

Hermiston City Council to discuss electric rates

East Oregonian

Hermiston city council will discuss electric rates Monday at a work session before their regular council meeting.

The work session will begin at 6 p.m. at city hall, followed by a meeting at 7 p.m.

A year ago the council approved a rate increase, which for residential accounts raised the base charge from \$6.50 to \$10.50 per month and increased the charge per kilowatt hour for residential customers by 12.4 percent.

City manager Byron Smith said at the time city staff did not know how much Bonneville Power Administration was going to raise the price on the wholesale power it supplies to Hermiston Energy Services.

"We said we know we're going to need an increase, but we may need to come back and talk about it again," he said.

The city also put some

money into smaller improvements to Hermiston's power grid this year, but will need to come up with the money for larger capital improvement projects soon.

Smith said there were ways to do that besides a rate increase, such as bond refinance, so staff wanted to discuss options with the city council on Monday.

The regular meeting following the work session does not have any new resolutions or ordinances, but includes committee reports, the city manager's report, introductions from the police department and a monthly report on the progress of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

Smith said they tried to keep Monday's meeting agenda short because the city council and staff will be back together at city hall Wednesday at 6 p.m. to go over the proposed 2016-2017 budget with the city's budget committee.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Searching for greener pastures

A pronghorn stands next to an irrigation line near alfalfa fields above Butter Creek on Friday southwest of Hermiston.

BOARDMAN

Idaho teen pleads not guilty to stabbing woman

East Oregonian

A 17-year-old Idaho boy pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges related to stabbing a woman May 14 at a rest stop near Boardman.

A Morrow County grand jury on Wednesday indicted Talon James Davis, of the area of Lewiston, Idaho, on charges of second-degree assault and unlawful use of a weapon. Davis appeared in circuit court Thursday via video from jail in The Dalles and pleaded not guilty.

District Attorney Justin Nelson said he charged Davis as an adult because second-degree assault falls under Measure 11, Oregon's mandatory minimum sentencing law. Nelson initially charged Davis with first-degree assault, but he said the evidence did not support the harsher charge

because the victim did not suffer serious physical injury.

Nelson said the 51-year-old woman from Hood River noticed Davis outside when she entered the restroom at the state rest stop off the westbound side of Interstate 84 near Boardman. When she exited a stall, Nelson said, Davis was in the restroom and attacked, stabbing her once in the area of the lower back.

She required medical help and stayed until Monday at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston.

Oregon State Police arrested Nelson and booked him into the juvenile facility at the Northern Oregon Regional Correctional Facilities, The Dalles. Circuit Judge Ron Pahl during Thursday's arraignment kept Davis's bail at \$100,000. Nelson said Davis has his next hearing Thursday, May 26.

IRRIGON

Kid mayors headed to state competition

Two students first ever to participate from Irrigon

By GEORGE PAVLEN
East Oregonian

A pair of Irrigon Elementary School students have some big ideas for ways to improve their community.

Fifth-grader Caren Cardenas and sixth-grader Rosita Orozco recently participated in the Oregon Mayors Association's "If I Were Mayor, I Would ..." contest, and were chosen by Irrigon City Council to advance to the statewide competition in July.

For the contest, Cardenas prepared a poster that highlighted projects and programs she said would make the town a better place to live — things like a bowling alley and splash pad, along with regular town halls and a tutor program at the library.



Staff photo by George Plaven

Fifth-grader Caren Cardenas, left, and sixth-grader Rosita Orozco, of Irrigon Elementary School, were selected as winners of the "If I Were Mayor, I Would ..." contest, and will go on to compete against others across the state.

"It could help all kinds of students get better at any subject they like," Cardenas said.

Orozco, meanwhile, wrote an essay detailing her plans to start a recycling committee, build a mall and, most importantly, open a hospital with

local urgent care.

"A lot of people get hurt around here, and I want them to be safe and helped as soon as possible," Orozco said.

Irrigon City Manager Aaron Palmquist said this is the first year local students participated in the compe-

tion, which encourages the next generation of civic leaders.

