

STANFIELD

Fire damages Morstarch factory



Contributed photo
Umatilla County Fire District 1 crews work to put out a fire Tuesday morning at Morstarch in Stanfield.

East Oregonian

Umatilla County Fire District 1 responded around 6:05 a.m. Tuesday to an industrial fire in Stanfield. The fire, which damaged portions of the outside of the Morstarch factory on 405 Hoosier Rd., was mostly contained by 8 a.m.

Eldon Marcum of the UCFD said the fire was likely caused by one of the dryers at the factory, which he said caught fire and set some bins ablaze. He said no one was injured in the blaze, and most of the damage was to the outside of the facility.

"They've had problems in the past," Marcum said of the dryers at the factory. "That was probably what caused it."

Marcum said he didn't know the cost of the damage, and members of the company did not want to comment on the fire.



Contributed photo
Umatilla County Fire District 1 crews work to put out a fire Tuesday morning at Morstarch in Stanfield.

PENDLETON

Quezadas plead not guilty to nuisance violation

Facing daily fines in excess of \$22,000

East Oregonian

Facing \$22,000 in fines for violating Pendleton's nuisance ordinance — an amount that is increasing every day — the family that owns old city hall pleaded not guilty to municipal court Tuesday.

In front of Pendleton Municipal Court judge Will Perkinson, Jose Quezada and his daughter Diana Quezada entered their plea and told the judge that they would utilize legal counsel.

Perkinson explained that the family had been cited every day between Jan. 4 and Feb. 16. Since the presumptive fine is \$500 per day, the Quezadas have been fined \$22,000.

In an interview after the meeting, city attorney Nancy Kerns said the city will continue to cite the owners unless something

changes with a municipal judge's ruling.

A trial date has not yet been set.

Old city hall was heavily damaged by a July 2015 explosion, which killed Eduardo Quezada, Jose Quezada's son.

More than a year after the explosion, the city began warning the family that the building was in violation of the nuisance ordinance, which requires fire-damaged buildings complete repairs within a year of the fire.

The city initially offered a few extensions as the family began building a new roof for the building, but city council voted Jan. 3 to begin fining them when they didn't finish the roof by the Jan. 1 deadline.

The Quezadas contend that a historically bad winter and other factors outside of their control prevented them from completing the roof on time.

HERMISTON

Desert Cobbler celebrates 40 years

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

They don't make shoes like they used to. Dale Platt, owner of Desert Cobbler in Hermiston, knows that better than anyone in town.

Although his business celebrates its 40th anniversary on Wednesday, he's had to adapt along the way.

"When I first came here I just did shoe and boot repair," he said. "Now I do a little bit of everything."

"Everything" includes leather saddle bags, belts, holsters and knife sheaths. Platt has some standard sizes on hand, but he can also tailor-make holsters or sheaths to fit a weapon someone brings in.

Over the years, shoes and boots have become cheaper, but also more cheaply made. Footwear has gotten more casual (meaning less leather) and the way the shoes are put together by machines makes it harder (and more expensive) to repair. All that has taught people to think of their shoes as something disposable that is not worth repairing.

"Some people don't want to bother," Platt said.

Of course, there are still people in Eastern Oregon who appreciate the value of a good, high-quality work or cowboy boot that has been properly worn in. For those customers, Platt can save that favorite pair of shoes with a new sole or heel. He said some of his customers



Staff photo by Jade McDowell
Desert Cobbler owner Dale Platt works on taking apart a baseball mitt a customer brought in for repair.

have been coming to him for almost as long as he has been in business.

Despite the change in how shoes are made, he said the basic tools for fixing them are "still pretty much the same."

Platt grew up in the McKay Creek area, and learned the trade from a cobbler shop in Pendleton in the 1970s. He had gone off to college but came home to work after he ran out of money, and a cobbler offered to train him up in the art of shoe and boot repair. When Platt heard that a cobbler in

Hermiston was selling their business, he decided to take it over and moved to Hermiston.

Platt said he used to bring his children to work and let them entertain themselves in a playpen or, as they got older, help greet customers. Despite all the exposure to the industry, none of the three wanted to follow in their father's footsteps and become a cobbler. He never took on anyone to train, either, since business started declining around the time that he would have considered it.

Still, Platt keeps on working, adapting to the changing industry and the challenges that come with being a downtown business owner. He said one of the keys is to remember is good old-fashioned customer service.

"Just be here when you tell people you're going to be here, and treat everyone the same," he said.

Desert Cobbler is located at 120 N.E. Third St.

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

BRIEFLY

Good Shepherd gives \$500,000 to health foundation

HERMISTON — The Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation will be giving out more grants and scholarships after a \$500,000 gift from Good Shepherd Health Care System.

