



A cloud of smoke fills the downtown blocks near the corner of Southeast First Street and Dorion Avenue as firefighters work to contain a fire at the old city hall building on Tuesday in Pendleton.

FIRE: Blew out windows on the third floor

Continued from 1A

thought the kitchen at nearby Sister’s Cafe had blown up and he rushed to help.

He darted between the buildings and saw the fire was not coming from the cafe, but the old city hall. Severe said he noticed Christian Garcia and the two men rushed inside to help.

They found an upstairs room thick with black smoke and he stayed low to the floor to evade it. He found Eduardo injured on the ground and he and Garcia worked to carry the man out. Severe said he looked back and saw the smoke increasing and flames shooting out. They had to move.

That’s when a man in a uniform and another man in plain clothes helped move Quezada down the stairs and out of the building.

Severe said he and Garcia received medical treatment for inhaling smoke but otherwise were physically unharmed. But the man they attempted to rescue did not survive. Severe said his heart ached for Quezada and his family.

Severe, a contractor and cabinet maker by trade, said he is close to the family and knew “Eddie.” He heard from family members it was possible Quezada was working with homemade fireworks, but he did not want to speculate beyond that.

He was adamant, though, that a meth lab did not explode, contrary to rumors. He said Eduardo Quezada was not involved in drugs.

Stuart Roberts also said there was no evidence supporting that theory.

Severe described Quezada as thoughtful and curious, “sometimes to the point he was a little bit daring.” And Quezada never spoke ill of others, Severe said he was well-read and had a fascination for aeronautics.

“He was just a good kid, he was fun to be around,” Severe said.

Quezada was the youngest of his siblings and the son of Jose Quezada, who owns the building. Severe said he was planning on visiting with the family, who now is focused on taking care of themselves and getting Eduardo



Pendleton assistant fire chief Matt Benedict coordinates firefighting efforts from his truck on Dorion Avenue while firefighters battle the old city hall fire Tuesday in Pendleton.

Quezada’s mother here from Los Angeles.

Jared Pennington’s fingers shook as he took a drag from his cigarette in the later Tuesday morning and described the chaos of the explosion and rescue effort. Pennington’s music studio sits on the bottom floor of the old Pendleton city hall. He was going through his normal morning routine when the explosion rocked the building. Pennington ran outside to try and figure out what had happened and saw smoke pour out from upper story windows.

“I saw glass shattered everywhere,” he said.

When he heard people were inside, he re-entered the building and raced up the stairs to help Quezada. The man was in bad shape, a gash on one leg, missing fingers and an eye, moaning and bleeding profusely. Pennington, a former Marine, said he helped move Quezada outside.

“He was at ground zero,” Pennington said. “He was bad off.”

Charlene Hanson and Loraine Greeno were signing loan papers next door when they heard the blast.

“At first it sounded like thunder.

There was a light one, a bigger one and then a huge explosion,” Hanson said. “It blew all the windows out.”

As they watched, a man with bare feet came out a window and landed on the sidewalk.

“He was trying to walk through the glass in his bare feet,” Hanson said. “He went back in.”

A tearful young woman said she and her family lived in the basement of the building. She said she thought an earthquake hit when she heard one explosion and then the roof caved in.

The eruption and fire blew out windows on the building’s third floor. More than an hour after the explosion large flames still burned.

Robert Blanc said he was working at the Edward Jones, just a few doors down from the old city hall, when the building blew.

“It sounded like a sonic boom, one big bang,” he said. “It sounded like it was coming right on top of us.”

He also said one man in underwear and a woman in a nightgown ran out of the destruction.

Phil Wright, Kathy Aney and Antonio Sierra contributed to this story.



From left to right: Wendy Hinkle, 31, and Deidra Prevatte, 31, attend Tuesday evening’s candlelight vigil for Eduardo Quezada, who died of injuries suffered in fire at the old city hall building earlier in the day.

Friends remember Eduardo Quezada

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

One of Eduardo Quezada’s nieces sobbed as she gazed at a photo of her uncle on a table surrounded by candles and flowers.

She and about 75 other family and friends had gathered to remember the adventurous 25-year-old who died Tuesday morning in a fire in the old Pendleton city hall. The faces of the mourners glowed in candlelight as they shared memories and wiped tears from their eyes on the sidewalk in front of Sister’s Cafe.

