

SNOW: More than 14 inches since Dec. 1

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vehicles remained backed-up on the Washington side of the bridge and both directions of traffic was closed. He said he was working the long line of tractor-trailers stopped along I-84.

Coming the other way, about halfway between Kennewick and Umatilla, a multi-vehicle pileup including an unknown number of semis and passenger vehicles stopped traffic at about 2:40 p.m.

Caroline Jared, who lives in Hermiston and works as a nurse in Richland, was among the first vehicles stopped behind the wreck.

"I'm glad I did," she said, "I was next in line for the dogpile."

Tow trucks were working to remove the wrecked vehicles after 6 p.m., and Jared was stuck with other motorists. She has been commuting to the Tri-Cities for the past 15 years and said this is the worst wreck she has seen in that time.

She also said on her way to work Tuesday morning a FedEx truck had rolled at the same spot.

In Hermiston, a red sedan sustained major damage to the front end when it hit a maroon Ford F-150 that was heading west on Theater Lane at the



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan
Hermiston police officer Tim Miears helps direct traffic Tuesday after a wreck at the intersection of Highway 395 and Theater Lane.

intersection of Highways 395.

Braylin McIntyre, who was driving the sedan, said he, his wife Katherine — who is pregnant — and their 1-1/2-year-old son were all safe and uninjured. Those in the other car — two women and three young children — were also not injured.

"We had a green light, and they had a yellow. (The other driver) said she just wasn't anticipating me coming that fast," said McIntyre. "It's good they got farther ahead. There were three babies in the back of that truck."

The collision mangled the front of the sedan, and the F-150 appeared to have sustained some damage to

the back. The driver of the F-150 said everyone in her vehicle was safe but would not comment on the crash.

Hermiston police were on scene to direct traffic, and the sedan was towed from the intersection.

Hermiston and Pendleton have both seen more than 14 inches of snow since the beginning of December, according to the National Weather Service office in Pendleton. That's about double the average for the Dec. 1-Jan. 10 timespan.

Phil Wright, Jayati Ramakrishnan and Daniel Wattenburger contributed to this report.

BUSINESS: Employees must pass background check

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The OLCC will then evaluate whether the building contains all the elements required by the state — a video security system, a designated sales area and a secure room where employees can lock away marijuana products when the store isn't operating.

Brandon Krenzler, a co-owner of Kind Leaf, said his business will also be ready for inspection by the end of the month.

Giving a tour of the building as the interior was being painted, Krenzler showed how they were subdividing the one-time fabric store to meet OLCC rules.

Krenzler is hoping to use his marijuana retail experience and connections as a writer for cannabis trade publications to offer a boutique atmosphere.

"We abstain from cannabis leaf signage, green crosses, flashing lights, that stuff," Krenzler said at the commission meeting. "It really makes Sandy Boulevard in Portland look pretty pitiful."

Every prospective business owner and employee will also have to pass a background check.

Not everyone's record is spotless — between 2004 and 2005, Krenzler was convicted of several felonies and misdemeanors, including burglary and assaulting a public safety officer.

Krenzler said he's worked hard to turn his life around

since that time and is working with a lawyer to get the charges expunged. He hasn't been involved in a criminal case in more than a decade and said he was confident he would be issued the requisite licenses.

Pendleton police chief Stuart Roberts wrote in an email that he has met with Krenzler and discussed his criminal history.

Roberts, whose department will be conducting the background checks on behalf of the city, wrote that the only automatic disqualifier for an applicant is a felony drug conviction.

"A mere felony conviction in itself is not necessarily a disqualifier," he wrote in an email. "If/when felony convictions are discovered, the facts/circumstances of the conviction are explored. I characterize all non-drug related convictions as discretionary, because at face value they may not tell the true story of offense. I would be concerned about (an) offense that involves fraud and/or violence."

Roberts added that he would also consider the length of time between the conviction and the application.

Roberts wrote that he has not conducted official background checks on any of the applicants yet.

OLCC spokesman Mark Pettinger didn't list any specific disqualifiers the state considers during a

background check, but did say that the state also looks into investors in addition to owners and employees.

One such investor in Kind Leaf is Jim English, a former Pendleton Police Department officer and Umatilla County Sheriff's deputy.

English said he retired from law enforcement in May 2016 to get involved in private business and work with his hands.

English said he had been working with A-1 Construction Fence & Deck, which eventually relinquished its space to Kind Leaf. English said he was helping Kind Leaf with some construction work when he was offered shares in the company.

After considering the moral implications and weighing the pros and cons, English accepted their offer.

