

**MILTON-FREEWATER**

# Villegas stays in jail without bail in murder case

East Oregonian

Murder defendant Oscar Pastor Garcia Villegas of Milton-Freewater decided not to go through with a bail hearing Tuesday.

Villegas appeared in circuit court, Pendleton, via video from the Umatilla County Jail. His defense attorney, Kara Davis, told Judge Lynn Hampton she spoke at length with Villegas, who conceded the state could meet its burden of proof to keep Villegas behind bars.

Villegas, 26, has been in jail since police arrested him May 26 at this Milton-Freewater home for slaying his wife, Maria Villegas, and trying to kill their two children. He faces 11 counts in all, including

murder, attempted aggravated murder, assault and unlawful use of a weapon.

Davis told the court psychologist Terry Templeman of Pendleton recently evaluated Villegas' mental state and is working on a report. She also said she anticipated a settlement conference in this case. The conferences, which take place behind closed doors, have become common for making plea bargains in murder cases and other major crimes.

Hampton set Oct. 6 for the next hearing in the case.

Earlier news stories had "Garcia" for the defendant's last name. During the hearing Tuesday, the judge and others used "Villegas."

**PENDLETON**

# Two juveniles go missing Monday night

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Two Pendleton juveniles are missing from their families.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said Zacchaeus Otto-Allen, 14, and Destiny Fletcher, 11, went missing sometime after 9:30 p.m. Monday. Jerry and Cynthia Rickett of Pendleton are Zacchaeus's parents. Jerry Rickett said they have been out looking for their son throughout the night and the day.

"We haven't been to bed since the night before," he said.

Rickett said he was changing clothes Monday when his son took off from their home to break up with the girl. A post on Zacchaeus's Facebook page showed they planned to meet between Denny's and McDonald's, which is near her home, he said, and from there they "pretty much disappeared."

Rickett said they had a report Tuesday afternoon of Zacchaeus near Bedford Bridge, but that proved fruitless. Two of his friends also claimed they have not seen the teen, Rickett said, but he is sure his son is in Pendleton.

Roberts said police contacted Destiny's family and confirmed the boy was at her residence around 9:30 Monday night. Then they both were gone. Destiny's grandparents signed her as a runaway, the chief reported, and police are on the lookout for the pair.

"Information obtained from friends is that they are together," Roberts said in an email, "but no one

knows or is willing to say where they are staying."

Zacchaeus Otto-Allen is Caucasian, 5 feet 4 inches tall, weighs about 100 pounds and has blonde hair and blue eyes. He was wearing a red hooded sweat shirt, green athletic shorts, Chuck Taylor tennis shoes and carrying a light blue backpack.

Destiny Fletcher is Caucasian, 5 feet 3 inches tall and weighs 115 pounds. There is no description of her clothing. The *East Oregonian* was not able to contact her family.

If you see either teen or have information about them, call Pendleton police at 541-276-4411.

The family of Matthew Steven Johnson of Joseph took to social media and emails to report he was missing in Stanfield since Aug. 20. But Stanfield Police Chief Bryon Zumwalt said no one filed a missing person report with his department, and he has not had any contact with the family.

The *East Oregonian* in a Tuesday story reported there was a police report, but that was inaccurate.

Zumwalt said he received one of the emails, which contained a digital poster displaying photos and a description of Johnson, along with a request asking people to call Stanfield police if they had information about him. Zumwalt said he tried to reply to the email but the address did not work. He said he had no more information than what was in the email.

"We'd gladly take a report," Zumwalt said, but someone needs to talk to police first.

**PENDLETON**



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

**A Pendleton Police officer monitors the intersection at St. Anthony Way and Highway 395 after a power failure inundated the area Monday in Pendleton.**

# Bird's nest knocks out power

East Oregonian

A wet bird nest knocked out electricity to more than 1,500 Pacific Power customers Tuesday morning on the south side of Pendleton.

