

# Happy Canyon names 2017 princesses

Virginia Conner, Gabriella Lewis to be introduced Jan. 21

East Oregonian

The Happy Canyon Board of Directors has announced Virginia Conner, 20, and Gabriella Lewis, 18, as the 2017 Happy Canyon princesses.

A public reception will be held Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Pendleton Convention Center to introduce both princesses, beginning at 10 a.m.

"We are so excited to be represented by Virginia and Gabriella in 2017," said Kipp Curtis, court chaperone. "They provide the poise and confidence that's so necessary to promote Happy Canyon as it begins its next 100 years."

Conner is the daughter of Kevin Blueback, of Warm Springs, and Kristen Conner, of Pendleton. An enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, she graduated from Pendleton High School in 2015, where she earned letters all four years in swimming.

Conner was also active on the CTUIR Youth Council, and served as secretary of the Native American Board of Representatives from 2012 to 2014. She is the fourth generation of her family to participate in Happy Canyon, having held a number of roles in the night show. Several of her relatives have also served as Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon royalty.

Conner is currently a student at Blue Mountain



Photo contributed by Dallas Dick of the Confederated Umatilla Journal  
**Gabriella Lewis and Virginia Conner are the 2017 Happy Canyon princesses and will meet the public Jan. 21 at the Pendleton Convention Center.**

Community College and works behind the counter Dave's Chevron in Pendleton. She plans to transfer to a four-year college where she will pursue a bachelor's degree in business management.

Lewis is the daughter of Joe and Kathy Lewis, of Spokane Valley, Washington. She graduated in 2016 from University High School in

Spokane, and is now studying graphic design at Walla Walla Community College.

Lewis is an enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe, and her relatives have camped at the Pendleton Round-Up since its inception in 1910. Lewis has camped at the Round-Up every year since she was a baby, and was named best dressed woman during the Tribal Ceremonial

Dancing Competition in 2015. Like Conner, Lewis has also held a number of roles in the Happy Canyon Night Show.

Once she graduates from Walla Walla Community College, Lewis plans to attend either the University of Oregon or Boise State University to earn a bachelor's degree in graphic design.

## HERMISTON

# 4-year-old boy dies of respiratory failure

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A four-year-old Hermiston boy died Dec. 29, from what is believed to be a respiratory infection.

Jasper Duree McKenzie had been sick for a few weeks with a respiratory illness but was an otherwise healthy child, according to his aunt Kendra Aylett.

"It was out of nowhere, all of the sudden," she said Thursday.

According to a report from the sheriff's office, Jasper was having trouble breathing at his home near Hermiston.

His mother, Krista Hendricks, 28, was working at Desert Lanes bowling alley in Hermiston and her boyfriend, Christopher Mallory, 29, brought the boy to the bowling alley to

pick her up before taking them both to Good Shepherd Medical Center.

While another child went into the bowling alley to get Hendricks, the boy stopped breathing. A passerby began CPR on the child and an ambulance was called, but life-saving measures failed and the boy was pronounced dead at the hospital.

Hendricks described Jasper as a loving, caring and happy child with a giving spirit.

"He had the best smile in the world," she said in a message relayed by Aylett. "He loved his mom and (three) sisters and grandma, and to help do chores."

A benefit account has been set up at Bank of Eastern Oregon for Jasper's family under the name Kendra Aylett.



McKenzie

## BRIEFLY

### Drunk drivers stalled by high-intensity patrols

PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office arrested six drunk drivers and handed out 86 citations and warnings during a recent high-intensity enforcement period.

The sheriff's office increased patrols between Dec. 9, 2016, and Jan. 1, 2017, thanks to a \$9,000 grant through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Oregon State Sheriff's Association.

"Our goal was to increase our presence in the community, reduce impaired driving, and promote safe travel during the holiday season," said Sgt. Josh Roberts.

Sheriff Terry Rowan said they evaluate the success of these patrols, which happen four or five times a year, by the number of serious or fatal accidents caused by intoxicated driving.

The next enforcement event funded by grant dollars is scheduled for Super Bowl Sunday on February 5.

### Man 'combative' after accident

PENDLETON — A man was transported to the hospital after his vehicle spun off the road on Highway 37 north of Pendleton Thursday afternoon.

Pendleton Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo said the man was driving too fast at a curve, causing his truck to leave the road and stop in a field. Ciraulo said the man

was "a little combative" when emergency responders arrived at the scene, requiring assistance from the Pendleton Police Department in transporting him to St. Anthony Hospital for further evaluation.

