

PENDLETON

MacKenzie under investigation for theft

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Former Pendleton city planner Evan MacKenzie is the subject of a theft investigation, but his girlfriend said the real culprit is a con man she hired.

MacKenzie, who resigned Monday from his position with the city, did not respond to a request for comment. Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts said MacKenzie could be looking at criminal charges, though the case is not related to his resignation.

Eric Arbogast said Michelle Manion, MacKenzie's girlfriend, hired him in November to install in some two-by-fours and drywall at her 335 S.W. Court Ave. home.

"I told them right off the bat that I'm not licensed [as a contractor]," he said, so he would not touch plumbing or electrical.

Arbogast also said Manion agreed to let him and his son stay in a room in the house while he worked, so they had a place to hang out. All their deals were verbal, he said, and nothing was in writing.

He said he used the room for more than a month and kept a television and Xbox system there for his son, as well as music gear — speakers, amps, a drum set, guitars and more for the open mic sessions he operates in Pendleton.

Manion contended Arbogast did not do the work and instead squatted in the residence, so she wanted him gone. She told MacKenzie, who then told Arbogast he had 24 hours to get out of the house.

"He was told to vacate and remove his items — everything that wasn't tools for the job," Manion said. "Anything not removed by a certain date and time would be taken to the dump. He responded that he understood and agreed."

Arbogast said MacKenzie one Saturday in December indeed took everything that was not a tool.

But Roberts said MacKenzie did not make a run to the dump.

"He stored a lot of it and started selling it on social media," Roberts said.

Roberts said MacKenzie asserted Arbogast rang up big charges at a local hardware store for work he did not do, and selling the items was a way to recoup the losses. Oregon law, however, does not allow for that.

"You cannot just take the property and keep it," Roberts said. "And you absolutely cannot turn around and sell someone else's property without their knowledge. He had no right to do that."

Roberts also said Manion and MacKenzie should have followed a formal eviction process to get Arbogast out of the house. Manion maintained

she did not need to because Arbogast was not a tenant.

"He was hired to do Sheetrock and was holding drug/music parties instead," she said in an online message. "No tenant, no eviction. Just handyman who turned out to be criminal con man."

"Why would I need to squat?" Arbogast said. "I own my own [expletive] home."

Roberts said even if Arbogast did not have permission to move in, Manion and Arbogast had "kind of an opened-ended verbal agreement to do this work," the house was vacant and Manion consented to allow Arbogast to be there. Roberts said landlords who evict squatters often have to go to court, and even police must give 48 hours notice before removing anything from homeless camps.

Arbogast said he made a two-and-a-half page list of items that MacKenzie took. Roberts said Arbogast has yet to provide that list to police.

Roberts said the police report will soon head to the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office for possible charges.

Arbogast said Manion paid him about \$1,700 in cash, but she owes him \$1,800 more. Manion filed a small claims lawsuit on Dec. 18 against Arbogast for \$6,570. The first hearing in that case is March 22 in Umatilla County Circuit Court, Pendleton.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.



MacKenzie

IRRIGON

Pursuit begins with bank alarm and ends in arrest

East Oregonian

A false alarm at an Irrigon bank resulted in an arrest anyway after a driver fled the scene when police showed up.

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office reported that deputies responded to an alarm call at the Bank of Eastern Oregon, 230 S First St. in Irrigon, around 8:18 a.m. on Wednesday. As they arrived, a black Nissan pickup truck sped away from the scene and Deputy Colleen Neubert gave chase while Deputy Todd Siex spoke with bank employees and determined it was a false alarm.

According to a news release from the sheriff's office, Neubert attempted to perform a traffic stop after the truck did not obey the stop sign at South First Street and Southeast Wyoming Avenue. After the vehicle failed to pull over and ran a second stop sign, Neubert informed dispatch she was involved in a pursuit southbound on Division Street. The pursuit covered

several county roads and cut across Interstate 84 and onto private property owned by the Greenwood Resources, reaching speeds of up to 95 miles per hour.

According to the news release, at 8:49 a.m. the suspect tried to turn north on County Line Road but lost control of the vehicle and slid into a dirt embankment, causing two flat tires.

Deputies arrested the driver, Lawrence Allen Perrin, 39, of Irrigon and charged him with felony elude, misdemeanor driving while suspended, reckless driving, reckless endangerment and criminal trespass. He was lodged at Umatilla County Jail with \$27,000 bail. The sheriff's office reported that more charges are pending.

