

WRECK: Arrested a female passenger at the hospital for outstanding warrant

Continued from 1A

with one landing in the west-bound lanes of I-84.

State police, Pendleton police and Pendleton fire and ambulance crews responded, and Oregon Department of Transportation workers assisted at the scene. A Life Flight helicopter landed on the freeway and took one person while ambulances took the others, according to Pendleton fire's assistant chief Matt Benedict. State police reported it appeared the other three occupants fled on foot.

The driver, a man, first received treatment at St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, which transferred him in an air ambulance to Kadlec Regional Medical Center in Richland, Washington. An air ambulance also transferred one of the ejected males from St. Anthony to Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland. State police reported both men had critical injuries.

State troopers and Pendleton police scoured the area near the crash for anyone who may have tried to leave or was thrown from the



A Life Flight helicopter prepares to land Thursday in the middle of the eastbound lanes of Interstate 84 near mile marker 209, Pendleton, in response to a single vehicle rollover.

wreck. Police caught up to a female passenger who left the crash and was seeking treatment at St. Anthony Hospital. Police arrested her on an outstanding warrant after the hospital released her.

Police blocked the west-bound lane of I-84, backing traffic from the 209 to the 210. Oregon Department of Transportation workers at about 4 p.m. allowed passenger vehicles to double back to the previous on ramp, but there was no through traffic and semi trac-

tors-trailers and other large vehicles remained in place until around 5:30 p.m., when traffic started again flowing westbound. During that time semis and other vehicles used Court Ave. through Pendleton as an alternate route.

State police also reported it would release more information and the identities of the involved parties as it becomes available.

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FIRE: A 50- to 75-ft buffer zone all the way around is recommended for homes

Continued from 1A

Hans Rudolf, stewardship forester with ODF in Pendleton, is the man who works with landowners to identify fire-scaping opportunities, and apply for grants through the National Fire Plan.

The program reimburses 75 percent of the project's cost, Rudolf said, providing a dollar incentive to keep forests healthy and homes protected.

"You're trying to remove all that clutter, and (eliminate) the potential for a surface fire getting up into the crown which causes all that damage," Rudolf said.

Firescaping is also critical around homes and structures to give them a defensible space from fire, Rudolf said. Typically, homes should have a 50- to 75-foot buffer zone all the way around, clear of fast-burning vegetation and trees clustered too close together.

Without that heavy fuel, fire is more likely to stay on the ground and have a hard time progressing, Rudolf said.

Building materials also matter in firescaping. Homeowners should avoid wood shingles and siding, since embers from a large fire can travel 1-2 miles in the air and land on top of roofs.

For that same reason, property owners need to make sure they stay on top of cleaning dried leaves and needles out of their gutters and sweep their decks, said Jamie Knight, National Fire Plan forester for ODF in La Grande.

"Maintenance is a huge thing," Knight said. "Those are the sneaky things you don't really think about a lot."

David Salman, chief horticulturist for High Country Gardens, a Denver-based sustainable gardening business, said he is getting more questions about firescaping and recommends people replace flammable plants close to their homes with



Jerry Wyland and his business partner Mike Thompson, right, stand on a road on Wyland's property where the brush in front of them has been largely cleared Thursday outside of Weston.

more fire-resistant species, such as sedums, yarrows and other types of wildflowers.

"In general, you want things that are green and filled with water and that can resist flame," Salman said. "You just have to do your homework in advance."

Umatilla County does have fire safety siting standards in its development code for new homes built in a shared farm-forest zone. Planning Director Tamra Mabbott said the regulations were adopted 15 years ago, which means the vast majority of forest houses were grandfathered in to the code.

Mabbott said she is working with Jack Remillard, the county's emergency manager, on securing more grants to help people prepare their properties for fire.

Regardless, both Knight and Rudolf said there is no sure thing when it comes to increasingly big "megafires." Infernos like the Canyon Creek Complex south of John Day — which has consumed more than 100,000 acres, destroyed 43 homes and more than 50 other cabins, barns and outbuildings — get so big, and so hot, that no amount of defensible space can keep it away.

"It can happen," Knight said. "But there are a lot of things you can be working on and thinking about in the meantime."

For Wyland, it's a job he finds not only necessary, but enjoyable. On Thursday, he and Mike Thompson took a brisk stroll to check over their work in progress, with slash piles stacked over still-bare dirt.

It might not look attractive now, Thompson said, but he points to another parcel where they did a similar project three years ago. Green grass and small brush have since returned, and he said trees are growing bigger and stronger than ever with more distance between them.

"There was a day you couldn't see through all this," Thompson said. "If you just let it go, you have a bunch of dead stuff. It doesn't look nice and it has no value."

Tom Beechinor, a property owner along the North Fork Walla Walla River in northern Umatilla County, has about 1,000 timbered acres where he grazes cattle and harvests some logs for the sawmill. Like Wyland, he took to thinning "severely overstocked" portions of the land, clearing ladder fuels and boosting the trees' resiliency to disease.

"If everything dies and we get a fire, it's really a bad situation," Beechinor said. "That's the beauty of these grants. The positives for the public are better land quality, better water quality, better air quality and better habitat for wildlife."

