

# SHOOTING: Investigation remains active though no other suspects are being sought

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to police and emergency services of shots fired at Hermiston Avenue and 11th Street, Hermiston. About 10 minutes later, another caller reported gunshots at a home on Madrona Avenue, which intersects 11th Street a block from Hermiston Avenue.

Edmiston said Huston himself made one of three calls to police to report gunshots.

Dispatchers and police were uncertain if the gunshots were on the east or west side of Hermiston, so police went to at least two locations. Edmiston said Hermiston detectives and police Capt. Travis Eynon responded to the area of Northwest 11th, saw the door ajar at 130 N.W. 11th St., made a “high risk entry” and found the crime scene.

The investigation remains active, he said, and he anticipated a debriefing and review to come at a later time.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris  
**The State Police forensic unit van sits at the end of Country Lane Friday near the spot Justin “JJ” Hurtado’s body was found late Thursday evening west of Hermiston.**

Valdez volunteered in 2013 and Huston became a volunteer coach a year later, said Hermiston Shool district spokesperson Maria Duron.

Both men wrestled for the school’s team when they were students, and both graduated in the class of 1989.

“These gentlemen grew up in the wrestling program, so they’ve been in the

community for a long time,” Duron said.

Huston was arrested in December 2009 on charges of menacing and unlawful possession of a firearm. He pleaded no contest to the gun crime and the menacing charge was dropped. He was sentenced to probation and 20 hours of community service.

# DEATH: ‘Hopefully we can get through this together’

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time, Hurtado’s Facebook page features pictures of him with various family members, grinning and hugging away. Baldrige said he Skyped and called his siblings and cousins from other parts of the country almost daily.

One example of his dedication to family came when his grandmother passed away a couple of years ago. Baldrige said Hurtado was a huge support to his grandfather afterward, spending the night on a regular basis and doing whatever he could think of to help out around the house or just keep his grandfather company.



Photo by Ashley Seibel Photography  
**James “JJ” Hurtado**

**“We’re still in the numb stage.”**

**— Terressa Baldrige, Hurtado’s great aunt**

by the news of his death.

Outside of school, Hurtado was an active member of the youth group at Hermiston Assembly of God. The church has posted link to a GoFundMe account for Hurtado and Valdez’s families on its website, [www.hermistonassembly.com](http://www.hermistonassembly.com).

There also is a separate GoFundMe account that Hermiston resident Tiffany Dawson opened.

Valdez has had a long history with Hermiston High School wrestling.

He wrestled for the Bulldogs during his high school career, culminating in an individual district championship his senior year at the 171 pound weight class under coach Rod Bragato and helping the Hermiston grapplers place seventh in the 1989 state tournament.

Valdez graduated from Hermiston High School that June.

After graduation, Valdez became involved with Bulldog wrestling as a volunteer assistant coach for the high school.

He was employed with United Parcel Service at the time of his death.

School administrators and counselors met with the cross country team, wrestling team and all coaches to reassure them that support was available. The district also made its counselors and psychologists available



EO file photo  
**Teams fish for walleye below the McNary Dam on the Columbia River during Smoker Craft-Sylvan Spring Walleye Classic near Umatilla in March 2007.**

# WATER: All motorized boats required to have an invasive species permit

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from getting too close to the dam. Rapid surges in water levels can pull an anchored boat under water in seconds. There are unseen currents that can pull a boat upstream into a spillway and quickly capsize it.

Changing currents and unpredictable waves make it difficult to control a boat, even for the most experienced mariner.

On a Thursday afternoon he points to a small fishing boat on the water with a father and son at its helm.

“I would’ve never taken that out on this river,” he said.

A summer afternoon on the water might sound like an ideal way to spend a few hours, but for Johnson, it’s all work.

“I’m taking everything in,” he said. “What are they drinking? Do they have life jackets?”

According to the Oregon State Marine Board, 85-90 percent or more of boating related fatalities could be prevented if the victims wore life jackets.

All boats must carry at least one U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation

device or life jacket for every person aboard. And the jackets should be in good shape with no rips, tears, or broken straps.

All life jackets must also be kept “readily accessible.” Life jackets in a storage compartment are not considered readily accessible.

Johnson is also looking for what he refers to as a “type 4 throwable,” which would be something like a buoy life ring or cushion and is required on all boats 16 feet and over. Neglecting to have one can net you a \$260 citation, as two boaters from Idaho discovered that afternoon.

Johnson is also checking for aquatic invasive species permits. All motorized boats, and manually powered boats ten feet and longer, using Oregon waters are required to have an invasive species permit. The permit program was initiated in an attempt to prevent what the Oregon State Marine Board calls a “devastating introduction of zebra or quagga mussels into Oregon waterways.”

On average, these mussel species are the size of a fingernail, but the price

tag of their presence in the Columbia River would be anything but small.

Rick Boatner, the Invasive Species Coordinator for the ODFW, said if the mussels get to the Columbia River dams there would be an initial investment of at least \$25 million and then a minimum of a million dollars annually in maintenance.

The mussel species multiply rapidly, clogging irrigation and dam cooling pipes as well as water grates. They also adhere to fish ladders, tearing into salmon and steelhead and causing infection and death.

Both Johnson and Boatner agree that it’s more of a question of when the mussels will appear in the Columbia River, not if. But each year the species doesn’t make it into the Pacific Northwest waterways is another year millions of dollars are saved.

Johnson’s position with the Umatilla County Sheriff’s office may be seasonal, but he returns year after year. This is his 24th year working as marine patrol deputy.



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