

HERMISTON

12-year-old charged over threat to school

East Oregonian

A 12-year-old Hermiston boy ended up in jail on Thursday after police were made aware of a social media post threatening gun violence that was sent to Sandstone Middle School students.

The boy was taken into custody around 1:15 p.m. and charged with first degree disorderly conduct.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said in a news release that the message, made through a fictitious Instagram profile using the name James 4.0 and a profile picture of a clown, was sent to multiple students starting about 11 p.m. Wednesday. The message was shared numerous times before

coming to the attention of the school resource officer at approximately 9 a.m. Thursday morning.

Edmiston said the department began interviewing students and the flow of information between the department's school resource officer and Hermiston School District administrators was "phenomenal."

"Our officer was able to piece this entire incident together and identify the 12-year-old as the person behind the message," Edmiston said. "We have no information of any past problems with this student and we believe this unfortunate decision to be an isolated incident spurred by the national phenomenon taking place."

PENDLETON

Endowment created to honor Houk

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

There are still about three months left on Pendleton Mayor Phillip Houk's term, but he may already be lining up his next civic responsibility: fundraising.



Houk

On the last day of the League of Oregon Cities annual conference Oct. 1 in Salem, a few of Houk's peers announced that the league's foundation was establishing an endowment under his name.

Having already received honors earlier in the week from the Oregon Mayors Association, Houk was emotionally overwhelmed. "It was a shocker," he

said. The endowment will provide scholarships to small towns to help them cover the cost of attending the league's annual conference and other events sponsored by the municipal lobbying group and its affiliates.

Houk said it was important for Oregon's smaller cities to get a chance at attending the conferences, which offers workshops and breakout sessions to city officials.

"If you're not at the table, you don't have a voice," he said.

The endowment was the brainchild of Redmond Mayor George Endicott and Independence Mayor John

McArdle, who wanted to do something fitting for a man who has been the president of both the league and its foundation.

With commemorative plaques bearing his name all over Pendleton and a wall of awards, Endicott said they wanted their tribute to be more than honorifics.

"It's not a bauble," he said. "It's a real thing."

Endicott said they've raised \$15,000 toward their \$20,000 goal, with the intent of using the endowment's interest to fund the scholarships and keep it self-sustaining.

Although it's close to its initial goal, Houk said he intends to continue fundraising and growing the endowment so that it can award more scholarships each year, giving an activity

to do after he leaves the mayor's office in December. Houk is honored that the endowment will not only bear his name, but also his title.

"Pendleton will have its mark," he said.

After serving on the Pendleton City Council for 11 years, Houk was elected mayor in 2004. He declined to run for a fourth term in February, citing the increasing demands of his job as a risk management manager for Union Pacific Railroad Co.

Former Blue Mountain Community College President John Turner was elected to fill Houk's seat and will take office in January.

Contact Antonio Sierra at asierra@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0836.

BOARDMAN

Students get lesson in local agriculture

East Oregonian

A total of 245 fourth-graders from five Morrow County elementary schools learned about local agriculture Wednesday during an event presented by the nonprofit Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation, and hosted by the SAGE Center in Boardman.

Dozens of community members volunteered to lead students around each of 13 stations, featuring everything from fruits and vegetables to equipment safety. Students were able

to grind wheat using a bicycle wheat grinder, and pressed apples into cider.

Presenters included Oregon State University Extension Service, Echo FFA members and other local farmers. The event was sponsored by Madison Ranches, Umatilla Electric Cooperative, Bank of Eastern Oregon, Boardman Foods, Jill and Tim Parker, Sunrise Café and Milky Way.

More information about Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation is available at oregonaitc.org.



Local farmer Karl Smith shares a beehive with students as presenter and local beekeeper Jan Lohman looks on Wednesday at the Sage Center in Boardman.

BRIEFLY

Boil order continues for trailer park

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Oregon Health Authority issued a boil order reminder for a Milton-Freewater trailer park Thursday.

According to the authority, E. coli was found in the water supply for Locust Mobile Village on May 10 and are advising residents to boil their tap water for one minute or use bottled water for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes and food preparation until further notice.

The boil order was originally issued May 12 and the latest one is acting as a reminder to residents that the boil order remains in effect.

E. coli can cause diarrhea, cramps nausea and headaches and is a special health risk for young children and people with compromised immune systems.

The boil order states that the well Locust uses for water has a failing chlorination system and repairs have not been completed.

Residents can contact Nancy Shaw at 509-540-7245 for more information.

UEC receives federal grant for solar array

UMATILLA — Umatilla Electric Cooperative has received a \$250,134 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Energy for America Program to help offset the cost of the Moyer-Tolles Solar Station east of Umatilla.

The system, which came online in February, includes 3,952 solar panels generating 1.3 megawatts of electricity. It cost \$2.5 million to build, financed mainly with New Clean Renewable Energy Bonds.

"We are pleased that this grant will further reduce the cost and increase the

value of this project to our members," said Robert Echenrode, UEC general manager and CEO. "Such a significant investment on the part of the USDA shows UEC is on the right track with our renewable energy program."

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack said the Rural Energy for America Program helps businesses create jobs, helps farmers and rural businesses reduce their carbon footprint and helps the country move closer to energy independence.