IRRIGON: 'We followed our procedures'

Continued from 1A

Bensen started as the Irrigon Junior/Senior High School principal in 2008 and later transferred to his current position as principal for Morrow Education Center in Irrigon. He declined to comment about the investigation.

Dirksen said he believed the investigation would show that the district properly handled the situation.

"It's interesting to be investigated, given I'm the one that called it in," he said. "If I was going to guess, given the situation with Mr. McElligott, they're going to make sure that everything has been taken care of with the district."

"I am more than comfortable with the district investigation, the district practice. I don't think we did anything wrong. We followed our procedures and looked into everything and reported immediately to the agencies we're supposed to."

Dirksen, who is starting his 35th year with the school district, said he forwarded all the information he had about the allegations against McElligott to the commission and did not want to comment about the information until the commission concluded its investigation into the incident.

According to a Morrow County Sheriff's Office report, a former Irrigon High School student told detectives she had her first sexual encounter with McElligott on the day of her graduation in 2013. She was no longer a minor at that time.

The case was closed because there were no allegations of criminal conduct, but the detective recommended the report be forwarded to the commission for investigation.

McElligott was hired as a teacher at Irrigon Elementary School in 2004 and soon transferred to Irrigon Junior/Senior High School as a math teacher. He was hired as the

head softball coach at the high school in April 2006 and resigned from that position in June 2013. He was a basketball coach at the junior high school before being hired as the head boys basketball coach at the high school for the 2009-10 school year.

McElligott was hired as a sixth-grade teacher at Armand Larive Middle School in Hermiston in July 2013, but he continued as the boys basketball coach for Irrigon, winning the 2A state championship in 2014. Soon after, he was hired as the head boys basketball coach for Hermiston High School for the 2014-15 school year.

Hermiston School District officials announced the vacancy of the head boys basketball coach position in August and said McElligott was on paid administrative leave pending the commission investigation.

McElligott could not be reached for comment and has not returned repeated messages.

MARRIAGE: Miller and Roberts denied license four times

Continued from 1A

believing that marriage is a union between one man and one woman. He compared her willingness to accept imprisonment to what Martin Luther King Jr. did to advance civil rights.

"Kim Davis represents the best of us and everyone should lament and mourn the fact that her freedom has been taken away for what she believes," Gannam said.

Laura Landenwich, an attorney for the plaintiffs, rejected the comparison.

"Ms. Davis is in an unfortunate situation of her own creation. She is not a martyr. No one created a martyr today," Landenwich said, adding "she holds the keys to her jail cell."

Speaking earlier from the bench, Bunning said it would set up a "slippery slope" to allow an individual's ideas to supersede the courts' authority.

"Her good faith belief is simply not a viable defense," Bunning said. "I myself have genuinely held religious beliefs ... but I took an oath."

"Mrs. Davis took an oath," he added. "Oaths mean things."

Davis is represented by the Liberty Counsel, which advocates in court for religious freedom. Before she was led away, Davis said the U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalizing gay marriage nationwide conflicts with the vows she made when she became a born-again Christian.

"I promised to love Him with all my heart, mind and soul because I wanted to make heaven my home," Davis said.

Miller and Roberts were denied a marriage license four times by Davis or her deputies since the June ruling. Miller testified that one of the deputy clerks told her to apply in another county. "That's kind

of like saying we don't want gays or lesbians here. We don't think you are valuable," she said.

Rather than be fined, jailed or lose their jobs, five of the clerks told the judge they would issue the licenses. Her son, Nathan Davis, refused, but the judge said that wouldn't matter and he wouldn't be punished, as long as the others complied.

"I don't really want to, but I will comply with the law," said one, Melissa Thompson. "I'm a preacher's daughter and this is the hardest thing I've ever had to do in my life," she added. "I don't hate anybody ... None of us do."

Davis, an Apostolic Christian whose critics mock her for being on her fourth marriage, stopped serving all couples after the Supreme Court ruling in June. Many supporters and even some Republican presidential candidates have rallied behind her.

"People are calling the office all the time asking to send money," she testified. "I myself have not solicited any money."

Davis said she hopes the Legislature will change Kentucky laws to find some way for her to keep her job while following her conscience. But unless the governor convenes a costly special session, they won't meet until January. "Hope-

fully our legislature will get something taken care of," she told the judge.

Until then, the judge said, he has no alternative but to keep her behind bars. Davis stood and thanked Bunning, pausing briefly to search the crowded courtroom for familiar faces before she was led away.

Later photos showed Davis being escorted from the courthouse in what appeared to be handcuffs with a towel draped over her hands. She was taken to the Carter County Detention Center in a white, windowless van.

It's unclear exactly how long she'll remain in jail. Davis' attorneys said the judge's order would keep her in jail indefinitely. But Bunning indicated he would revisit his decision in a week, giving the deputy clerks time to comply with his order.

"The legislative and executive branches do have the ability to make changes," Bunning said earlier in the hearing. "It's not this court's job to make changes. I don't write law."

Davis served as her mother's deputy in the clerk's office for 27 years before she was elected as a Democrat to succeed her mother in November. As an elected official, she can be removed only if the Legislature impeaches her, which is unlikely in a deeply conservative state.

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