

HERMISTON

Wyden praises HHS to Senate

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Hermiston High School got eight minutes of fame Wednesday when Sen. Ron Wyden spoke about the school's career technical education programs on the floor of the Senate.

Wyden visited the school last week, and told his colleagues in Washington, D.C., that he saw some "terrific" programs.

"I got a chance to watch some very impressive students in action," he said.

One of those students he mentioned was Elizabeth Herrera, a graduating senior at HHS who showed him around the latest student-built house that the Columbia Basin Student Homebuilding Program has placed on the market.

"I thought the student homebuilding program could be a model not just for my state, but for the nation," he said.

Wyden said he believed the types of career technical education programs found at Hermiston High School could help raise graduation rates by making students more interested in their education. He said that Hermiston students told him the homebuilding program and other classes like it made them want to go to school each day.

"I am committed to raising graduation rates in Oregon and across the country, and I think one of the best ways to do it is to support programs like the one in Hermiston, because I think it is



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Sen. Ron Wyden listens to Hermiston senior Hannah Reese, second from left, talk about her project on hospitality and recreation Wednesday, June 1 at Hermiston High School.

tailor-made to achieve this goal," he said.

Wyden said federal funding for those types of programs has been declining, however, and urged his colleagues to move away from "over-tested bubble kids" to more well-rounded students and make a bipartisan effort to re-authorize the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which helps fund career technical education programs.

He said watching a rural community

in Eastern Oregon create such programs was a special experience and he enjoyed his visit to Hermiston.

"I'm going to do everything I can to take the student homebuilder program that I saw last week and spread the word about what the potential is here," he said.

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IRRIGON

Victim's report leads to arrest of man for rape

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

An Irrigon man is in jail on a charge of first-degree rape.

The scenario Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack recounted that led to Tuesday's arrest of Ruben Macias, 47, has become commonplace in sex crimes.

Matlack said Macias and a 29-year-old woman who was a family friend were at the Sub Zero Restaurant & Lounge, 100 West Highway 730, Irrigon, the night of May 4 or early May 5. There "was alcohol involved," the sheriff said, and Macias offered to give her a ride to her mother's house, also in Irrigon, and the mother left them alone.

Macias then engaged in sexual intercourse without the woman's permission, Matlack said, and she told Macias "stop."

The victim waited until May 6 to report what happened. Matlack said victims of sex crimes often hesitate to report right away — or at all — for multiple reasons, including

uncertainty of what to do. In this case, he said, the woman called the sheriff's office and told a deputy, which started the investigation. She also went to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, for a sexual assault examination.

Deputies interviewed Macias Tuesday, Matlack said, and when that was done they put him in cuffs and booked him into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, for first-degree rape.



Macias

The crime in Oregon applies when an offender forces the victim to have sex, or when the victim is younger than 12, or if the victim is younger than 16 and is a sibling or child of the rapist. First-degree rape also applies when the victim is incapacitated and incapable of giving consent.

The crime falls under Oregon mandatory minimum sentencing law and carries a prison sentence of at least 8 years, 4 months.

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

Speed limit to be reduced on some rural highways

East Oregonian

Just three months after the speed limits were raised on 1,500 miles of central and Eastern Oregon highways, the Oregon Department of Transportation has decided to reduce speeds on certain stretches due to safety concerns.

Paul Mather, the ODOT deputy director

for highways, announced Tuesday that segments of highways 97 and 20 will return to 55 mph as soon as new signs are installed in the next 2-3 weeks.

The change was ordered after ODOT engineers analyzed how the higher 65 mph limit affected driver behavior and specifically crashes. The lower limit will be in place for one year

as ODOT further evaluates the data and discusses its analysis with the state speed zone review panel to decide if the change should be made permanent.

The four segments where ODOT is reducing the speed limit from 65 to 55 mph are:

Highway 97 from Madras to Terrebonne (about 16.5 miles) and at the La Pine south city limit

(1 mile), and Highway 20 from the Bend east city limit to Dodds Road (6 miles) and from Vale to Cairo Junction (about 11.5 miles).

The limits were increased March 1 on about 300 miles of Interstate 84 and about 1,200 miles of highways, following a new state law passed in the 2015 legislative session.

