

HERMISTON

Paramedic to lend a hand at inauguration

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Mark Johnson will see history up close this month, when he serves on a team of paramedics working at the Jan. 20 inauguration of President-elect Donald Trump in Washington, D.C.

Johnson, a Hermiston native and paramedic with Hermiston's fire district for almost 17 years, is part of the statewide Disaster Medical Assistance Team. The teams are deployed to federal events that can include natural disasters or national security matters. Most states in the U.S. have at least one team, Johnson said. Those teams are on rotation throughout the year, and Johnson's team is up for January.

"Our team commander sends out the federal info to us and asks us if we want to go," he said.

The teams provide medical assistance, and are akin to hospital units that can set up anywhere.

"We basically can take care of ourselves for up to three days," Johnson said. The group was created in 2000, and Johnson was one of the charter members for Oregon's team. The team has provided medical care at catastrophes like hurricanes Rita and Katrina and has

been present at other events — such as when international figureheads visit the U.S. — to provide medical care if necessary.

"Our medical team was one of the teams (there) for the pope's visit," he said, recalling his most recent deployment to the East Coast in 2015.

In order to work the event, paramedics and team members had to be vetted and cleared at a federal level. Johnson said with the animosity surrounding this year's election and inauguration, it's possible his team will see more issues.

"It has the potential to be challenging for security," he said of working the inauguration. "We know from that standpoint — the federal government — security is one of their strong points. But every deployment has the potential. This one is more politically active."

The team does a lot of training, some for specific activities and some for general maintenance and preparation.

"Our job is to be there, and to be available for anything that happens at a moment's notice," he said.

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Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan
Hermiston paramedic Mark Johnson will work at this month's presidential inauguration in Washington, D.C.

HERMISTON

Higher Power Fitness moving to larger space

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

Higher Power Fitness in Hermiston is celebrating its new home with a six-week fitness challenge.

The fitness center is having a week-long "grand re-opening" at 2120 N. First St. during the week of Jan. 16, with a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce Jan. 20 at noon.

The new space is 5,600 square feet, which makes it almost four times as large as the former 1,500-square-foot space that Higher Power Fitness began in two years ago. The extra space will be used to offer more programs and larger classes.

Higher Power Fitness offers workout classes, personal training, yoga and nutritional programs to help people lose "as much fat as they can in a healthful manner," according to a news release from owner Cindee Henderson.

"I'm all about people changing their lives for the better," she said. "Unfortunately, in the modern age there is an overload of information both good and bad available, so when

people try to figure it out on their own, they are paralyzed by so many choices and fail even to take the first step. We are making it as easy and transparent as possible to take that first step. We take out all the guess work."

The six-week Transformation Challenge runs through Feb. 25. According to the news release more than 50 "challengers" from Umatilla County and Morrow County plan to participate in the research-based program consisting of metabolic, cardio and strength training.

Henderson said the program "has been tested to the point that it will produce amazing results" in helping people trim weight and develop lasting healthy habits.

"This isn't a quick fix," she said. "We want to help people get their lives back."

Weekly updates on the challengers' journey will be chronicled on the Higher Power Fitness Facebook page or on the blog at www.higherpowerfitnessllc.com

For more information or to join the Transformation Challenge, contact Henderson at 541-289-5483.

TURNER: Sees potential in developing UAS range

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Rather than gut city departments that would affect quality of life, Turner said the best way to improve Pendleton was to grow the economy.

"I bet you if you looked at the last four mayors that were seated in this job — that would take you back thirty-some years — probably everyone of them entered this office said the same thing: 'Let's grow the economy,'" he said. "Unless you have a road map with specific goals, you'll never get there."

Shortly after he was elected in May, Turner began working on a list of goals, which were eventually narrowed down to four — improving Pendleton's economy, housing, land development and infrastructure.

Turner said the council would begin coming up with ways to measure those goals at its next work session.

Turner saw potential to solve some of these problems by continuing to develop the Pendleton Unmanned Aerial Systems Range, which he credited for helping the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport emerge from being a financial "sinkhole."

He also saw potential in the Airport Road extension, which is still without businesses seven years after construction.

Turner said businesses could start to arrive once the sites become "shovel-ready," which is currently being explored by the city.

Turner doesn't see the same sort of



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Pendleton mayor John Turner presides over his first city council meeting Tuesday in Pendleton.

economic benefit for Pendleton's newly legalized marijuana industry — the costs to public safety and health could outweigh them, he said.

Those costs to public safety justified the high licensing fees Pendleton is imposing, Turner said, and it hasn't stopped two businesses from trying to open in town.

Back at the meeting, Turner tried to inoculate the audience against the city's critics.

"Don't pay attention to the professional naysayers and the rock-throwers

that sit on the curb and do nothing to help and only criticize," he said. "Help out yourself, help us make strong, wise decisions."

Will Perkinson, recently appointed municipal court judge, also swore in new councilors Scott Fairley and Dale Primmer, whose remarks were much shorter.

"I have no words," Primmer said. "Let's get to work."

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BRIEFLY

Icy roads and fast driving lead to stolen car crash

PENDLETON — Oregon State Police out of Pendleton and Hermiston responded to 20 crashes on icy state roads since Friday. State police Sgt. Lisa Sater said that doesn't include slide-offs and tows.

Most crashes resulted in no injuries, several wrecks involved more than one vehicle, and one led to the recovery of a stolen car, though the car may be in rough shape.

State police received a report Monday at 12:21 p.m. of a car smashing into and breaking a power pole on the southbound side of Highway 339 at about milepost 2 near Milton-Freewater.

Trooper Amy Ford responded and found the red 1997 Nissan Sentra, which lost control while going too fast for the conditions, according to state police, the most common reason the agency attributed for crashes.