### Cold closes portion of refuge to hunting

With bitter cold weather causing stress to waterfowl, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has announced it will close a portion of the Whitcomb Unit in the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge to hunting several weeks early this season.

The closure, which took effect Thursday, impacts roughly 2,000 acres of the Whitcomb Unit in Washington, though the rest of the unit and all other hunting areas in the refuge remain open.

Lamont Glass, refuge manager, said that surveys of waterfowl in the area show that two-thirds are in poor condition.

"When it's this cold, and with snow covering other food sources, waterfowl need additional resources in order to survive," Glass said.

To do this, workers for the agency will begin knocking down corn and other crops in refuge fields to provide food for ducks and geese. Without a hunting closure, this would create what's known as a "baiting" situation. In Washington, it is illegal to hunt for waterfowl in areas where food has purposefully been provided.

A map of the closed area can be found online at [www.fws.gov/refuge/umatilla](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/umatilla). For more information, call 509-546-8333.

# STABBING: Multiple controlled substances were involved

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potential suspect. He was still detained Thursday evening, according to police chief Jason Edmiston, and was cooperating with the investigation.

Residents of the trailer park were being questioned shortly after the attack by Hermiston police and members of the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team, and the owner of the trailer where the stabbing was reported was immediately notified. Because the trailer park is within three blocks of Sunset Elementary School, police notified Hermiston School District officials of the incident and told them there was no direct threat or link to the school. Edmiston said that there was no immediate threat to the public.

"This investigation is very active as differing accounts of what transpired have been given," said Edmiston in a press release Thursday afternoon. "Detectives have several additional people to interview before making a determination of what charge(s) may be applicable." Edmiston also said that multiple controlled



Staff photo Jayati Ramakrishnan

**HPD officers question residents of the RV park where a reported stabbing took place Thursday morning.**

substances were involved in the incident.

"I can say with confidence that user level amounts of controlled substances were a contributing factor into the poor decision-making that took place today with the individual involved," he said.

He also added, in a

statement he admitted was political, that incidents like this should lead to reconsideration of the legalization of controlled substances.

"This is a classic example of a situation involving user levels of controlled substances having impact on the quality of life of those

people in the immediate area as well as the individual who received the stab wounds."

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at 541-564-4534 or [jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com). Daniel Wattenburger contributed to this story.

# Electric Cooperative keeping the heat on during extreme cold

East Oregonian

This week's cold snap might make residents cringe when they get their electricity bill for the month, but cranking up the heat isn't overloading Umatilla Electric Cooperative's system.

Most utilities are at their peak in the winter, member services administrator Steve Meyers said, but Hermiston's agricultural roots means that UEC's system reaches its peak loads during irrigation season in June, July and August.

Despite an unusually cold and snowy winter (December was an average of 5 degrees colder than usual in Eastern Oregon), Meyers said so far the system has not experienced any widespread outages.

He said one reason for that is that over the last three years UEC has worked to rebuild portions of its Western Mountain distribution system to better withstand snow, wind and other weather events.

The Red Cross recommends everyone take steps to make sure that if there is a power outage during extremely cold weather, they are prepared. Recommendations include keeping enough non-perishable food and water (a gallon per person per day) for everyone in the house to survive on for three days, plus flashlights, extra batteries, heavy blankets, a

radio and extra cell phone battery. If the power is out for long residents should run water through their pipes to keep them from freezing.

People should never use a generator, grill, camp stove or other device that uses gasoline, propane, natural gas or charcoal inside their home, garage or other enclosed area where poisonous carbon monoxide will collect.

## Every rock star had to start somewhere.

Youth (8-12 yrs.) beginning guitar classes start Jan. 9 and run each Monday 5:00-6:00 pm through March. We'll even provide the guitar.



PENDLETON CENTER for the ARTS

Mention this ad and pay just \$40 for all 10 sessions. More info: 541-278-9201 or [pendletonarts.org](http://pendletonarts.org)

# FLU SEASON MASKING

• VISITORS • PATIENTS • VENDORS

CHI St. Anthony Hospital is committed to protecting our patients from influenza (the flu). This flu season, we are asking all visitors who have not received a flu vaccine this year to please wear a mask while you are visiting our hospital. If you would like to receive a flu shot, they are available to anyone ages 18 and over free of charge. Please have a staff member contact the nursing supervisor if you are interested in this service, if you are under 18 please contact your primary care provider for flu vaccine information. In addition, if you have cough/cold symptoms and need to visit the hospital, we kindly ask that you wear a mask while you are here. Thank you for helping us to keep our patients safe!

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