Bill Clemens, regional community manager for Pacific Power, said the nest crossed all three wires on top of a power pole

near Hodgen Distributing, which caused the outage. Power was restored at 12:33 p.m., after approximately two and a half hours.

Several large customers were affected by the power failure, including St. Anthony Hospital. Anyone still having problems should call Pacific Power at 1-877-508-5088.

# Conservation strategy gets update

Identifies habitats, species in need

By GEORGE PLAVEN  
East Oregonian

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has signed off on Oregon's latest blueprint for protecting native plants and animals from the Coast to the Blue Mountains.

The recently revised Oregon Conservation Strategy was unveiled Friday, Sept. 2, providing an overall framework and recommendations for conservation projects across the state.

The strategy is not a management plan, but instead highlights opportunities for everyone to voluntarily participate in conservation. It outlines the needs and conditions of regions throughout Oregon, detailing what habitat could be preserved for at-risk species.

"This document pulls so much information together," said Meghan Dugan, spokeswoman for the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. "It's trying to be proactive rather than reactive when it comes to conserving non-game fish and wildlife."

ODFW began updating its strategy in 2014, reaching out to more than 200 environmental technicians, tribal biologists, state and federal agencies for input. The plan was initially developed in 2006, and the USFWS requires states to update their plans every 10 years to continue receiving wildlife grant funding.

"We relied on so many different technical experts and other natural resource experts to help us," Dugan said. "We're hoping that all Oregonians will find their role in conservation."

The strategy's main goal are to maintain healthy fish

and wildlife populations by restoring and maintaining habitats, and reversing downturns in fish and wildlife populations where possible. To do that, the 2016 update provides a range of Web-based tools to research different eco-regions across Oregon.

One of those tools is an interactive map of "conservation opportunity areas," listing everything from local species to recommended actions and potential partner agencies. For example, in the Grande Ronde Valley, the strategy identifies bull trout and chinook salmon as strategy species, and proposes restoring floodplains and wetlands. It points to ODFW, the U.S. Forest Service, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and private landowners as potential partners.

The strategy also details each of Oregon's nine distinct eco-regions, including the Blue Mountains and

Columbia Plateau in Eastern Oregon.

"The strategy does this by identifying the species, habitats and locations of greatest conservation need in our state and providing a list of conservation actions that anyone from a watershed council to a private landowners can do," said Andrea Hanson, conservation strategy coordinator for ODFW. "Having all Oregonians focusing conservation efforts on the priorities identified in the strategy greatly improves our chances of success."

The Oregon Nearshore Strategy focuses on the same conservation priorities, but in Oregon's territorial sea and estuaries. Both strategies can be found online at [www.oregonconservationstrategy.org](http://www.oregonconservationstrategy.org).

Contact George Plaven at [gplaven@eastoregonian.com](mailto:gplaven@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0825.



Photo contributed by Thomas Lossen

**Paige Evans with Oregon DEQ tests a homeowner's well as part of the agency's statewide groundwater monitoring program.**

# DEQ offering free well water testing in Walla Walla Basin

East Oregonian

Homeowners in the Milton-Freewater area can have their groundwater wells tested for free as part of a study by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

DEQ is conducting a statewide monitoring program to identify areas where local groundwater might be vulnerable to contamination. The Walla Walla Basin was chosen as a study area based on information about the aquifer, historic real estate transaction, geology, soils and gaps in the current data set.

Testing will be done on a volunteer basis. DEQ is looking for volunteers around Milton-Freewater, including areas west of Umapine, Highway 11 along Dry Creek, the lower part of Pine Creek, both the north and south forks of the Walla Walla River, Mill Creek and down south toward Tollgate.

It is ultimately up to the landowner what to do with the results

of the tests. Public water suppliers are required to test water on a regular basis, but private wells are not required to test unless the property is transferred.

All results are public record — however, addresses and names will not be made available to the public. DEQ will test for things like nitrates, arsenic, pesticides, selected metals and bacteria. Groundwater can be contaminated by both surface and sub-surface pollution sources, such as applying chemicals or on-site septic systems.