Umatilla County buildings get upgrades

PENDLETON — Two county buildings will receive upgrades. The Stafford Hansell Government Center in Hermiston will get improved communication systems and the county justice center in Pendleton will get better lights.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners approved the improvements on votes of 3-0 at a meeting Monday morning in Pendleton.

The Stafford Hansell building houses county offices, public meeting rooms and two circuit courtrooms. Heavy rains, snow and wind, though, can knock out the internet connection to the building, according to Dan Lonai, head of county administrative services.

Local company Eastern Oregon Telecom submitted the least expensive solution — installing fiber optic cable for \$7,750 plus a monthly charge of \$378.95.

The justice center is home to the sheriff's office, dispatch and jail. Six exterior lighting ballasts at the center are burnt out.

The county will use Pendleton Electric to replace the old lights with LEDs, which can last years and use less energy. The project cost is \$25,503, but Oregon Energy Trust incentives cover \$7,872.

Lonai also calculated the new lights would save \$4,188 a year in electricity, and the project would pay for itself in three years.

Canal Road off limits to through-trucks

HERMISTON — Freight haulers from out of the area can no longer use Canal Road in the Hermiston area. The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners banned through-trucks from the road on a vote of 3-0 at a meeting Monday morning in Pendleton.

Tom Fellows, public works director, told commissioners complaints came in after the start of the year about freight haulers using the road, and in April the sheriff's office also received complaints. The road department set up traffic counters on the road and found a few big rigs were using it.

He said he suspected they started using Canal Road to avoid construction on Highway 395 through Hermiston, but there is no reason for those haulers to use Canal, which local farmers already use. And while Canal's structure could handle the loads, he said, there is one steep hill that causes some trucks to spin out and require a wrecker. Locals in the area, he said, were not happy about that.

Fellows also said Baxter Road in the Hermiston area has a no through-truck sign as well, but staff cannot find the documentation approving it. So he asked the board to rectify that, and it did with a vote of 3-0.

BRIEFLY

SAGE Saturday sprouts this weekend

BOARDMAN — Free admission and activities are featured during SAGE Saturday.

The event is Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the SAGE Center, 101 Olson Road, Boardman. The featured activity is making a sprout house, which uses sponges to grow items from seed.

The SAGE Center is an interactive visitor center that highlights sustainable agriculture and energy. It provides an opportunity for people of all ages to have fun and learn at the same time. The hours are Sunday through Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Regular admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for seniors/students and free for ages 5 and under. There is a \$20 maximum per family.

For more information, contact 541-481-7243, sagecenter@portofmorrow.com or visit www.visitsage.com.

Hermiston Elks salute Flag Day

HERMISTON — A display of United States flags, special music and a history of the flag are featured during a Flag Day ceremony at the Hermiston Elks Lodge.

The event, which is open to the public, is Sunday at 3 p.m. at 480 E. Main St., Hermiston. Hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages will be available for purchase after the ceremony. Heather Baumgartner of Boardman will sing a trio of patriotic songs during the event.

Hermiston Elks trustee Dennis Coykendall said the flag represents our country's heritage and is a symbol of the freedoms we have.

While the Fourth of July honors the birth of our country, Flag Day celebrates the symbol of our country. In accordance with the Flag Resolution of 1777, June 14 was officially established as Flag Day in 1916 by President Woodrow Wilson. In 1949, it was designated as a national observance by President Harry Truman. According to a history of the Elks, Truman was moved to take the action as a result of his participation with the Elks Lodge in Independence, Missouri.

For more information about the ceremony, call Coykendall at 541-571-2925 or the lodge at 541-567-6923.

Douglas Co. official to discuss Umpqua tragedy

PENDLETON — Tim Freeman, a Douglas County commissioner, will discuss the tragic shooting that occurred at Umpqua Community College this past fall at the upcoming Round Up Republican Women's

meeting. The group is inviting the public, including representatives from Blue Mountain Community College, to learn what people are doing to help prevent such a tragedy from occurring locally.

The no-host luncheon is Tuesday, June 14 at 11:45 a.m. at the Red Lion, 304 S.E. Nye Ave., Pendleton. The cost is \$11.

