



EAST OREGONIAN

TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 2015

139th Year, No. 108

WINNER OF THE 2013 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar



Madrigal

Police blame gang for death

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Police believe Alonso Madrigal, killed in a shooting outside Hermiston's 11th Street Market on March 4, was murdered by gang members but was not engaged in criminal gang activity himself.

Hermiston police chief Jason Edmiston shared an update on the homicide investigation with the city's Hispanic Advisory Committee Monday.

"Because we believe those persons responsible for the death of Alonso are affiliated with a gang or gangs (from outside the Hermiston area), the investigation is very difficult due to a code of silence that is obviously in play," Edmiston said in a prepared statement.

He said based on its investigation, the Umatilla-Morrow County Major Crime Team believes Madrigal's death was part of an "ongoing dispute" and not a random act of violence but "it is our belief Alonso was not engaged in such criminal activity typically associated with gang behavior."

He urged anyone who had any information that could bring Madrigal's killer or killers to justice to contact Captain Travis Enyon at 541-667-5103.

"Hermiston is attractive because of our relatively low violent crime rate and our acceptance of diversity," he said. "That does not mean we have to cower to thugs who come to our city from other cities and commit crime."

See GANG/8A



Fireworks explode in the sky over Wildhorse Resort & Casino Saturday night as part of the resort's 20th anniversary.

Staff photo by Kathy Aney

The art of kaboom

Pyrotechnician paints Pendleton skies for Wildhorse's birthday

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

A day at the office for Bruce Lawson involves fireballs, smoke jets and colorful explosions cascading and corkscrewing across the sky.

Saturday night's 20th anniversary fireworks display over Wildhorse Resort & Casino was Lawson's handiwork. The Homeland Fireworks owner and his crew of 35 pulled into town Wednesday night, slept and got to work in a field just north of the hotel. By Saturday afternoon, more than a mile of wire and 2,300 devices had been strategically placed on the wheat stubble. That night, Lawson would unleash one of Oregon's biggest displays.

The veteran pyrotechnician, "pyro" for short, describes himself as a kid with his hand in a candy jar. His interest in fireworks started with a bang when he accidentally set off a string of 20 firecrackers in his bedroom as a teenager.

"My mom and dad weren't too happy," said Lawson on Saturday



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Pyrotechnician Mike Eicher helps put the finishing touches on the fireworks display. The pyrotechnic display included 2,300 devices and a mile of wire.

afternoon as he looked across the field that would serve as the launch site for that night's extravaganza.

After he decided to become a pro, he reached out to mentors and apprenticed all over the United States. That's the way it goes in the

world of pyrotechnics.

"There's no book," Lawson said. "You get taught by your older pyros."

After his training, he got li-

See FIREWORKS/8A

HERMISTON

District picks new principals

East Oregonian

Armand Larive Middle School principal Tom Spoo will take the reins at Hermiston High School next year after principal Jocelyn Jones announced her retirement.

Armand Larive assistant principal Stacie Roberts will then step up to take Spoo's place as the middle school's principal for the 2015-2016 school year.

Superintendent Dr. Fred Maiocco called Spoo an "absolutely great fit" for Hermiston High School. Spoo formerly served as the high school's assistant principal before taking the principal position at Armand Larive last summer and has been employed by the school district for 21 years.

He was not one of the two out-of-town candidates presented as the job's finalists during a meet and greet with parents on March 3.

Spoo said in a news release that he is grateful for the memories and experience he gained at ALMS but



Spoo



Roberts

The district is now working to fill open assistant principal positions at Armand Larive Middle School and Hermiston High School.

is excited to work with staff and students at the high school.

Maiocco said the district decided to promote Roberts to fill Spoo's place at Armand Larive after her "strong showing" during the interview process to fill the open principal position at Rocky Heights Elementary, which ultimately went to Jerad Farley of Othello, Washington.

PENDLETON



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Surely you jest(er)

Members of the Junior Jam elementary traveling team, dressed as court jesters, talk with a small boy before performing their dance titled "Topsy Turvy" at a send-off for the Rhythmic Mode dance team Monday in Pendleton. The Pendleton High School dance team will be performing at the state dance competition this weekend in Portland. For more on Rhythmic Mode and the state dance competition, see Saturday's Lifestyles section.



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