

HERMISTON

City cleanup nets 60 tons of junk

25 tons of tires,
11 tons of concrete

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Hermiston did its share of spring cleaning this weekend, helping residents haul away more than 60 tons of junk during the city's first Clean Sweep event.

The recycling event cost the city \$4,000, but city codes enforcement officer Mike Marcum said that it was worth it.

"That's a lot of junk that isn't going to stay stacked up in people's yards, garages and driveways," he said. "I couldn't be happier with the turnout."

Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter, who helped spearhead the event, told the city council Monday that about 200 people took advantage of the opportunity to drop off hard-to-get-rid-of items for free.

The most popular item dropped off for recycling was tires. Residents brought in 25 tons of tires, 11 tons of concrete, eight tons of scrap metal, four tons of wood, four tons of electronics, two tons of plastic, two tons of



Photo contributed by the city of Hermiston
City crews help unload some of the 25 tons of tires that were dumped as part of the "Clean Sweep" Saturday in Hermiston.

upholstered furniture and nearly 1,000 gallons of paint.

The city's Faith-Based Advisory Committee recruited volunteers for the event on April 25 in the Umatilla Electric Cooperative parking lot.

In preparation, Marcum handed out warnings and information about the event to people whose properties were not compliant with

city's nuisance codes. For property owners who continue to ignore warnings to clean up their properties, the city retained Demos Enterprises to clean up the land and send the bill to the noncompliant property owners.

Fetter told city council he plans to make the event an annual one to encourage people to keep their yards clean. He said he would

look into providing paper shredders and disposal of hazardous chemicals, two things he heard requests for this year.

Mayor David Drotzmann said he hoped word spread and next year it would be a "bigger, better attended event" in the future.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

Craigen gets 2½ years for having explosives

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

Convicted murderer George West Craigen of Milton-Freewater will spend a bit more time than life behind prison walls.

He received a two-and-a-half year sentence Monday for five counts of possessing explosives.

A Umatilla County jury earlier this month convicted Craigen of the charges. The case sprang from the police investigation of Craigen at the end of 2011 for the shooting death of Cecil Carter of Milton-Freewater. A jury convicted Craigen in late 2014 for the murder, and visiting Circuit Judge Russell West of La Grande sentenced Craigen to life in that case.

West also presided over the explosives trial and sentencing. Craigen's attorney, Will Perkinson of Pendleton, explained Oregon law required merging the five counts into a single conviction and sentence. Perkinson said he argued for a concur-

rent sentence to the life imprisonment because the explosive devices were part of the murder case, while the state argued they were separate and thus required a consecutive sentence.

That was the opposite of what the state and defense argued before Craigen's murder trial.

Perkinson said West used Oregon law to determine the sentence was consecutive because the explosives represented a different level of danger, particularly to officers that found the devices during the search for Craigen.

Craigen's trial for having a shank in 2013 while he was in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, is on hold. Perkinson said he just received notice there could be a hearing on that in August. That could mean Craigen will return to Snake River Correctional Institution, Ontario, rather than stay in the county lockup where he has been for the latest trial and sentencing.

Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus did not return a call Tuesday before deadline.



Craigen

BRIEFLY

One dead, another critical after I-84 wreck

MEACHAM — A Cove man died early Sunday morning in a single-vehicle crash on Interstate 84 between Pendleton and La Grande.

Steven Gardner, 60, was pronounced dead at the scene after the 2003 Chevy Tahoe he was driving in the eastbound lane went through the median and struck a guardrail, then rolled into the westbound lane and landed on its top.

His passenger, Bryan Yeager, 53, of Elgin, was flown to Kadlec Medical Center in the Tri-Cities with critical injuries and remained in the intensive care unit on Tuesday.

The wreck occurred a little after 2 a.m. at milepost 238, according to Oregon State Police, and both men were wearing seatbelts. Icy conditions are being investigated as a contributing factor to the crash. The highway was closed for four hours during the investigation.

Hermiston approves city engineer contract

HERMISTON — The city of Hermiston once again has a city engineer.

City council approved a contract with Anderson Perry & Associates Monday night. The La Grande-based firm has agreed to have engineer Chas Hutchins work out of Hermiston two days a week, allowing city staff to pop in and ask questions or have Hutchins run out and look at something when necessary.

The council sought proposals from regional firms after deciding it could save money by not having to pay Kennedy/Jenks Consultants out of Portland for a six-hour round trip every time an engineer needed to sign off on a component of a project.