Those who plan to attend are asked to make a reservation by Monday morning. For more information or to RSVP, contact rounduprepublicanwomen@hushmail.com or 541-276-1206.

Recreation department offers boredom busters

PENDLETON — All types of activities are planned during Pendleton Parks & Recreation's Summer Parks Adventure Camp.

Open to ages 7-12, kids can attend one week or all six. The camp begins Monday, June 20 and the final week starts Monday, July, 25. It runs Monday through Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Pioneer and Community parks in Pendleton.

The fee is \$17 per week and includes lunch by Sodexo through the Pendleton School District meal program. An afternoon snack will be provided by recreation staff.

Morning activities feature active games like tag, Frisbee and whiffle ball. Participants will stay cool in the afternoons with board games or craft and science projects in the shade.

On Tuesdays, Pioneer Park participants will go to the aquatic center and Community Park attendees will visit the library and gym. On Thursdays, the schedule is reversed so all participants visit the aquatic center, gym and library each week.

For more information about the programs or to register, visit www.pendletonparksandrec.com or stop by the parks office, 865 Tutuilla Road. For more information, call 541-276-8100.

Photo club focuses on park stroll

HERMISTON — An upcoming photo walk is planned by the Hermiston Public Library Photography Club.

The group invites anyone interested in photography to join them for the field trip meeting. The event is Tuesday, June 14 at 5:30 p.m. at Riverfront Park, located off Orchard Extension Loop at Southwest 23rd St., Hermiston.

For more information, call 541-567-2882 or visit www.hermistonlibrary.us.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

Umatilla County delays allowing ATVs on roads

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

ATV riders will have to wait a while longer before getting to cruise on Umatilla County roads. The county board of commissioners split on a vote Monday in Pendleton and will postpone deciding the matter.

The new county law would allow ATV use on roads in the county's northern area, from Adams to the Washington border. ATV user Jessie Shaw of Milton-Freewater spoke in favor of the proposal at a public hearing Monday, according to county records. He said nearby counties in Walla Walla already allow the use, and Umatilla County should get on board with that.

Rancher Cliff Bracher of Pendleton opposed the proposal. He owns property on Upper Pine Creek and Wildhorse roads, he said, and having ATVs ride through could lead to increases in vandalism and fire. He also said the roads cut through open range, and he and other ranchers haul livestock through the area in the spring and fall, both of which would be a safety concern.

Commissioner Larry Givens made it clear where he stood: "There's no way I can support this ordinance, not at all."

Opening the land to ATV use is bad policy, he said, and ATV riders policing themselves will not work. Trespassing is a significant problem, he went on, and this new local law would make that worse

and open up a slew of other problems from vandalism to water concerns to smoke management.

Commissioner Bill Elfering said the citizens of the county own the roads, and motorcycle riders already can use them, and the county's law requires more of the ATV riders than of motorcycle riders.

"It is being proposed as a trial, a one-year period," he said. "This ordinance expires in June next year. If there are problems I would never consider renewing it."

And that, he said, puts the burden on the people who want it to make it work.

Board chairman George Murdock said he would have "massive" but personal concerns if this experiment was in the south end of the county, where he has seen vandalism and increased fire danger.

Elfering moved to adopt the law, and Givens moved to reject it, and both motions died for lack of a second.

Murdock proposed delaying the vote until the board could see a map of the roads in question. Elfering seconded, and he and Murdock voted to postpone. Givens voted against. The board did not set a date to continue the matter.

Elfering said he sees both sides of the issue and recalled similar situations with walking trails. Some people opposed those, but later changed their minds when they saw they added value to their property.

Agritourism Workshop

Have you considered adding a farm stand, farm tour or lodging to your farm or ranch? Get inspired and discover how to plan your project, navigate the regulations and permitting, and gain the most from your marketing dollars at the *Agritourism Workshop, June 21 & 22*. The FREE workshop will be useful for people just starting and for established agritourism businesses. Registration is required! Go to: Industry.traveloregon.com/ruggedcountryATS
Tuesday, June 21 | 1-5
Wednesday, June 22 | 8-4:30
Boardman and Hermiston
For more information and an agenda, contact Janet Dodson, 541-786-8006 or janetd@eoni.com