The testing process should only take about 30-45 minutes and the homeowner does not need to be present. DEQ will send test results to the well owners and residents on the property.

Testing is scheduled during the weeks of Sept. 19 and Sept. 26. To volunteer, call 503-693-5736 or email [Groundwater.Monitoring@deq.state.or.us](mailto:Groundwater.Monitoring@deq.state.or.us). Participants must have spigot access to their water before any treatment or filtration occurs.

**BRIEFLY**

## Wolves attack sheep in Mount Emily unit

PENDLETON — Wolves are responsible for killing two adult sheep and injuring two more in the Mount Emily Wildlife Management Unit, according to the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife.

A herder discovered the dead and wounded ewes the morning of Sept. 1 in a forested allotment on public land. ODFW arrived to investigate later that day, and confirmed it was a wolf attack. Bite marks were consistent with wolves, and tracks were also found within 20 feet of one of the carcasses.

No other depredations have been confirmed in the area this year.

## Grange cancels meeting, bingo

PENDLETON — Due to Pendleton Round-Up activities, the White Eagle Grange has canceled its regular monthly meeting and potluck Thursday and its bi-weekly bingo event Saturday. Bingo will return Sept. 24 at the grange hall between Pendleton and Pilot Rock on South Highway 395. The next grange meeting will be held Oct. 13, also at the grange.

The White Eagle Grange welcomes all interested

parties to its business meetings, which include a potluck dinner, held the second Thursday of each month beginning at 6 p.m. at the grange.

For more information, contact Gail Wilson at 541-276-3778.

## BJ the DJ spins bicentennial hits

MILTON-FREEWATER — A mixture of musical activity was heard during the country's bicentennial year in 1976 — and BJ the DJ is ready to spin some of those tunes during Oldies Night in Milton-Freewater.

The event is Saturday at 7 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church, 816 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. Oldies Night is free and The Frogs will offer some tasty treats.

In '76, some artists had their first number one hit in a decade, while lots of new artists hit No. 1 on their first chart appearances. Among the latter were the Bay City Rollers, a group from Scotland who allegedly used a dartboard to pick a namesake American city. Barry Manilow hit No. 1 with "I Write the Songs," which he didn't write — Bruce Johnston of the Beach Boys did. The Four Seasons reminisced about an evening 'way back in "December, 1963." And, disco was rolling along as the Bee Gees admonished listeners,

"You Should be Dancing."

It was quite a year in popular music, and you can experience it all over again. Join BJ the DJ as he takes you down memory lane — only in Milton-Freewater.

For more information, contact Bob Jones at 541-938-7028 or [dubuquer@charter.net](mailto:dubuquer@charter.net).

## Voc rehab seeks input at forums

PENDLETON — Vocational Rehabilitation is hosting a series of policy forums around the state — including in Pendleton — and wants to hear from the public.

People with disabilities, their families, service providers, employers, students with disabilities, teachers, advocacy organizations, Workforce partners and other organizations serving people with disabilities are all encouraged to attend. The forum will be offered at two

different times.

People can attend the local meeting Tuesday, Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. to noon or 3-6 p.m. The forums will be held in the Vert Club Room, 480 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton.

The gatherings will include information about vocational rehabilitation policies and procedures, an open discussion about services, and a listening session about future directions of the agency.

Accommodations, including interpreters, assistive listening devices and materials in alternative format are available upon request. Organizers request advance notice for accommodations by filling out the box when registering.

The forums are free, but those planning to attend are asked to register at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/vrforum2016](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/vrforum2016). For more information, contact 503-786-6082, 888-988-3228 or [jenny@factoregon.org](mailto:jenny@factoregon.org).

**Ride the Wine & Cheese Train!**  
**Saturday, October 1**  
 Featuring Copper Belt Winery,  
 Umapine Creamery and Peterson's Chocolatier

**Eagle Cap Excursion Train**  
 800.323.7330  
 or tickets online  
[eaglecaptrainrides.com](http://eaglecaptrainrides.com)