In addition to having Hutchins in town two days a week, Anderson Perry also

agreed to only bill half price for travel, saving the city an estimated \$60,000 a year from what it currently pays Kennedy/Jenks.

The contract came before the council during its April 13 meeting but city attorney Gary Luisi recommended the council ask city staff to reopen negotiations after he spotted a few provisions that concerned him, including the stipulation that engineering drawings of city projects would be owned by the firm instead of the city.

On Monday Luisi said he was satisfied with the updated contract and the council voted unanimously to approve it.

Bond refinance to save Umatilla taxpayers \$451,000

UMATILLA — Taxpayers in Umatilla will save about \$451,000 after the Umatilla School District refinanced its general obligation bond.

The bond, approved by voters in 1998 to build Umatilla High School, will be paid off in 2022.

Jodi Durfey, business manager for the school district, said in a news release that the district started the process last fall to refinance the debt, giving the district a lower interest rate that will save taxpayers money over the life of the bond.

"We want to show taxpayers we are doing everything we can to be fiscally responsible with their money," Durfey said.

District prepares to sell student-built home

HERMISTON — The Hermiston School District board of education approved a plan Monday to sell the district's first student-built home.

The three-bedroom home at 895 West Angus Avenue is being constructed by high school students in the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding program, supervised by professional

contractors.

It is scheduled for completion by June 1, after which the district will announce a market baseline price and accept sealed bids, awarding the home to the highest bidder. The money from the sale will be used to finance construction of another student-built home in the Fieldstone subdivision next to Armand Larive Middle School next year.

An open house will be held June 1 for interested bidders or members of the public who want to see the finished 2,050-square-foot house.

Bid documents and other information about the project can be found at www.columbiabasinstudenthomes.org.

Firewood permits go on sale Friday

PENDLETON — Firewood permits will go on sale Friday, May 1 on the Umatilla National Forest.

Permits are available for \$5 per cord, with a minimum purchase of four cords. The maximum limit for personal-use firewood from the forest is 12 cords per household.

Vendors include the Southgate Mini-Mart in Pendleton; Smitty's Ace Hardware in Hermiston; Mentzer & Elliot and J&D's Food Mart in Pilot Rock; Athena Grocery; Heppner Shell Station; and Rhode's Supply in Ukiah.

Firewood cutters will be required to keep track of the date, time and quantity of wood they remove from the forest. A chart on the front of the permit, called the "Produce Quantity Removal Record," is provided to record the information.

Cutters must also carry an ax, shovel, 8-ounce capacity fire extinguisher and have their chainsaws equipped with an approved spark arrester when out collecting firewood.

Public use restrictions may be in place over the summer months that would limit or prohibit firewood cutting for the day. Updated restrictions will be posted

on a recorded message at 1-877-958-9663, or online at www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla.

Firewood season ends Nov. 30.

Bazaar benefits Relay for Life

PENDLETON — A spring bazaar will raise money for Pendleton Relay for Life.

The event is Saturday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at McKay Creek Estates, 1601 Southgate Place, Pendleton.

Vendors include home business products as well as craft products.

For more information, call Gert Hawthorne at 541-215-9767.

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

Mushrooms arrive in Blue Mountains

East Oregonian

campgrounds.

Commercial mushroom picking is also prohibited in wilderness areas. Mushroomers in the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests must display a recreation pass in their vehicle windshields when using a designated fee trailhead. Passes are \$5 for the day or \$30 for the year, and can be bought at any Forest Service office. The Malheur National Forest does not require a pass.

Anyone can pick up to one gallon of wild mushrooms for personal consumption in Oregon. Otherwise, a commercial mushroom permit is required to harvest more than a gallon of mushrooms for sale.

Commercial mushroomers must also buy an industrial camping permit if they plan to camp overnight on Forest Service lands, and are not allowed to camp in developed


Commercial mushroom picking is also prohibited in wilderness areas.

Mushroomers in the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests must display a recreation pass in their vehicle windshields when using a designated fee trailhead. Passes are \$5 for the day or \$30 for the year, and can be bought at any Forest Service office. The Malheur National Forest does not require a pass.

It is up to the individual hunter to recognize the difference between edible and poisonous mushrooms. Guide books are available at the Umatilla National Forest headquarters, 72510 Coyote Road in Pendleton.

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