Armand Larive Middle School, will run from 3:30-6 p.m.

High school students from Hermiston, Umatilla and Stanfield broke ground on the house in August 2014 and have been working with mentors from the homebuilding industry all year to learn the skills of the trade while building a house that will be sold to fund construction of another house during next year’s class.

Students just finished working with Mr. Insulation Co., Hermiston, to insulate the home, and deputy superintendent Wade Smith said in a news release that the house is at the “perfect stage” to showcase the students’ work.

“Visitors will be able to see the care, craftsmanship, and top-shelf design and components put into the house before they are covered by the wall, ceiling, and floor coverings,” he said.

City considers library, dispatch agreements

PILOT ROCK — The Pilot Rock City Council will consider a new agreement for library services when it meets Tuesday night. The council also will vote on a deal for police and fire dispatch service.

The Pilot Rock Public Library’s revenue comes from its own taxing district and not from city funds. An agreement between the two ensures the library continues to operate in the city, according to a memo from library director Susan Hilliard to the city council. Hilliard also called the library a benefit to the community.

The council also will consider a proposal to pay \$6,000 to Umatilla County to provide dispatch services. That amount came after the police department negotiated with the county to lower the figure from \$7,000.

Pilot Rock, like most cities in Umatilla County, does not have its own dispatch center and relies on the county for the service.

The council also will hear a presentation about the city’s 2014 financial audit. The council will meet at 7 p.m. at the council chambers, 144 N. Alder Place.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

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PENDLETON

Water summit comes to Eastern Oregon

By **GEORGE PLAVERN**
East Oregonian



EO file photo

In this Sept. 2013 file photo drag tubes are used on irrigation pivots for land application of Hermiston Foods wastewater in alfalfa fields.

It’s no secret that water is a pretty big deal in Eastern Oregon.

Faced with growing demand and economic reward, local farmers have been trying for years to secure new water supplies for irrigation from the Columbia River. But the answer isn’t that simple; endangered fish also need water to survive, and hydroelectric dams need water to keep the power grid in balance.

The result is a complicated maze of laws, regulation and compromise. It’s against that backdrop the agricultural team from Dunn Carney law firm of Portland held a water summit Friday in Pendleton.

About 40 people gathered at the Slickfork Saloon to hear a brief presentation from Tom Byler, director of the Oregon Water Resources Department, as well as a panel discussion about the future of water availability for agriculture.

Dunn Carney — the same firm that represented an area farmer in the mysterious case of genetically modified wheat in 2013 — has hosted a number of agricultural summits in the past, but never one east of the Cascades. The timing is appropriate, with potentially millions of dollars in state funding for water projects working its way through this year’s legislature.

Newly appointed Gov. Kate Brown has said she will pursue a \$51.6 million water development fund that John Kitzhaber proposed before his resignation. Friday also marked the first day of rules advisory meetings for Senate Bill 839, which was approved by the 2013

legislature and authorizes a \$10 million Water Supply Development Account.

Agriculture already accounts for 85 percent of the state’s water use, yet forecasts show it will need another million acre-feet to keep up with demand. One acre-foot is equal to 326,000 gallons of water.

“We know there’s new demand on the horizon,” Byler said. “However we solve our problem is going to take time, it’s going to take energy and it’s going to take money.”

SB 839 is the horse they’re riding to get there, Byler said.

A four-member panel talked in greater detail about how to get projects off the ground, from navigating complex laws to building a system that can efficiently pump water to the farm.

Any water taken from the Columbia River must be mitigated through bucket-for-bucket replacement, said Kate Moore, environmental attorney with Dunn Carney. It must also remain in

stream between April 15 and Sept. 30, when it’s needed for fish runs.

“Despite all these difficulties, there’s a lot of opportunity here,” Moore said.

Craig Reeder, board chairman for the Northeast Oregon Water Association, believes they have a balanced solution. Their project calls for up to 500 cubic feet per second of new water into three distinct critical groundwater areas, in exchange for mitigation work farther upstream.

Last November, a top resources aide for Kitzhaber said they were “weeks away” from a deal between NOWA and environmental groups that would clinch a smaller chunk of water to get the project started. That was before all the drama in the governor’s office, and Reeder said they have been reassured the support is still there under new Gov. Brown.

“We’re closer than we have ever been,” Reeder said. “We’ve got a shot. So be involved, and ask how you can participate.”

PENDLETON

City to add more eyes to review airport plan

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

The city of committees plans to add two more to its ranks, but one will be short-lived.

The Pendleton City Council will consider appointing seven people to an airport master plan advisory committee. Mayor Phillip Houk said the committee is temporary and is a requirement under the city’s 20-year comprehensive plan. Pendleton has 20 committees, commissions and boards, according to the city website, not including ad-hoc committees.

A memo about the advisory committee said it would provide input to the city on a multitude of topics concerning the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport, which the city owns, including an inventory of existing conditions, facilities, airport needs and operational issues.

The Pendleton Airport Commission already looks at the master plan, Houk said, but the advisory committee is meant to provide fresh eyes and ideas. The committee has no voting power, and Houk said it would meet around five times over the course of a year.

Mike Short has applied to serve on the committee. He is the only applicant who now serves on the Airport Commission, according to the city’s website. Other applicants include Mary Lemm Davis with Eastern Oregon Nutrition Services; Jeff Holmes, a recent member of the city’s Solid Waste Advisory Board; and attorney Will Perkinson, who also serves on the city library board.

The city council also will consider creating a tree commission, one of four standards the city needs to achieve Tree City USA recognition.

A memo to the council from parks director Donnie Cook said the city meets the other three requirements: having a tree care ordinance, an Arbor Day observation and a spending at least \$2 per capita on buying and caring for trees.

And among other issues, the council will vote on increasing the daily rates of three meetings rooms at the Pendleton Convention Center from \$55 to \$110, which would generate about \$1,000 a year. The Pendleton City Council will meet at 7 p.m. at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

NINETY PERCENT OF SMOKERS START BEFORE THEY ARE EIGHTEEN

It’s a vicious cycle. For every person who dies from tobacco related disease, at least 2 kids, teens or young adults become regular smokers. In fact last year, thousands of kids in Oregon started smoking—more than graduated from all the public high schools in Eugene, Medford, Salem, Bend and Pendleton combined. What’s for sale in your community?

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From Dr. Hibbert,
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