English thinks his background can help Kind Leaf shed some of the negative perceptions surrounding marijuana.

"I want to see something that's professional, that's clean," he said about the store.

If and when Kind Leaf and Pendleton Cannabis open, they could be followed by others.

At the planning commission meeting, city permit technician Julie Chase said the commission would consider another conditional use application for a marijuana retailer at a future meeting with more potentially down the pike.

HERMISTON: Council will ask Umatilla County to rename East Airport Road

Continued from 1A

by Jan. 1, 2018, the city will reimburse the company for its building permit, system development charges and \$10,000 for extension of water and sewer lines that will also make it easier to develop neighboring properties in the future. The total package of incentives is estimated to be worth about \$107,800.

In addition, Ranch & Home will have space on its 18-acre property for additional retail development. If the company convinces a grocery store of at least 25,000 square feet to agree to build on that space by Oct. 1, 2018, then the city will reimburse Ranch & Home \$185,000 for road improvements on the northeast side of the property.

For every month that Ranch & Home misses those deadlines, the financial incentives will be reduced by 10 percent, and the deal is off if the deadlines are missed by more than six months.

Smith said parts of Hermiston are considered a "food desert" by the USDA based on the ratio of grocery stores to residents, and Hermiston residents spend an estimated \$21 million in the Tri-Cities each year on groceries alone. He said if Ranch & Home and a grocery store come in, the financial incentives would be returned to the city, county and school district through property taxes in just a couple of years.

The council unanimously approved the agreement, along with a replat of the three lots that make up the Ranch & Home property at 2500 S. Highway 395 near the Wal-Mart Distribution Center.

Road renaming

On Monday the city council also voted to ask Umatilla County to rename East Airport Road.

Smith told the council that since the opening of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, visitors and delivery drivers have been making complaints to the EOTEC staff that they got lost after ending up on the nearby and similarly-named Airport Way. He said Airport Way is not a wide road, and it is difficult for trucks to turn around at the airport and head back to the highway after coming down the wrong road.

On the other hand, Smith said renaming East Airport Road would create its own set of difficulties, as people try to plug in an address that their outdated GPS maps will say doesn't exist.

"We had conversations with a resident (on that road) and their reaction was not real positive, which I understand," Smith said. There are 19 addresses on the road.

There are fewer houses and businesses that would be affected by a change of name for Airport Way, he said, but it would be confusing to have the only airport-related road name not actually lead to the airport.

Mayor David Drotzmann said he has personally turned down the wrong street after mixing up Airport Road and Airport Way, so he agreed it was a problem that needed addressed.

Councilor Jackie Myers said she didn't see anything wrong with approaching the county about "trying to fix an ongoing problem that's going to continue to be a problem."

The council voted 5-2 in favor of submitting a request to the county.

Downtown Parking

Before Monday's regular city council meeting, the council held a work session with staff to discuss downtown parking.

Assistant city manager

Mark Morgan said a look at Google Earth images from the last 10 years shows — in an admittedly unscientific study — that on average about 44 percent of parking spots on Main Street are full, with somewhat similar numbers in other areas of downtown. However, complaints about limited parking downtown is something the city hears "all the time" from residents and business owners who say people avoid shopping downtown because they think they won't find parking.

"Whether or not there is an actual parking problem downtown or not, there's a perception in people's minds," Morgan said.

Some of that may come from a "phobia" of parallel parking, he said, noting Google Earth images that show parking lots full or almost full even as most of the spots along the street are empty.

One low-cost solution that both adds spots and eases peoples' minds about having to parallel park is turning some of downtown's street parking into angled spots.


"That's the low-hanging fruit," Morgan said.

He said the city's engineers had drawn up plans to put angled parking spaces for a block along Gladys Avenue in front of the library. The new configuration would add four spots (each 19 feet long) to the block, get rid of more difficult parallel parking and still leave travel lanes more than 12 feet wide.

"We saw this as a possible way to ease our way into trying angled parking, and it's totally reversible if people don't like it," he said.

City councilors agreed to consider a motion at the Jan. 23 council meeting.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.



Environmental Impact Statement P.O. Box 2870, Portland, OR 97208-2870 1-800-290-5033

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IN REPLY REFER TO: CRSO-EIS

Public comment period extended for scoping input for the Columbia River System Operations Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation and the Bonneville Power Administration are seeking your help to shape our basin's future. Together, the three agencies operate 14 federal multi-purpose projects on the Columbia and Snake rivers, known as the Columbia River System, that serve the region with flood risk management, navigation, power generation, irrigation, fish and wildlife conservation, recreation, and municipal and industrial water supply.

