

# Four fires since Friday, but no injuries

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

Pendleton firefighters took down a garage fire Monday in about an hour, marking the fourth domestic fire local agencies handled in as many days. Fire chiefs reported no one was injured in any of the blazes.

Pendleton fire received the call-out at 10:55 a.m. for a fire at 1106 N.W. Ellis Ave., Pendleton. Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo said he and the crew arrived about three minutes later and saw flames coming out of the east side of a stand-alone garage and smoke billowing from the building.

The above-freezing temperatures, he said, helped keep water flowing, and firefighters entered, extinguished the blaze and were back in the fire department a little after noon. No one was injured, he said, and the work also saved a leaf blower, a miter saw and other equipment.

A furnace that was on appears to be the cause of the fire, he said, but whether



Smoke billows out of the garage of a residence as Pendleton firefighters prepare to fight the fire at 1106 N.W. Ellis on Monday in Pendleton.

it ignited items nearby or went up on its own was impossible to tell.

Umatilla County Fire District 1 handled an attic fire Saturday around 10 a.m. at 334 S.E. Fourth St., Hermiston. Fire Chief Scott Stanton said medical

calls for service left two firefighters on an engine and one commander for the initial attack, though two more engines and more crew soon arrived.

"We confined the fire just to the attic," he said, and smoke damaged was

minimal and no one was injured. The work also took about an hour. Stanton added fire marshal Tom Bohm determined the cause of the fire was electrical.

And the Echo Rural Fire Protection District responded Saturday after-



Chief Scott Stanton of Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 is briefed regarding an attic fire Saturday morning at 335 S.E. Fourth St., Hermiston. No injuries were reported from the incident. Crews with the fire district were kept busy with numerous calls during the weekend.

noon to a house fire on West Halstead Street, Echo. Chief Delbert Gehrke credited the homeowner with calling for help right away.

"We were able to confine the fire to just one room," he said.

Again, no one was injured, and the cause appeared to be a candle, an all-too-common fire starter

this time of year.

Gehrke also said an electrical problem seemed the likely cause of the attic fire the agency responded to Friday morning. The all-volunteer department, he said, has been a little busy.

Contact Phil Wright at [pwright@eastoregonian.com](mailto:pwright@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0833.

## HERMISTON

# Miller, Putnam win Christmas Spirit awards

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

Two volunteers exemplifying the Christmas spirit were surprised with awards Monday by the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation.

Cathy Putnam and Virginia Miller are the 2016 recipients for the foundation's 21st annual Christmas Spirit award.

To keep the awards a surprise, board members came up with the perfect ruse to attract a community-minded, busy volunteer: a fake meeting of a new committee at the Chamber of Commerce that the awardees were invited to join.

Instead, when Miller showed up on Monday morning she was presented with a plaque and poinsettias.

"You are a beacon of generosity and bless our community with your example of service and long term dedication to the growth and prosperity of Hermiston and surrounding areas," GSCHF board chair Liz Marvin told Miller during the presentation.

Miller has been a volunteer with Altrusa International of Hermiston, the Board of Realtors, the Umatilla County Department of Land Use Planning and the Ford Leadership Program. She was an active participant in the remodel and re-purposing of the Umatilla Community Center.



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Virginia Miller was presented with the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation's Spirit of Christmas award on Monday.

She is also a meal preparer at the Open Table at First United Methodist Church, which involves planning, shopping for and serving hot meals three times a month for Hermiston residents in need.

According to the plaque Miller received, she is "always the first to volunteer and assist in any way to improve the lives of those around her" and her benevolence and enthusiasm for life is infectious.

Marvin and GSCHF director Bob Green caught up with Putnam, the second honoree,

at work at Carlson Drug in Umatilla, which she owns. Marvin presented her with a plaque recognizing her "considerable talents and abilities" that she uses to support the community.

"Her caring attitude is evidenced by the many times she has delivered medication to residents after a long day's work," Marvin read from the award. "She has been known to open the pharmacy on many occasions after hours just to provide medication and expertise to many who are in need."



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Cathy Putnam was presented with the Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation's Spirit of Christmas award on Monday.

Putnam mentors young people in her community, is on the board of directors for Eastern Oregon Mission (which runs Agape House and Martha's House) and visits Sun Terrace residents regularly before work to chat and lend a listening ear.

The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation takes nominations for the awards, which are voted on each winter by the foundation's board.

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

## UMATILLA

# Stop leads to drug arrest

East Oregonian

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office from Dec. 9 to Jan. 1 is running extra patrols to catch intoxicated drivers. That work seems to be paying off.

Deputy Nathan Rankin at about 7:30 p.m. Friday stopped a driver going the wrong way on a one-way street near Umatilla, the sheriff's office reported in a written statement. That led to Rankin arresting Oscar Garcia, 21, of Paterson, Washington, for driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving and driving while suspended.

The state suspended his license, according to the sheriff's office, for a previous DUII arrest.

Rankin brought in a second intoxicated driver after a stop Sunday around 1 a.m. on Highway 395 near Joy Lane, Hermiston.

Rankin pulled over a vehicle on suspicion of impaired driving. The driver, Whitney Diane Sanders, 19, of Hermiston, refused to identify herself, said she smoked "pot," the sheriff's office reported, and would not get out of the vehicle.

Rankin found a glass pipe in her jacket, along with stereo equipment, a full container of gas, multiple sets of tools, and a wallet with a Colorado identification, which did not belong to Sanders or her passenger.