The driver of the car, though, fled before police arrived. Ford also found the car's owner reported it stolen Dec. 16 from

Walla Walla.

Local troopers also took two drivers off the road since Friday for driving while suspended and in another instance caught a 22-year-old Pilot Rock resident driving without a license. Violating traffic laws led to each of those stops.

Boardman City Council meeting postponed

BOARDMAN — The Boardman City Council has rescheduled its regular monthly meeting to Tuesday, Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. Meetings are typically held the first Tuesday of each month, but city manager Karen Pettigrew said the decision was made to ensure a quorum.

The council will swear in Mayor Sandy Toms, who was re-elected in November, along with incumbent councilors Art Kegler and David Jones, who were also re-elected. The council's newest member, Toni Connell, will also be sworn in.

The council meets at city hall, located at 200 City Center Circle. For more information, call 541-481-9252.

CITY HALL: Fairley said fines would only prolong the disrepair

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think it's time for action for this property. It has posed a public safety risk and is not getting mitigated nearly as quickly as it should have. The amount of potential fire load coupled with no sprinklers to speak of in that block (means) we could stand to lose a lot in the event of a fire."

The debris' close proximity to the building spurred councilor Becky Marks to scold the Quezadas, who were represented by Jose Quezada and his adult children — Diana, Miguel and Marco.

"You're jeopardizing the safety and security of the buildings around you," she said. "That's where my heartburn comes from."

Miguel Quezada said the family could remove the debris this week.

City attorney Nancy Kerns said the council should vote on whether the city should continue to declare the building a nuisance and also whether to provide another extension or enforce the ordinance.

If the council decided to enforce the ordinance, the city would fine the Quezadas the maximum \$500 per day, with the municipal court judge given the option of adjusting the rate if they contested it in court.

If the Quezadas fix the roof by the court date, Kerns said the issue would be at the discretion of the judge.

The council unanimously

agreed that the building should still be a nuisance, but enforcement was a more contentious issue.

Casey Severe, a general contractor and Quezada family friend who is assisting them with the project, said the Quezadas were a victim of "the worst winter in 10 years" and a drawn-out bid process for supplies.

If the family got an extended period of dry weather, Miguel Quezada said they could have the roof done in three weeks.

Councilor Scott Fairley said fining the family would require them to redirect their resources from the roofing project to the fines and would only prolong the building's disrepair.

He suggested the council extend the enforcement date until the Quezadas had three weeks of good weather to finish the roof.

Calling in from home while he recovers from knee surgery, councilor Paul Chalmers said he didn't think it would be feasible for the council or city staff to define "good weather."

Ultimately, the council voted 5-3 to begin enforcing the nuisance ordinance, with councilors Fairley, Jake Cambier and John Brenne voting against.

The council's decision sparked the ire of Miguel Quezada.

"Jerks," Miguel Quezada said to the council before leaving the chambers.

WEATHER: Last year saw a rapid spring runoff of snowpack

Continued from 1A

in December at the Pendleton airport, with at least 1 inch reported on six days and 5.7 inches reported on Dec. 14. Overall, precipitation is running 1.52 inches above normal for the water year, beginning Oct. 1, 2016.

That's good news for snowpack across the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Willow basins, which depend on snow in the Blue Mountains to replenish streams and reservoirs in spring and summer. As of Tuesday, snow-water

equivalent — defined as the amount of water contained within snowpack — was 126 percent of normal for the water year, according to the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Julie Koeberle, snow hydrologist for the NRCS, said the year couldn't have gotten off to a much better start, though they are hoping to avoid a repeat of last year's rapid spring runoff, triggered by record-breaking high temperatures in April.

"The way to think of snowpack is like a frozen reservoir storage," Koeberle

said. "If it melts off too quickly, you deplete that water source."

Healthy stream flows are critical for irrigation and fisheries in the area. Koeberle said the NRCS is compiling its stream forecasts for the upcoming spring, which should be completed within the next week or two.

"A lot of industries depend on that stream flow over summer," she said.

Despite the increased precipitation, most of Eastern Oregon — including southern Umatilla County — is still classified as abnormally dry

by the U.S. Drought Monitor. The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center is predicting wetter-than-usual weather over the next three months, which could lead to removal of the drought designation.

The forecast is still fuzzy when it comes to temperature, with an equal chance of being below, above or near normal.

"It's still a little up in the air," Koeberle said.

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BEST STAND-UP COMEDY ON IT'S WAY TO HERMISTON!

Melonville Comedy Festival January 28, 2017 Hermiston Community Center

The 24th edition of the Melonville Comedy Festival will feature three headlining stand up comedians. These comics are in demand corporate show entertainers.

CHASE MAYERS
is coming to Hermiston from Baton Rouge Louisiana for the first time. Chase is a comedy club headliner in the Gulf Coast area. He also appeared in the movie "The Butler". Chase is a Back Porch Comedian.

GABRIEL RUTLEDGE
Another regular on the Bob and Tom Radio show has appeared at the 2006 Melonville Comedy Festival. He is on the comedy stage nightly all over America. Gabriel's TV credits include Nickelodeon, Comedy Central, and HBO. Two of his albums are on the Sirius Satellite radio comedy radio top ten. Rutledge finds humor in his family and everyday life. Gabriel is based in Olympia.

DWIGHT SLADE
is a regular guest on the Bob and Tom Radio show. He appeared on the Tonight Show, and on Comedy Central. Dwight is a headliner on the biggest stages of standup comedy throughout the world. Slade started working in comedy clubs as a teen and at the Melonville Comedy festival in 2004. His humor covers everything from driving to pets. Dwight is based in Portland.

Tickets \$35 per person
Doors open at 7pm, Show starts at 8:00
Tickets available at
Hermiston Chamber of Commerce
Reserve Tickets at: 541-561-7488

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