

HERMISTON

Hockensmith cuts deal for five counts of animal neglect

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

Hermiston rancher Michael Hockensmith will be charged with five counts of misdemeanor animal neglect and placed on probation for five years after nearly 200 malnourished cattle were discovered on his property in January.

Hockensmith was arraigned Monday. At his indictment February 28 he was charged with 200 counts of animal neglect — 14 in the first degree and 186 in the second-degree, one count for each animal in the herd. At Monday's hearing, Hockensmith pleaded guilty to five counts of misdemeanor animal neglect, for five of the animals that died, but asked for counts 6 through 200 to be dismissed. In exchange for charges 6 through 200 being dropped, Hockensmith asked to be placed on bench probation, which means

he cannot own domestic animals or livestock.

Hockensmith's attorney, John Ballard, asked for two exceptions. One, that Hockensmith be allowed to keep one horse that he already owned, and that had been found by the sheriff's office to have been reasonably well cared for. The other, Ballard asked permission for Hockensmith to be able to own and operate firearms, as he lives in a rural area.

Temple granted those two exceptions.

Deputy district attorney Jake Kamins, who for the past three years has specialized in animal cruelty cases, served as a special prosecutor for the case.

Although Hockensmith pleaded guilty to five counts of neglect, 17 animals from the herd died over the past few months. Ballard said five appeared to have been sick early on, when the winter storm hit.

"There are probably

some other factors not worth getting into," Ballard said. "In summation, this is probably the most fair resolution, without getting into two to three days' trial."

Kamins said the five animals were largely symbolic of the other animals.

"There's nothing particularly egregious about those five," he said. "In a plea bargain situation, we're looking at the defendant taking responsibility for actions, and being held accountable in a way less than the max penalty. This was resolved very quickly. He took responsibility very quickly."

He added that nothing would have been different had Hockensmith been charged with 50 counts of animal neglect.

While all the counts were initially classified as felonies, Kamins said the five to which Hockensmith pleaded guilty were reduced to misdemeanors.

"We agreed that because he was coming forward quickly, he didn't need to have felony charges on his record," Kamins said.

He added that no matter how many counts Hockensmith had been charged with, five years' bench probation was the maximum he could have received for being barred from owning livestock.

"That's a good resolution for this case," Kamins said.

Hockensmith will also have to complete 80 hours of community service, and pay a \$130 misdemeanor fee, as well as \$100 for each count of animal neglect. He was initially sentenced to 180 days in jail, all of which Temple suspended.

Hockensmith did not make any comments during the hearing.

Contact Jayati Ramakrishnan at 541-564-4534 or jramakrishnan@eastoregonian.com.

HERMISTON

Cyclist dies in collision

East Oregonian

A 55-year-old Hermiston man was killed around 8:19 p.m. Monday at the intersection of Highway 395 and East Elm Avenue after a collision between the bicycle he was riding and a semi truck.

As of press time, Hermiston Police Department had not identified the victim.

Police chief Jason Edmiston said in a press release it was too early to know all the factors that may have caused the crash such as speed, visibility of the cyclist and any potential impairment of those involved. He said the department has video surveillance of the incident and will review the footage before presenting the information to the district attorney's office.

The Hermiston Police Department's initial investigation, as well as witness reports, indicate the semi

truck was turning right onto East Elm from Highway 395 near McDonald's. As it was turning, the truck hit the cyclist. The truck continued to travel eastbound on Highway 207.

The Oregon State Police stopped the truck on Highway 730 near the Washington border.

OSP processed the truck for evidence, and a Hermiston Police officer brought the driver of the truck to the police station. Oregon State Police were on scene to conduct a crash reconstruction.

Officers from the Hermiston Police Department were on the scene within minutes, as was Umatilla County Fire District 1.

Family members were notified, and many arrived at the scene within half an hour of the collision. Police chaplains were at the scene to counsel the family.

BRIEFLY

City considers street improvements for Hill Meat expansion

PENDLETON — With a water line replacement already complete, city staff is seeking the go-ahead from the Pendleton City Council to proceed with the second half of planned infrastructure improvements to Hill Meat Co.'s processing plant.

At a meeting Tuesday, the council will discuss using a state grant and a local match to help Hill Meat make road improvements to Northwest 50th Street and Northwest F Avenue.

In January 2016, the council and state agreed to provide up to \$670,000 in funding for infrastructure improvements to Hill Meat if the company used the resulting facility expansion to create up to 30 new jobs.

New water lines for the plant's sprinkler system were finished last summer, and with the council's approval, the street project construction could start as soon as July, according to a city staff report.

The city has budgeted \$250,000 for the street project, with the state willing to kick in another \$250,000 through an Immediate Opportunity Fund grant.

The council will meet at 7 p.m. at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Pilot Rock lagoon project gets another hearing

PILOT ROCK — Pilot Rock residents have another opportunity to give input on the city's wastewater lagoon project.

The city council will hold a public hearing Tuesday night prior to submitting the funding application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The project has an estimated cost of about \$5.25 million, according to information from the city, and the federal ag agency would fund the project with \$1.4 million in grants and the rest in a low-interest, long-term loan.

City council meets Tuesday at 7 p.m. at city hall.

The council also will consider a resolution supporting the police department's efforts to bring properties into compliance with city code and an addition to city law establishing rules for what property owners must do with buildings that sustain serious damage from fire, flood or other disasters.