"These investments in clean energy are good for the environment, are good for each business's bottom line and they support the broader rural economy by encouraging the production of renewable energy sources," Vilsack said in a statement.

VA clinics offer free flu shots

Veterans can receive free flu shots at clinics sponsored by the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center. The local clinics are in Boardman and at the VA Medical Center, located at 77 Wainwright Drive, Walla Walla :

•Tuesday/Wednesdays in October from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Building 143 lobby, Walla Walla (walk-in).

•Friday, Oct. 14 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. at the Port of Morrow, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman (walk-in).

•Wednesday, Oct. 26 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Building 74 Circle, Walla Walla (drive-thru).

In addition, for veterans unable to attend these clinics, the VA has partnered with Walgreens for flu shots — some restrictions may apply.

For more info, contact your VA provider team or visit www.wallawalla.va.gov.

MINAM: Project to fix hill in 1991 did not have enough funding

Continued from 1A

Engineers and the Division of State Lands will take nine months to a year, and Patterson said he anticipates the project going out to bid in late 2017, with construction to start the following summer.

Included in the project are repairs for two areas where the shoulder on the cliff side of the road is washed out, Patterson said — one before the 25-mph curve and another near the bottom of the hill. Some of the rock removed from the uphill side of the highway will be used to buttress the crumbling shoulder.

Patterson said that in 1991, ODOT planned a project he called the "granddaddy of them all."

"It was supposed to fix everything from the top to the bottom of the hill, but we couldn't accomplish everything because there wasn't enough funding," Patterson said.

Patterson said money for the 2018 work is coming from two sources — one for highway safety projects and another earmarked for enhancing and modernizing highways.

A Sept. 19 crash near the 25-mph curve, 200 yards above the bottom of the canyon, is a reminder of how important this project is, Patterson said.

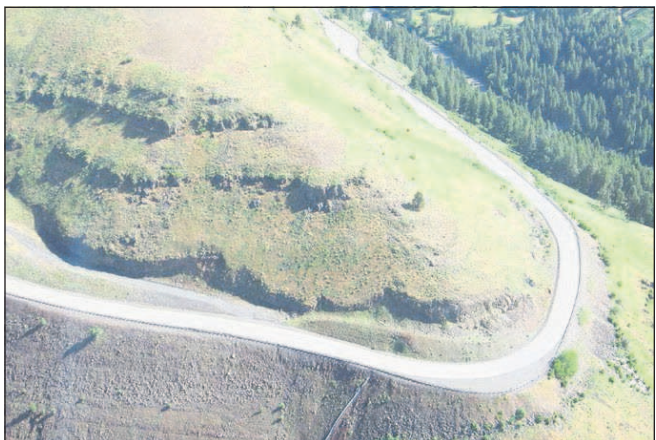


Photo contributed by Oregon Department of Transportation

A \$4.5 million project to improve Highway 82's notoriously dangerous Minam Curve is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation's 2018 construction plan.

Gary Leonard Alford, 70, of Joseph, was driving a Dodge pickup truck down the Minam Grade toward Wallowa County when the truck veered off the road and rolled approximately 120 yards down the embankment. Alford was ejected from the truck and was alive when emergency responders and members of the Union County search and rescue ropes team reached him. He died on his way to a waiting Life Flight helicopter, Oregon State Police Sgt. Kyle Hove said.

Hove said equipment failure may have been a contributing factor in the crash. An investigation is ongoing.

Before that crash, the last

fatal wreck on Minam Grade occurred not far from where Alford's truck left the road.

In 2011, a loaded cattle truck driving downhill toward the Wallowa County line crashed into five cars. The driver was killed, as were several cattle. Brake failure was suspected at the time.

Nick Pallis of the Union County Sheriff's Office was called to both wrecks.

"When you are coming off the top of the hill, it's a steep grade and then there is a 90-degree corner where a lot of our problems occur," Pallis said.

He said if a heavy vehicle or one towing a trailer doesn't have good brakes, is going too fast or the driver isn't in the correct gear, the

grade can be dangerous.

"You come off that thing heavy loaded — if you aren't in the right gear — and once the brakes heat up and fade, they are not going to stop you," Pallis said.

Both Alford's crash and the 2011 accident happened during the summer, in daylight when the highway was dry. But Pallis said snow and ice can make the corner even more treacherous.

He said after responding to the crash that killed Alford, he and another trooper considered ways the road could be improved.

"We were putting our heads together," Pallis said. "How can it be safer? I honestly think they need to have higher poles or a double guardrail so vehicles can't just hit it and jump right over it, but I'm not sure if it's possible."

Instead of a double guardrail Patterson said the outside of the corner will have earthen fill and the highway will be moved farther from the cliff. The 2018 project will reduce the severity of the 25-mph curve and allow for more sunlight to hit the road to melt snow and ice.

While both vehicles involved in the fatalities were traveling downhill, Patterson said people driving uphill have crashed as well.

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Honoring those who have served and those that are currently serving our country!

Bring us a picture of your servicemen or servicewomen or veteran by **November 3rd** along with the form below and we will include them in our "Veterans Day Salute" on November 9th in the Hermiston Herald and November 11th in the East Oregonian at no charge.

For more information call 1-800-962-2819 in Pendleton or 541-564-4530 in Hermiston.

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