The award, which was given Feb. 14, is the second largest donation the foundation has ever received.

Good Shepherd Community Health Foundation executive director Bob Green called the \$500,000 "truly a marvelous gift."

"With this contribution, we will be able to provide grants to the community to support health initiatives and medical scholarships to local students pursuing a degree in health care," he said in a statement.

The foundation supports health and wellness initiatives in Umatilla County and Morrow County. Since it began in 1995, GSCHF has given more than \$2.5 million in health-related grants to local nonprofits as well as medical scholarships to local students.

ecologist with the U.S. Forest Service, will lead the 70-minute talk interspersed with video vignettes and photos. Hessburg works at the Pacific Northwest Research Station in Wenatchee, Washington, and is a member of the University of Washington's affiliate faculty.

The presentation, titled "Era of Megafires," will begin at 7 p.m. at Maxey Hall, 173 Stanton St. in Walla Walla. There will be a Q-and-A session for members of the audience to ask questions of local concerns.

For more information, contact David Brauhn with the city of Walla Walla at 509-524-4436.

Pendleton growth subject of talk

PENDLETON — Larry Lehman, former Pendleton city manager, is the special guest speaker during the Umatilla County Historical Society's February Terrific Tuesday presentation.

The event is Tuesday, Feb. 28 at 7 p.m. at Heritage Station Museum, 108 S.W. Frazer Ave., Pendleton. In "Pendleton 1990-2010: A Time of Growth and Change," Lehman will share his research on the unique development in Pendleton during the last 10 years of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century. Admission is free.

For more information, call 541-276-0012.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

PENDLETON

School board sets schedule for superintendent search

Aiming to have a replacement by early May

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

Fourteen months after initiating the last one, the Pendleton School Board began another search for a superintendent.

The board met Monday to declare the superintendent position vacant and set the process for finding Kovach's replacement.

Citing "personal reasons," Pendleton School District superintendent Andy Kovach announced his resignation Feb. 13, just seven months into his tenure.

Many of the broad details of the search are the same as the previous one with some minor tweaks added.

Given that the district is starting its search at a later date, board chair Debbie McBee said the schedule was slightly more condensed. The district will open the application period Wednesday and close it March 24.

After a screening committee sorts through the applications, the board will conduct initial interviews April 19-22 and select finalists April 24.

Following reference checks and visits to the finalists' job sites, the remaining candidates will participate in a meet-and-greet and a

second round of interviews in Pendleton May 2-4.

The board will announce the new superintendent May 8, who will start working July 1, the same day Kovach's resignation goes into effect.

Not everyone liked the condensed timeline.

Board member Dave Krumbein didn't attend the meeting, but McBee relayed his thoughts on the hiring process.

According to McBee, Krumbein would prefer the board appoint an interim superintendent while members take more time to find a permanent replacement.

The shorter schedule also caused the board to raise the ceiling on the salary range.

Whereas the last superintendent search established a range of \$127,500 to \$140,000, McBee suggested raising the maximum to \$150,000 to entice more candidates during the later portion of the hiring season.

Kovach is making \$127,500 for the 2016-2017 school year.

The board is also still considering whether to use a search consulting firm, which the board hired during the 2016 search.

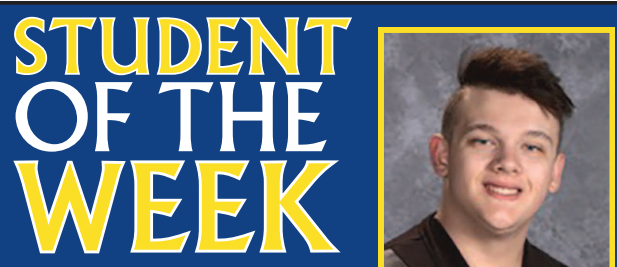
Last year, the consultants also conducted background checks on the candidates,

but human resources director Brad Bixler told the board he was capable of doing them if members decided to go without.

The job requirements for the position remain the same — candidates must have a master's degree, a license in administration, teaching experience and superin-

tendent or administrative experience in the central administration of a school system. The board also has a 36-point list of qualities they would like to see in a prospective superintendent.

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



Trevor Riedmann
Pilot Rock High School

Trevor is an outstanding student in many areas, but excels in academics. He is the president of National Honor Society and did a wonderful job as emcee of the NHS Initiation and Awards Night. His love is theater and has taken the lead role in many plays during his four years of high school; he takes the stage by storm. Trevor is the senior class president and has held a class office every year. His quick smile brightens a room and PRHS will miss it as he pursues his college endeavors. Congratulations Trevor!

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Pick up an application at 211 SE Byers, Pendleton or e-mail resume and cover letter to hr@eomediagroup.com