We are preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to review the environmental and socioeconomic effects of the long-term system operations and configurations of these projects.

To begin this process, the three agencies are hosting public scoping meetings throughout the basin. If you were unable to attend a scoping meeting in your area, you can also find information about the NEPA process and about the way we currently operate the system posted on our website at www.crso.info. You can also use the website to provide us comments that can help define the issues, concerns and thoughts on system operations for consideration in the EIS.

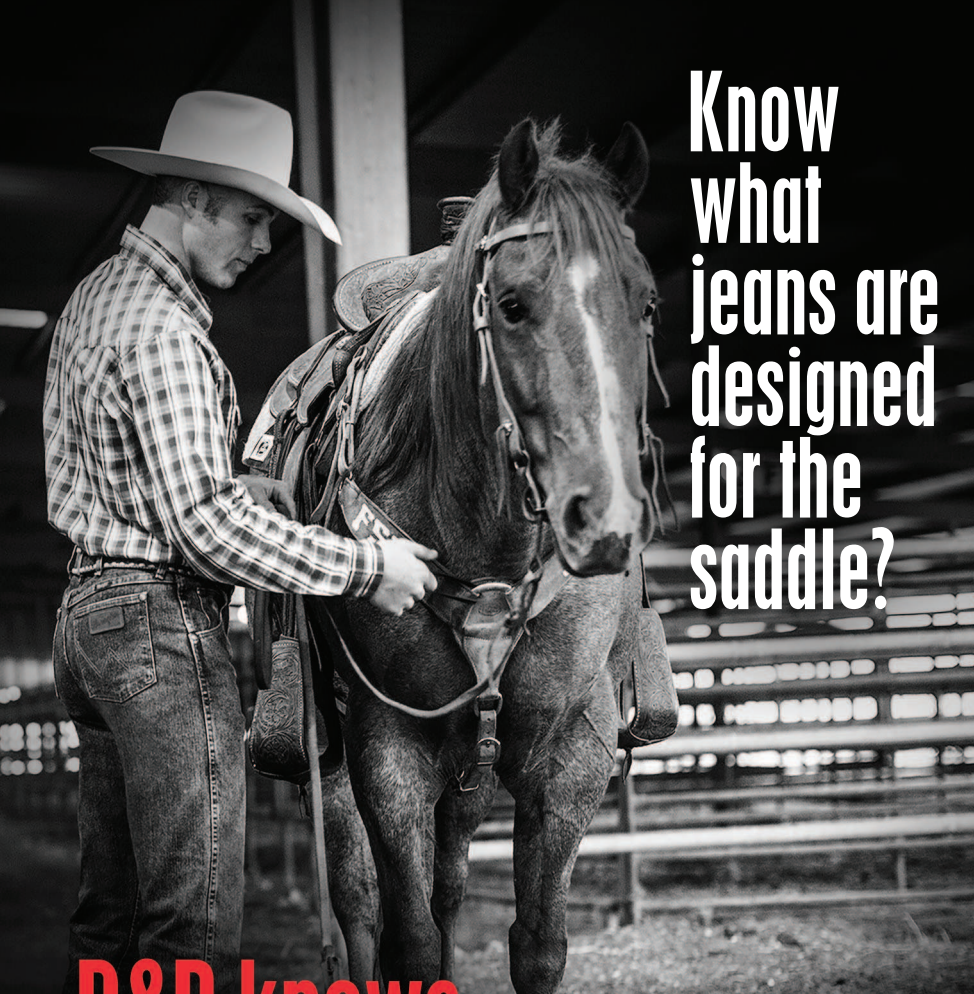
Based on requests from a number of interested organizations, we have extended the scoping comment period to Feb. 7, 2017, in order to allow more time for development and submission of written comments.

After the scoping period ends, we will carefully review the comments received to help inform a range of alternatives and impacts to resources for evaluation in the EIS. We are committed to considering all regional perspectives and to running an open and transparent public process. To that end, we will continue to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement and dialogue with the region after the scoping comment period closes. We all have a stake in the operation of the system and the environmental health of the Columbia River Basin, so we encourage and look forward to hearing your thoughts and comments.

If you have already shared your thoughts, we thank you! If you have not yet shared your perspective, there is still time to do so. Again, the revised public comment period for scoping will now conclude Feb. 7, 2017.

Please go to the website for information about the NEPA process, or send your comments to comment@crso.info. You also may mail your written comments to CRSO EIS, P.O. Box 2870, Portland, OR 97208-2870.

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