

# EAST OREGONIAN

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One dollar

**HERMISTON**

## Vigil planned for shooting victims

East Oregonian

A candlelight vigil for the victims of last week's shooting in Hermiston is planned for Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. at McKenzie Park.

The community has been mourning James "JJ" Hurtado, 14, and Kenneth E. Valdez, 45, who were killed last Thursday in what police have characterized as a murder-suicide by James E. Huston, 45, who died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot. Hurtado's mother Andria E. Bye, 35, was also shot but survived.

Ky-Leigh Nelson, who helped organize the vigil along with Bonnie Griffith, Kari George and Angie Hocker, said instead of making the vigil for a specific person, organizers decided to invite anyone who wanted to show support for those affected by the

See VIGIL/8A



A candlelight vigil will be held for James "JJ" Hurtado and Ken Valdez, Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. at McKenzie Park. Contributed photo

## Details emerge in murder-suicide investigation

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Jason Huston fired three rounds from a 9 mm Glock pistol Thursday into his lifelong friend Ken Valdez at his Hermiston home, killing him. Huston also shot Andria Bye once and, in the end, shot and killed himself.

Bye was taken to the hospital after telling police what had transpired, though she didn't know the whereabouts of her son, 14-year-old James "JJ" Hurtado.

Perhaps no more than an hour before, Huston is believed to have shot and killed Hurtado, to whom he was something of a father figure, with the same pistol.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston and Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan revealed more on Monday about one of the most violent crimes in Hermiston's history.

Huston and Valdez, both 45, had known each other as far back

See INVESTIGATION/8A

**HERMISTON**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Umatilla County Fire District 1 is leasing the Bob Shannon Safety Center at 320 S. First St. from the city of Hermiston.

## Fire hall deal done

Fire district will pay \$200,000 over next four years

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

The Hermiston city council approved leases with the fire district and school district on Monday night.

The newly-formed Umatilla County Fire District 1 will

lease the current fire department building at 320 S First St. from the city for \$75,000 during the first year, \$50,000 the second and third years, \$25,000 the fourth year and \$1 per year after that.

Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services had leased part of the

Bob Shannon Safety Center from the city for \$1 per year since the fire department became its own taxing district separate from the city. But since voters approved a new combined fire district with Stanfield in May, the district must sign a new lease.

Assistant city manager Mark

Morgan told the city council on Monday that due to compression laws that cap property taxes in Oregon, the new fire district's higher share of the tax revenue will mean the city gets about \$130,000 per year less in property tax revenue for its own general fund. The higher rents for the first four years of the new

See COUNCIL/8A

## Citizens panel backs corporate sales tax

By PARIS ACHEN  
Capital Bureau

A citizens' panel that reviews Oregon ballot initiatives for the voters' pamphlet has endorsed a controversial corporate sales tax measure on the November ballot.

Measure 97 would levy a 2.5 percent tax on certain corporations' Oregon sales exceeding \$25 million.

The Citizens Initiative Review Commission heard from both sides of the measure before voting 11-to-9 on Sunday to endorse the measure. Its key findings will be published in the state voters' guide.

The tax would raise an estimated \$6 billion every two years in additional revenue at a time when the state faces an estimated \$1.4 billion shortfall in to maintain existing services.

Supporters cited the shortfall and a study by Ernst & Young ranking Oregon 50th in the lowest rate of corporate taxation as reasons for the endorsement.

"We are currently in a crisis of underfunded public education, healthcare and senior services," the supporters wrote in a statement. "The passage of Measure 97 would quickly fix this."

Commissioners who voted against the endorsement cited a study by the Legislative Revenue Office that show the tax would hike up the prices of daily items such as food and fuel for the typical family by \$600 a year.

That study also showed job growth would slow significantly in the private sector while boosting public sector jobs.

"A regressive tax takes a larger percentage of income from low income earners creating an unnecessary burden on many Oregon families," commissioners wrote in a statement of opposition.

The endorsement marks another victory

See MEASURE/8A

## No plan for speed cameras in rural Oregon

State's first ticket-giving traffic cams installed in Portland

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Drivers in Portland will have a hard time getting away with speeding now that the city has put up the state's first fixed speed enforcement cameras.

The cameras, which were installed on the Beaverton-Hillsboro Highway earlier this month by the Portland Bureau of Transportation, send photographs of every speeding car to the police, who can then mail tickets to the offenders without ever

pulling them over.

Eastern Oregon residents who don't like the idea of Big Brother checking their speed can breathe easy for now, however. Tom Strandberg, spokesman for the Oregon Department of Transportation's Region 5, said he hasn't heard any discussion on ODOT's part about bringing the technology to this side of the state.

"I don't know of any plans we have to use those, at least in Eastern Oregon," he said.

The department isn't using cameras to ticket people who run red lights in Eastern Oregon either, despite rampant speculation after ODOT installed cameras at intersections on Highway 395 in

See SPEED/8A



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Traffic passes a speed sign on Highway 395 north of Hermiston.