Cardenas and Orozco were presented with \$25 gift cards to Wal-Mart from Mayor Sam Heath, and will have the chance to win an Apple iPad Air 2 if they win first place at state.

Statewide winners will be notified by mid-June, and recognized at an awards luncheon during the OMA annual conference July 21-23 in Lincoln City.

Heath said the council was especially impressed with Cardenas and Orozco for their sense of caring about the community.

"It's been our honor to meet you and have you here," Heath said during a brief ceremony on Thursday at city hall. "It's great to know what is on your minds for the future."

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.

MILTON-FREEWATER

Grand jury clears officers in recent shooting

East Oregonian

Three Milton-Freewater officers can return to duty after a grand jury determined they were justified in using deadly force against Robert Gage Sregzinski, 19, of College Place.



Sregzinski

Sregzinski is now in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on multiple charges including attempted aggravated murder.

Milton-Freewater officers Scott Clayton and Jesse Myer and detective Morgan Dunlap confronted Sregzinski after a police chase April 28. Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus reported Sregzinski shot at officers and they returned fire, striking Sregzinski.

He ended up in a Walla Walla hospital, and then the county jail there held him. Umatilla County Jail records show Sregzinski arrived

Thursday morning in Pendleton.

A grand jury indicted Sregzinski, Primus said, on charges of attempted aggravated murder for shooting at police; possession of a prohibited firearm (a sawed-off shotgun); four counts of unlawful use of a weapon; misdemeanor and felony attempt to flee police; three counts of menacing and one of reckless driving, also misde-

meanors. The district attorney's office arraigned him that afternoon. Primus said Sregzinski's bail is more than \$1 million.

Milton-Freewater placed the officers on paid leave in the wake of the shooting. Primus said the grand jury found the police were within their rights to use deadly force.

He also said Sregzinski's next court appearance is June 23.

Boards, chiefs from six fire districts plan meeting

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Fire districts from the west end of Umatilla County and northern Morrow County are looking to strengthen their relationships at a gathering June 7.

The meeting will include boards and fire chiefs from six districts, and will feature remarks from Genoa Ingram, a lobbyist for the Oregon Fire District Directors Association and Oregon Volunteer Firefighters Association.

Hermiston fire board chair Ric Sherman said the districts — Hermiston, Stanfield, Umatilla, Echo, Boardman and Irrigon — have a "very good network of intergovernmental agreements" that plays out on the ground when fire crews provide mutual aid. But on the other hand, board members don't get much of an opportunity to talk and share ideas with other districts.

"Fire is an equal-op-

portunity killer," he said. "We're all in this together."

At the dinner, which will be held at the Westland Road station at 6:30 p.m., Ingram will share with fire chiefs and boards new legislative actions in Salem that affect fire districts and also listen to feedback about how she can help rural fire districts as a lobbyist.

"She's an advocate, she's a cheerleader, she's a support system, she's everything," Sherman said.

He said she also will share details from a new state program to help districts retain volunteers, which is especially important for all-volunteer districts. Sherman said in the old days when there was a fire, volunteers from all over the area would immediately drop what they were doing and rush to the firehouse. Today, the district often puts in the time and money to train volunteers, only to find that their employers won't let them leave their jobs to respond to a fire.

"Times and attitudes have changed," Sherman said.

The day after the six-district summit, on June 8, Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services will hold its last board meeting before it combines with Stanfield Fire District on July 1 to become the new Umatilla County Fire District 1. Sherman said members of both the current boards are excited about the change and feel it will result in the services "people expect, and quite frankly they deserve."

"There is a lot of work to do, but we will really be able to upgrade fire and ambulance service," he said.

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

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Goodbye to Buildings Full of Memories

Join us for cake and an open mic session to share stories of your time at Sherwood or Washington Elementary Schools. Bring any pictures or memorabilia to share.

Tuesday, May 24th, 5:00-7:00pm
Sherwood Heights Elementary School
3111 SW Marshall Ave

Tuesday, May 24th, 5:00-7:00pm
Washington Elementary School
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