

HERMISTON

OSHA investigating onion shed fire that killed worker

By ALEXA LOUGEE
East Oregonian

The cause of the fatal June 1 onion shed fire near Hermiston is still under investigation.

The fire claimed the life of Columbia Basin Spreaders Inc. employee Joseph Adams, 62, of Umatilla.

According to Columbia Basin Spreaders project manager Steve Williams, the shed was going through a renovation process in an effort to update the air flow system.

Oregon OSHA is investigating the fire. According to

Gary Beck, state-wide safety enforcement manager, the investigation is still at least two months away from concluding, though legally OSHA has up to six months to finish its investigation and produce its findings. Beck said this is a particularly complicated case to figure out and there are no witnesses.

Adams had worked for the company for more than 10 years, according to his brother Weslie Adams. His



Adams

death was one of 27 workplace fatalities reported to Oregon OSHA in 2016 as reported on Oregon OSHA's website.

The fire consumed an approximately 400-by-150-foot single-story onion storage building, one of 18 the company uses to store produce, and caused an estimated \$1.2 million in damage. Columbia Basin plans to rebuild the facility, though a timeline has not been set.



EO file photo

Firefighters battle a fire in an onion shed at the Columbia Basin Spreader facility on June 1 on Westland Road southwest of Hermiston. Firefighters from Umatilla and Morrow counties responded to the blaze.

HERMISTON

No summer break for facilities crew

By ALEXA LOUGEE
East Oregonian

There's no such thing as a summer vacation for the 40-plus members of Hermiston School District's facilities department.

Tonya Langley, custodial supervisor for the school district, compares it to a house party.

"You clean what you can while the guests are there," Langley said. "But after they leave you do the deep cleaning."

In this case, the guests are the 5,300 district students and the house covers more than 754,050 square feet of schools and district facilities.

For the custodial crew, that means deep cleaning each room and hallway from the ceiling to the floor, starting with the flies in the light fixtures and shampooing carpets or applying three coats of wax on linoleum floors.

Grounds crews are also busy. It takes five full-time employees 40 hours a week just to mow the roughly 200 acres of grass within the district. In addition, employees work on irrigation management, sprinkler repair and other construction or repair projects around the district grounds.

This summer, three new basketball hoops will be installed at West Park Elementary and a new scoreboard added at Desert View



Staff photo by Alexa Lougee

Joey Williams, a custodian at Hermiston High School works to scrape chewing gum from the bottom of a table.

Elementary, among a long list of projects spanning the height of a white board in the facilities department office.

Not on the list? Sleeping in. Facilities crew members start their workday at 6 a.m.

"It's a different kind of busy," said Martie McQuain, facilities supervisor, about

the summertime maintenance schedule. Grounds crews will assist with the installation of five new modular classrooms around the district.

The department also oversees facility use during the summer. Employees prepare fields for sport camps and clinics. They also clean up after events like summer

school, Hermiston Parks and Recreation camps, Umatilla Electric Cooperative's Hydromania, iCanBike and more.

Mike Kay, executive director of operations for the district, said the facilities department also lends out district property. Facilities crew members recently delivered and took down bleachers for OSU Hermiston Agricultural Research & Extension Center's potato field day.

As the district grows, Langley, who has worked for the Hermiston School District facilities department for 16 years, says the crew and their responsibilities have grown too.

"We do stuff that goes unnoticed," she said.

That includes following increasingly strict standards for school maintenance. It also includes other projects, like changing every locker combination in the district's two middle schools and high school, or scraping globs of chewing gum off the undersides of tables and desks.

Joey Williams, a district custodian, remembers one summer when all the gum from desks and tables was gathered from the classrooms along one hallway and collected into a sizable wad.

"It was bigger than a baseball," he said.

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Senators push fire funding legislation

By GEORGE PLAVEN
East Oregonian

as a "broken, dysfunctional system."

Oregon's congressional leaders continue to push toward changing the way federal land management agencies pay for fighting large, costly wildfires across the West.

As it stands, when the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management exhaust their annual firefighting budgets, they must dip into other programs to make up the cost — a practice known as "fire-borrowing." That differs from the way the government pays for other natural disasters, like hurricanes and floods.

Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden testified Thursday on a draft bill in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, urging lawmakers to put an end to fire-borrowing. The Wildfire Budgeting, Response and Forest Management Act of 2016 would, in part, provide a budget cap adjustment for the Forest Service and BLM when they run out of money to fight fires.

According to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, fire suppression cost more than \$2.1 billion in 2015. That's higher than the 10-year average of \$1.6 billion. Wyden said firefighting now eats up more than half of the Forest Service's total budget, and fire-borrowing takes money away from much-needed restoration projects.

In a joint statement with Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, they described the practice

nationwide gets put on hold every time there is a significant fire season in the West," they said. "And the wildfires are not getting any better. In fact, they're getting bigger, they're lasting longer and they're costing more each year."

