

Chase ends with serious injury to man who fired at police

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

A shooting suspect remains in a Portland hospital after an Oregon State Police trooper struck him with a car Saturday near Pendleton during a pursuit.

Three troopers involved in the chase and capture also remain on paid leave.

The Pendleton Police Department is investigating the confrontation. Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts said the suspect suffered a broken femur, broken pelvis and some injuries to organs. The injuries were not life threatening, Roberts said, and the man is at Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, where he is likely to undergo surgery.

But the man's medical condition and the distance have been hurdles

to questioning him and obtaining a statement, Roberts said, so he planned to talk to Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus about releasing the suspect's identity to the public.

Roberts also said he will not reveal the identities of the officers involved to protect the integrity of the investigation. He estimated he might be able to provide names next week.

The chase began Saturday at 1:17 a.m. after a trooper tried to stop a 1992 Honda Accord on Fulton Road near milepost 2 for speeding. The vehicle drove off at a high speed and, according to a statement from state police, led officers over rural roads where a trooper deployed spike strips, flattening at least one tire on the Honda.

That trooper is one of the three on leave. Roberts said the trooper

still had a grip on the rope to the strip when the Honda hit it, causing injuries to a hand. The trooper might report back to duty this week, Roberts said.

The Honda then entered the Umatilla Indian Reservation, where the driver stopped and a woman got out. Roberts said a trooper stopped and identified her, then an officer with Umatilla Tribal Police detained her. Roberts said he did not have more information on her status at this time.

The driver continued fleeing and fired shots that struck the lead state police vehicle, Roberts said. The gunfire presented an immediate danger to police and the public, he said, and troopers had to act.

The pursuit came to an end near the intersection of South Market and Tutuilla Church roads. Roberts said the lead trooper tried to do a "pit

maneuver" in front of the Honda to spin it out, causing it to crash. The second trooper was a split second behind and came around the other side of the Honda, where the driver was getting out and fleeing. The second car hit the driver, and the trooper swerved, also hitting the Honda and rolled the police car onto one side.

Neither of those troopers were injured. An ambulance took the suspect to St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton, and an emergency flight later took him to the Portland hospital.

Roberts said the information was preliminary — the state police crime lab is examining evidence, there is a rough draft of the crash reconstruction and police have yet to interview the officers about what happened.

Senate Bill 111, which the

Oregon Legislature passed in 2013, mandates each county develop procedures to investigate when officers use deadly physical force. Part of Umatilla County's plan is to have outside police agencies handle those investigations.

OSP Lt. Mike Turner at the Pendleton command said he has 12 troopers in all to work patrol, so having three on leave puts a pinch the department and meant some schedule juggling. Still, he said, troopers will continue to cover state highways and respond to help other agencies.

Roberts also said his department will turn over its investigation to the district attorney, who would take the case to a grand jury.

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HERMISTON

Variety show brings out local talent

Proceeds to benefit HHS swim team

By GEORGE PLAVERN
East Oregonian

For Marti Plum, singing in front of a nearly full Hermiston High School auditorium meant something personal.

Plum, 13, is in seventh grade at Armand Larive Middle School. She said she's been bullied in the past, and decided to perform the song "Beautiful" by Christina Aguilera as part of the fifth annual HHS swim team variety show on Saturday.

"It's kind of a way for me to express the way I feel," Plum said. "It doesn't matter what you look like. You're beautiful no matter what."

Twenty-four acts participated in the annual event, which has become a way for the swim team to raise money while highlighting a diverse range of talent in the community. Singers, dancers and musicians all shared the spotlight on stage to lively cheers from the crowd.

A trio of anonymous judges selected two "best of show" winners for eighth grade and younger and ninth grade and older, while the audience voted for their favorites by donating money in each performer's jar. All proceeds went to the HHS swim team to cover transportation costs.

Since Hermiston does not have an indoor swimming pool where the team can practice, the team must take the bus daily to the closest available pool at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton. Coach Kevin



Staff photo by George Plaven

Seventh-grader Marti Plum sings "Beautiful" by Christina Aguilera during the fifth annual Hermiston High School swim team variety show Saturday.

Hamblin said that drives up the cost close to \$5,000 per year, which is the highest transportation budget in the entire school district.

In years past, Hamblin said the team raised money through can drives, which was a pretty miserable experience in the cold, wet winter. Hosting a talent show actually fills a need in the community, he said, and has quickly caught on in popularity.

"The last couple of years, it's been getting good," Hamblin said. "You watch

some of these younger kids who get up there and perform, and it's just amazing."

The event also included a bake sale and raffle, with prizes including an iPad and Fitbit. Hamblin said they hoped to raise close to \$4,000 for the night. The Hermiston Sports Boosters help cover the remaining expenses.

Assistant coach Kerri Hodges said attendance has steadily increased every year.