They remembered Quezada as person who lived large, said what he felt and usually wore a brilliant smile.

Randi Strandholm recalled one of Eduardo’s favorite maxims.

“He told the kids it’s better to have fun and die young than be bored all your life and live to be old,” she said. “He liked living.”

Quezada enjoyed trying new things, such as paddleboarding, exploring caves and scuba diving. He was a regular attendee at Wendy Hinkle’s Buti yoga class at the Pendleton Yoga Studio. Wednesday night’s class was full, save one — Quezada. Hinkle, a good

friend of Quezada, had laid out his favorite mat and placed a candle at each of the four corners. She played his favorite yoga music during class. As she taught, she cried, as did others.

“He was very wise in his years, yet at the same time so innocent,” Hinkle said. “He was very adventurous. He had a yearning spirit to experience everything.”

At the vigil, Diana Quezada said her brother was a kid magnet who adored children. She glanced at the picture of Eduardo surrounded by candles and flowers. The young man had an arm around his three-year-old nephew, Adrian.

“He had lots of nephews and nieces,” she said. “He would love them and pick them up every day.”

Diana said the day had been horribly sad for the family.

“There were lots of tears,” she said. “I have no tears left.”

She turned to hug another friend. Both held white roses away from their embrace to keep them from getting crushed.

Eduardo, she said, will be sorely missed.

Contact Kathy Aney at kaney@eastoregonian.com or call 541-966-0810.



Flowers and candles surround a picture of Eduardo Quezada at a candlelight vigil Tuesday evening.

SURGERY: New rooms are 700 square feet

Continued from 1A

The new center includes 15 day surgery rooms and a new surgical equipment cleaning area with new, more technologically advanced sterilization equipment that will save staff time. It also includes two fully operational surgery suites and two more that can be equipped for use in the future as the hospital’s surgery schedule continues to expand.

Chief Operating Officer Jim Schlenker said the hospital’s former surgery suites were 350 to 500 square feet and new suites tend to be built to about 600 square feet. Good Shepherd decided to make its rooms 700 square feet to accommodate its ever-expanding body of surgery equipment.

“It’s very conducive to the personnel who need to be in the room to provide safe patient care,” he said.

It also leaves plenty of room for the da Vinci Si Surgical System, which allows the surgeon to operate from a set of controls. The robot’s more precise movements and high definition camera allow surgeons to better maneuver inside the body, translating into smaller incisions, less pain and less scarring for patients.

Good Shepherd’s former surgical suites weren’t designed with such large equipment in mind, but the



Surgical center staff explain how Good Shepherd Medical Center’s new surgery suite will handle sterilization of surgical equipment during a tour.

new suites have space for it.

Also included in the \$15.3 million expansion, but not in the tour, is a separate central utilities plant connected to the rest of the hospital by underground tunnel. All of the utilities necessary to run a medical center — including air handling pumps, medical gasses, hot water and more — will be handled in the new plant.

Steve Kolberg of Peterson Kolberg and Associates Architects said the project was so difficult, when it came

to implementing all of the new utility work that came with the new central utilities plant, that it almost would have been easier just to build a new hospital.

“It really has been a tricky, tricky project,” he said.

However, Kolberg said Good Shepherd and contractors McCormack Construction of Pendleton were “fantastic” to work with.

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

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Healthy Back Habits for Caregivers - CONCLUDED
TUESDAY, MAY 26, 3:30PM

Many adults spend a considerable portion of their week caring for aging parents, relatives, friends, or other adults. According to the results of a recent study, the stresses and strains of providing care to an ill loved one may take a considerable toll on the mental and physical health of care-givers — including their back and spine health. Learn healthy back habits to keep you safe.

Elder-Friendly Living: Modifying Your Home for Safety
TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 3:30 PM - CONCLUDED

No matter when the older person’s home was built and regardless of whether it is modern or traditional in style, it likely was designed for young adults and their families. As adults age their homes also grow older, but most are not updated to accommodate the resident’s changing needs. Home adaptation or modification can provide friendlier elder living so older occupants may continue to life safely in the comfort of their home.

Know Your Numbers
TUESDAY, JULY 28, 3:30 PM

Are you at risk for diabetes, heart disease and other chronic diseases? Learn about the numbers and what they mean for various screenings to stay in control of your health. We will talk about cholesterol, blood pressure, body mass index (BMI) numbers and more.

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