The sheriff's office also stated Sanders received text messages during the stop, including one requesting drugs.

Rankin took Sanders to the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, along with passenger Giovanni Sanchez, 23, of Hermiston, who had a warrant for his arrest. Deputies at the jail found two packages of possible methamphetamine in Sanders' possession.

She faces charges of DUII, failure to display a driver's license, contempt of court, possession and delivery of methamphetamine, and supplying contraband.

## Spaghetti feed planned for Echo fire victims

East Oregonian

In place of its regular school board meeting today, the Echo School District will host a spaghetti dinner fundraiser to help the Echo residents affected in a structure fire last Friday morning.

No one was injured in the fire, which burned through an attic in a home on Dale Street, but the home sustained heavy smoke and water damage.

The fundraiser is open to the public and will be from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Echo School Commons. The school board meeting has been rescheduled for 6 p.m. Monday, January 2, 2017.

## HERMISTON

# Made to Thrive gets holiday equipment donation

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

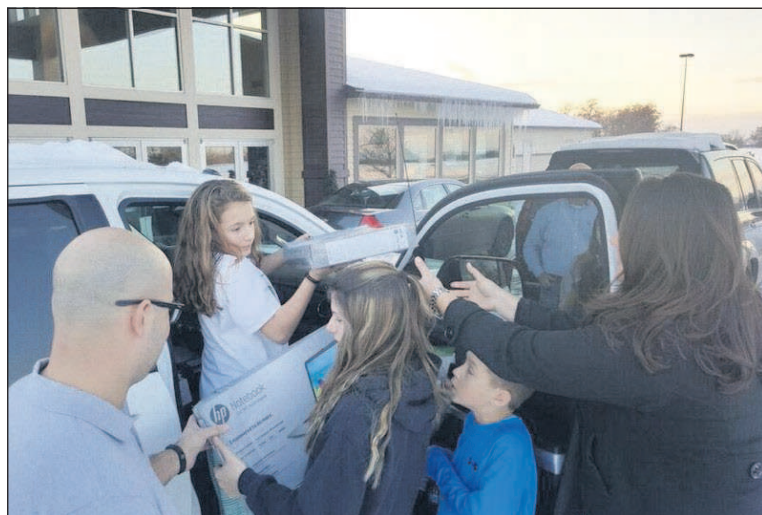
More of Hermiston's underprivileged students will get a chance to play sports next year after three local businesses donated gear to the nonprofit Made to Thrive.

The organization, which started in Hermiston three years ago, provides the fees, equipment, transportation and other support for students from needy families to be able to participate in extra-curricular activities.

U.S. Cellular, Wal-Mart and Obie's Coffee donated boxes of sports equipment and athletic wear as well as money to Made to Thrive on Friday, just in time for Christmas.

U.S. Cellular representatives said the aim of the donation was to help students in the community, but also to help bring more visibility to the charity and encourage others to contribute their own donations or volunteer power.

"At U.S. Cellular, we aim to give back to our local community and what better way than helping



Contributed Photo by U.S. Cellular

Made to Thrive volunteers help unload donations made by U.S. Cellular, Wal-Mart and Obie's Coffee.

children find productive and fun outlets after school," Erryn Andersen, director of sales in the northwest region, said in a news release.

Kriss Dammeyer, founder and director of Made to Thrive, said the boxes donated filled two tables.

Some of the items will be used for holiday gifts for participating children, while basics like socks, granola bars and water bottles will be given to volunteers to send with their students when they drop them off at practices and classes. Dammeyer said students participating in Made to Thrive

often show up to sports practices in worn-out shoes with no socks underneath.

"We don't like to send them out to an activity hungry and unprepared," she said.

Two laptops that were donated will go to high school students served by Made to Thrive who are working hard to better themselves.

Currently Dammeyer has about 35 regular volunteers and serves 300 students. The community support means a lot, she said.

"It was really neat to see multiple businesses come together," she said. "When people come together great things happen."

She said the organization's volunteers are what make Made to Thrive possible, and they could always use more with "a heart for kids."

For more information visit [madetothrive.org](http://madetothrive.org) or call Dammeyer at 541-571-6169.

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

**ORDER YOUR HOLIDAY CENTERPIECE!**  
Flowers • Candles • Jewelry  
Plants • Balloons & More!  
*Put a smile on the heart with the power of flowers.*  
HWY 395, HERMISTON  
541-567-4305  
Mon-Sat 8am-6pm • Sun 12pm-5am  
[www.cottagefloweronline.com](http://www.cottagefloweronline.com)

**HAMS FOR the HUNGRY**  
Call Faith Center  
541-276-9569  
to reserve your meal.  
Wednesday from 6-7 pm  
108 S. Main St.  
**A Christmas Meal for the Needy**

**Backyard By Design, LLC**  
Giving the Gift of Extra Space For the Holidays!  
**Holiday Special!**  
20% Off Solar Shades!  
Offer Expires: 12/31/16  
FREE Estimates!  
**541-720-0772**  
102 E Columbia Dr.  
Kennewick, WA 99336  
Visit our website for showroom hours  
[www.mybackyardbydesign.com](http://www.mybackyardbydesign.com)  
Patio Rooms  
Sunrooms • Pergolas  
Patio Covers • Solar & Drop Shades • Awnings & More!  
SUN CONTROL  
LICENSE #183965