"We have an amazing community that supports our

"The last couple of years, it's been getting good. You watch some of these younger kids who get up there and perform, and it's just amazing."

— Kevin Hamblin,
Hermiston High School swim coach

sports teams," Hodges said.

Best of show for eighth grade and younger went to Mischa Meyer, a fifth-grader at Highland Hills Elementary School who sang "Mad World" by Gary Jules. HHS senior Macie Cox won best of show for ninth grade and older with her rendition of Adele's "Hello."

First place for people's choice went to HHS senior Kodie Arnold who played ukulele and sang an original song. Arnold is blind from birth. Meyer won second place, and third place went to middle schoolers Nattalie Gray and Anini Medina, who performed a duet.

This was Meyer's fourth year at the show. She said she keeps coming back to meet new people and watch them try new things. She chose "Mad World" as a fitting end to what was a crazy year in 2015.

"We can start fresh this year," Meyer said.

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Seven arrested for dui over weekend

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Oregon State Police out of Pendleton reported arrests for driving under the influence of intoxicants more than doubled during this New Year's weekend compared to last year.

OSP Lt. Mike Turner on the Pendleton command said troopers from New Year's eve through the weekend made seven dui arrests, while last year there were three for the entire week of New Year's.

The boom started at about 4:30 p.m. on New Year's eve when a trooper stopped to help a driver in a Ford 150 pickup on the westbound side on Interstate 84 near milepost 216. The trooper noticed "multiple open containers of alcohol" in the front of the pickup, according to information from state police, and one person asleep in the back of the rig.

The trooper struggled to wake Levi Daniel Reed, 31, of Portland, who said he drove there until the pickup broke down, and while he drank before he stopped, he had not had a drop after.

Reed ended up behind bars at the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, for dui and refusing to take a breath intoxication level test.

Two people in one pickup also went to jail for dui.

A trooper stopped a Dodge pickup at 11:35 p.m. Thursday for failing to maintain a lane at Northwest 12th Street and Despain Avenue, Pendleton, according to state police. As the pickup came to a stop, the driver and

passenger switched seats, but both turned out to be drunk.

Chris Daniel Cruz, 48, of Astoria, and Jennifer Eugenia Elder, 46, no city provided, each failed sobriety tests, and state police hauled them to the county lockup for dui.

Police also cited Elder for possession of an open container and cited Cruz for driving while suspended and failure to install an ignition interlock device, an instrument that measures the blood alcohol level of your breath before you can start a vehicle.

The arrests carried into New Year's Day. Brian Richard Hemphill, 43, of Pilot Rock, tried to leave Archie's Bar a little before 3 a.m., but he put a Dodge pickup into drive instead of reverse and crashed through the front glass window of the bar.

State police also reported he could not finish a sobriety test, and his blood alcohol level was .16 percent, twice the legal limit. Troopers took him to jail, too.

State police also arrested these folks for dui during the holiday weekend:

Tirso Garcia Lopez, 22, of Hermiston. He has an additional charge of unlawful possession of a firearm.

Kile James Rosenberg, 22, no address provided. He admitted to smoking marijuana two hours before a trooper stopped him Thursday night near Athena.

Michelle A. McCallum Smith, 56, of Walla Walla. She also refused to take a breath intoxication level test.

PENDLETON

City council replacement could come soon

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

The Pendleton City Council will get a new member in 2016.

That fact didn't seem feasible until at-large City Councilor Jane Hill said she would resign her seat to take a job with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Once Hill resigns, the remaining city council members will need to begin the process of choosing her replacement.

City Recorder Andrea Denton said Hill needs to present a letter of resignation to the city council to initiate the process.

Hill has said she wouldn't formally resign until her job offer was finalized with the CTUIR, which is in the process of conducting a background check.

Once the council has accepted the resignation letter, it must pass a resolution declaring Hill's seat vacant.

Denton said the ordinance governing council vacancies demands the seat be filled "forthwith," which city staff are interpreting to mean "as soon as possible." That means the council can't keep the seat vacant until a person

is elected to fill it.

The last person appointed to a vacated seat was Hill herself in 2012.

Hill had already filed to run for the at-large seat when then-councilor Justin Pearce resigned with a year left in his term. Pearce's resignation opened the door for Hill and her opponent, Norm Winters, to apply for the seat before municipal elections.

After Pearce submitted his resignation letter Feb. 2, 2012, the council vacated his seat before municipal elections. Feb. 7, held candidate interviews Feb. 21 and appointed Hill to the seat March 6. Hill would go on to win a full

four-year term over Winters in the municipal elections.

Hill's impending resignation is in the midst of the filing period to run for her seat, which ends March 8. Her term runs through the end of 2016.

Elections to fill the seats currently occupied by Hill,

Ward I Councilor Becky Marks, Ward II Councilor Chuck Wood, Ward III Councilor Tom Young and Mayor Phillip Houk will be held May 17.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.



Hill

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