

HERMISTON



Members of mariachi band Los Temerosos sing and play down Second Street on Sunday during the Cinco de Mayo parade through downtown Hermiston. Staff Photo by Jennifer Colton

Crowds celebrate Cinco de Mayo

By JENNIFER COLTON
East Oregonian

Large crowds attended Hermiston's Cinco de Mayo celebration this weekend, sampling food, vendors and carnival rides to recognize the historic day, which officially takes place Thursday.

The carnival opened in the parking lot behind the Hermiston Public Library earlier in the week, and the main event kicked off at 1 p.m. Sunday with a parade, live entertainment and the "caballo bailando" — dancing horse — competition.

The swath of Second Street opposite Hermiston City Hall was closed off for the event.

Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, gave the opening address, and Tom Spoo, principal at Hermiston High School, served as grand marshal for the parade, which included more than 100 participants — and more than two dozen horses, most prepped and ready for the exhibition and dancing contest.

The Hermiston event has grown every year. This was the fourth year it



Children walk in the Hermiston Cinco de Mayo parade, Sunday. Staff Photo by Jennifer Colton

has taken place in downtown Hermiston, and organizers have said they hope to move to the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in 2017.

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HERMISTON

Naked woman in 'crisis' arrested after four incidents

East Oregonian

Hermiston police were kept busy Monday responding to numerous incidents involving a woman said in a news release was "clearly having a crisis of some kind."

At approximately 2 a.m. officers responded to a disturbance at Tower Apartments involving a 46-year-old woman who had locked herself out of her apartment and was causing a scene.

At 7:15 a.m. they

contacted the woman again after reports that she was walking down the road "acting crazy," but she refused offers of help.

At 9:30 a.m. Hermiston police took the woman to Good Shepherd Medical Center after responding to another call about her, this time that she was walking down Feedville Road naked.

And at 1:30 p.m. police received "numerous calls" from citizens who were alarmed after the woman walked away from the hospital and down the road with her bathrobe open.

At that point she was taken to Umatilla County Jail in Pendleton on charges of disorderly conduct.

Edmiston said the chain of events was an example of a system that is "extremely frustrating" for law enforcement.

"The new trend across the nation is to train officers to interact with people in crisis differently than before," he

wrote in a statement. "Inasmuch as that sounds great, the reality is people who are in crisis should be getting treatment from professionals not from line level police officers."

"In my opinion, the system failed yet again in this case as our agency was forced to arrest a person that clearly needs medical treatment of some kind."

PENDLETON

Benedict accepts Cannon Beach fire chief position

East Oregonian

Matt Benedict is heading for the coast.

According to the Cannon Beach Gazette, the Pendleton Fire Department assistant fire chief and fire marshal was offered the fire chief position at the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District.

Interviewed last week, Benedict said he has accepted the job contingent upon contract negotiations, which he doesn't expect to be an obstacle to joining the district.

Benedict, 47, will earn between \$67,500 and \$75,000 at the district, which extends from the Highway 101/26 junction to the northeastern tip of Tillamook County in Falcon Cove.

Benedict said he was attracted to the job because he and his wife wanted to be closer to their families in Portland. Benedict also said Cannon Beach is one of his favorite vacation spots and he is looking forward to serving out the rest of his career and retiring in the coastal

community.

A Portland native, Benedict was recruited to work for the Pendleton Fire Department in 1994 and has since made a life for himself in Eastern Oregon.

In addition to his duties with the fire department, Benedict also serves as chief to the volunteer Helix Rural Fire Protection District while his wife is a member of the Helix City Council.



Benedict

His last day with the department will be May 31.

Pendleton Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo commended Benedict for his new job and said he was well-liked in the department.

Ciraulo said Jack Remillard, a former Pendleton fire marshal and Umatilla County emergency manager, will cover fire marshal duties on an interim basis while the department searches for a full-time replacement.

While he's encouraging department personnel to apply for the position, Ciraulo said the city will cast a wide net in looking for the next fire marshal-assistant chief.

UMATILLA

TRCI inmate found dead

East Oregonian

A 76-year-old inmate was found dead in his cell Sunday morning at Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla.

Tomas Vejar-Garcia had been serving a sentence since June 1, 2012, for two counts of first-degree sex abuse in Washington County and was eligible for release on June 6. Prison staff found him unresponsive in his cell at 7:53 a.m. Sunday.

County medical examiner Rudy Stefancik said the death was natural and no autopsy would be performed.

Vejar-Garcia's next of kin were notified and the Oregon State Police Criminal Investigation Division conducted an investigation, as it does with all unanticipated deaths.

Vejar-Garcia is the fifth TRCI inmate to die of natural causes in the past nine weeks, according to Stefancik.



Vejar-Garcia

Avis Woodrum, 60, Shawn McMillian, 44, Ronald Marcus, 60, and Joel Abbot, 60, have all died since February 27.

TRCI houses approximately 1,800 male inmates and opened in 2000.

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Mother's Day Prime Rib Buffet
Sunday, May 8 10am - 2pm
Featuring
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FRESH GREEN BEANS WITH BACON
CHICKEN BUNKHOUSE PASTA
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Online registration & race information at WWW.BUTTECHALLENGE.COM
All proceeds benefit THE HERMISTON CROSS COUNTRY PROGRAM
Thank you for your support!