Passengers Brian William Barnes, 29, of Umatilla and Cassandra Lynn Huling, 33, of Irrigon were detained but released after questioning.

Boardman Police Department and Oregon State Police assisted in the pursuit.



Perrin

HERMISTON

Defibrillators added to police vehicles

East Oregonian

Hermiston police who arrive on scene at a medical emergency before paramedics will now have an automated external defibrillator at their disposal.

Hermiston Police Department Chief Jason Edmiston said the department recently purchased four portable AED units and a training unit. The portable units will be placed in four patrol vehicles driven by sergeants and corporals.

Edmiston said the \$2,600 purchase means an AED will be accessible to an on-duty shift "nearly 100 percent of the time."

He said he has applied for a grant that would be

used to purchase three more and plans to budget for an additional three during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.

Edmiston said in an email that years ago while on patrol he arrived before paramedics at a local restaurant where a customer was having a heart attack. He said he performed CPR with another patron, but had no success. He said research shows that using an AED early during an emergency can increase the patient's chances at survival.

"Our troops having yet another resource at their disposal is important for us in our attempt to provide as professional of a service to those we serve as possible," he wrote.



Photo contributed by Hermiston Police Department

Four portable automatic external defibrillators were purchased to place in Hermiston Police Department patrol cars.

HERMISTON

Branding committee seeks more members before Feb. meeting

East Oregonian

Hermiston's new branding committee has had its first meeting, but it is not too late to join the committee.

The city and Hermiston Chamber of Commerce will continue to accept applications until its next meeting on Feb. 1.

The committee is tasked

with finding a new brand, including logo and tagline, to promote Hermiston after a majority of residents surveyed expressed a dislike for the current "You can GROW here" brand.

Following the recommendation of a consultant, the committee of community members will come up with two different choices of brand

and present them in a survey to Hermiston residents sometime in the future.

During Monday's city council meeting Mayor David Drotzmann said he was pleased to see the first meeting had a substantial turnout and that good ideas were brought forward. He said he was glad that the committee included represen-

tatives from Hermiston High School's marketing class. "The adults in the room enjoyed having the kids around and they came out with some great ideas," he said. Applications for the committee and information on its progress can be found online at www.hermiston-brand.com.

PLUTE: Last local recall to make it to ballot was 2013 in Weston

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billing dispute and \$218,423 in attorney fees to Pendleton Plumbing, Plute said he appealed the ruling and eventually settled with the company for an amount he couldn't disclose because of a confidentiality agreement.

As for the street utility fee, Plute noted that he was one of six councilors who voted in favor of the fee and Kishpaugh and his associates did not voice their opposition to the fee when it was passed in December.

Kishpaugh faces a long road to recall Plute.

Denton said that if Kishpaugh is successful in gathering 705 signatures in

90 days and submits them, the Umatilla County Elections Division has 10 days to verify the signatures.

Successful signature verification will trigger a five-day period where Plute will be given the option to resign or submit a statement of justification.

If he submits a statement or takes no action during those five days, the city will be required to hold a recall election within the next 35 days.

If Pendleton voters then choose to vote Plute out of office in a recall election, the Pendleton City Council will appoint a replacement to fill out the remainder of Plute's term, which runs

through 2018.


The last local recall attempt that made it to the ballot was in 2013, when Weston voters decided to keep their mayor, Duane Thul. In 2012, four Hermiston city councilors and the mayor were the targets of a recall attempt but also kept their positions after a vote.

Plute said he was less concerned about his title as city councilor than helping to improve Pendleton, something he could do as a regular citizen.

In summarizing his thoughts about the petition, Plute quote former House Speaker Sam Rayburn.

"A jackass can kick a barn down, but it takes a carpenter to build one."

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



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SHOOTING: No one in custody for the killing

Continued from 1A

fired near milepost 233 on the Oregon Old Trail Road in the Meacham area on the reservation.

Tribal police, Pendleton police, Oregon State Police and the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office responded, according to Sams, and found one person shot. Officers also detained several people in the area of the shooting for questioning.

istion police and the Morrow County Sheriff's Office also joined the investigation.

Primus said there was only one victim and no one is in custody for the killing. He also said he could not reveal the victim's identity at

this time.

This is the first homicide of the year in Umatilla County, which had two in 2015 — one in March in Hermiston and the other in August in Milton-Freewater. Both remain unsolved.

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