Over in the House, Oregon's lone Republican Rep. Greg Walden has succeeded in getting his bill, the Resilient Forests Act, passed for a

fourth year in a row. That bill proposes to end fire-borrowing by creating an account under the Disaster Relief Fund specifically for wildfires. The Forest Service and BLM could then request additional funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency within 30 days of exhausting their fire suppression budgets.

Both bills also address a range of broader forestry management, but Wyden said he and Sen. Crapo want to ensure the funding piece does not get lost in the discussion.

"The Congress cannot in good conscience let another fire year go by, with lives and property at stake, without fixing this once and for all," they said.

If the Senate bill passes, then differences between the two bills would need to be hammered out and approved in a conference committee before moving to the President's desk.

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Wyden

HERMISTON

Man wins top prize in state Scratch-it drawing

By ALEXA LOUGEE
East Oregonian

Eastside Market in Hermiston will soon add a third Oregon Lottery Scratch-it winner banner to its wall of growing recognition.

Owner Joe Thompson said an Oregon Scratch-it ticket sold back in April wasn't an instant winner, but did eventually pay off. Larry Stormont originally purchased the Big Money Crossword ticket, but wasn't deterred when it didn't win. He entered the ticket's serial number into the Oregon Lottery's 2nd Chance website.

On June 21, his ticket was selected to win the game's top prize of \$50,000.

"I thought, 'Yeah, right, someone's playing games with me,'" Stormont said.

The Hermiston man is the first Eastern Oregon winner of the drawing since it began in February 2013.

Stormont plans to use the winnings to replace the sidewalk around his home and potentially paint his garage. Also, Stormont's wife, Linda, plans to take a trip back east.

For more than two years Stormont has gone to East-side Market every weekday morning for a cup of coffee. While there he buys a Scratch-it ticket or two. He said that despite the big win, he'll continue with his daily routine.

As for the Eastside Market, this is the third Scratch-it lottery winner in as many months, totaling \$175,000. The market won't receive a 1 percent commission from this ticket, but that doesn't make Thompson feel any less lucky.

"There certainly seems to be a trend," he said.

Oregon Scratch-it players can enter any non-winning crossword or bingo ticket into the 2nd Chance drawing. Once the tickets for that game are sold out statewide, which can take one to three months, then a drawing is held on the third Tuesday of the month.

According to Patrick Johnson of the Oregon Lottery, the 2016 monthly average odds of winning in the second chance drawing are one in 41,397. For comparison, Oregon Lottery's 5X Crossword ticket has three top prizes and the odds of hitting the top prize are one

in 720,000.

Contact Alexa Lougee at alougee@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534.



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Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.

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MUNICIPAL BONDS

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Tax-Exempt: In the opinion of Bond Counsel, under existing statutes and court decisions and assuming continuing compliance with certain tax covenants described herein, (i) interest on the Bonds is excluded from gross income for Federal income tax purposes pursuant to Section 103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), and (ii) interest on the Bonds is not treated as a preference item in calculating the alternative minimum tax imposed on individuals and corporations under the Code; such interest, however, is included in the adjusted current earnings of certain corporations for purposes of calculating the alternative minimum tax imposed on such corporations. In the opinion of Bond Counsel, interest on the Bonds is exempt from Oregon personal income tax under existing law.

Purpose: The Bonds, together with other legally available funds, if any, are being issued to (i) finance the costs of constructing a new K-3 school and sports complex and various capital improvements to District facilities; and (ii) pay costs related to the issuance, sale and delivery of the Bonds.

Redemption*: The Bonds maturing on June 15, 2027* and thereafter are subject to redemption prior to maturity on June 15, 2026* and on any date thereafter at a price of par, plus accrued interest, if any, to the date of redemption.

Maturities/Interest Rates*: The Bonds will mature on June 15, 2017 through 2036. Interest rates on the Bonds are expected to be established on or about Tuesday, June 28, 2016.

Security: The Bonds are general obligations of the District and, as such, the full faith, credit and resources of the District have been irrevocably pledged for their prompt payment. For as long as any of the Bonds are outstanding, the District will levy taxes annually without limitation as to rate or amount on all taxable property in the District in an amount sufficient, together with other money legally available therefor, to pay when due the principal of and interest on the Bonds. Payment of principal of and interest on the Bonds when due, is guaranteed by the full faith and credit of the State of Oregon under the provisions of the Oregon School Bond Guaranty Act.

*Preliminary; subject to change.

Please contact D.A. Davidson & Co. in advance for expected yield information.

The Bonds are subject to availability and to the acceptance of an offer to purchase. This is neither an offer to sell nor a solicitation of an offer to buy any of these securities. The offering of these securities is made only by the Official Statement, copies of which are available from D.A. Davidson & Co.

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