The council also plans to meet in a closed-door session to discuss records that could be exempt from the public.

BMCC hall evacuated for natural gas odor

PENDLETON — The strong smell of natural gas triggered the evacuation of one of the buildings on the campus of Blue Mountain Community College on Monday morning.

Casey White-Zollman, the college's vice president of public relations, explained that clearing Pioneer Hall was a precaution. However, fears of a gas leak proved unfounded.

"Because of repairs on gas lines last week (during spring break), the lines had been shut off. This morning, they were turning the gas lines back on," she said. "They started in Pioneer Hall."

The odor seemed especially pungent, so an evacuation was ordered. Pendleton Fire & Ambulance responded. A representative of Pacific Power inspected and deemed the building safe.

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

PENDLETON

Art installation offers experiential exhibit

Reception Thursday at Betty Feves Gallery

East Oregonian

A pair of Michigan artists created a large-scale mixed media sculptural exhibit that features a floor-to-ceiling experiential installation.

The unique exhibition's opening reception is Thursday from 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the Betty Feves Memorial Gallery at Blue Mountain Community College, 2411 N.W. Carden Ave., Pendleton. Although artists Ginger Owen and Vicki VanAmeijden won't be present, a gallery talk by Lori Sams, Betty Feves gallery director, is planned at 5 p.m. The free event is casual and family-friendly.

"Heritage Habitats" creates a series of physical spaces inside the gallery for contemplation of ancestry. Framed around nostalgia and memory, the pieces engage viewers' unique memories and experiences while emphasizing the commonalities that bind individuals: memory, history, culture and ancestry.

Owen received a master of fine arts in photography from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, and a bachelor's degree in photography from the University of Central Florida, Orlando. She currently serves as an associate professor of photography and intermedia at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo.

VanAmeijden received a master of fine arts in painting from Western Michigan University and a bachelor's degree in illustration from the Kendall School of Design in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She serves as the head of printmaking at the Kirk Newman Art School in the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts in Michigan.



Contributed

"Heritage Habitats," a collection of mixed media sculptural and experiential installation works created by Ginger Owen and Vicki VanAmeijden, opens Thursday at the Betty Feves Memorial Gallery at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton.

The exhibit will hang through Thursday, May 4 in the Pioneer Hall gallery. Betty Feves Memorial Gallery is open Monday through Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and by appointment by calling 541-278-5952. There is no admission charge.

The gallery was created in the memory of Betty Feves, an internationally known ceramic artist from

Pendleton. It was dedicated in 1990 as a nonprofit exhibit space to connect emerging and established artists and their work with students, staff and the general public in Eastern Oregon. For more information, visit www.bluecc.edu/community/feves-art-gallery.

For more about the Owen and VanAmeijden, visit www.gingerowen.com and www.vickivanameijden.com.

COMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

ADULT OPEN GYM, 6 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Half-court basketball. Adults only.

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-8100)

TERRIFICALLY FREE TUESDAY, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, 400 S. Main St., Pendleton. Free admission all day. (541-276-1066)

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME, 10:30-11 a.m., Stanfield Public Library, 180 W. Coe Ave., Stanfield. (541-449-1254)

SENSORY EXPLORATION, 11 a.m., Children's Museum of Eastern Oregon, 400 S. Main St., Pendleton. For ages 0-3. Sensory Bins provide endless ways for little ones to experience new things with all of their senses and boost essential skills. (541-276-1066)

PENDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

BOARDMAN SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Boardman Senior Center, 100 Tatone St., Boardman. Cost is \$4 for seniors 55 and over or \$5 for adults. (541-481-3257)

HERMISTON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Hermiston Senior Center, 435 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Cost is \$4 for adults, free for children 10 and under, \$4 for Meals on Wheels. Extra 50 cents for utensils/dishes. Bus service to Senior Center by donation. (541-567-3582)

CRAFTAFTERNOONS, 4:15 p.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton.

Drop in for a group or individual craft project. All ages. (541-966-0380)

BINGO, 5 p.m., Hermiston Senior Center, 435 W. Orchard Ave., Hermiston. Doors open at 5 p.m., games begin at 6:30 p.m. Everyone welcome. (541-567-3582)

INSIDE OUTSIDE THE LINES ADULT COLORING, 6-7:30 p.m., Irrigon Public Library, 490 N.E. Main St., Irrigon. Materials provided. Bring snacks to share. (541-922-0138)

PENDLETON KNITTING GROUP, 6 p.m., Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub, 230 S.E. Court Ave., Pendleton. (541-966-0380)

PENDLETON EAGLES TACOS AND BINGO, 6 p.m., Pendleton Eagles Lodge, 428 S. Main St., Pendleton. Regular packet \$10, special packet \$5. Proceeds donated to local charities. Public welcome. (541-278-2828)

STORY AND CRAFT TIME, 6:30 p.m., Milton-Freewater Public Library, 8 S.W. Eighth Ave., Milton-Freewater. For elementary school-age children. (541-938-8247)

VERMICULTURE AND VERMICOMPOSTING, 7 p.m., Pendleton Public Library, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Learn

about worms and their uses in the garden from OSU Master Gardener Johana Shuh and crew. Free. (541-966-0380)

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5

ADULT OPEN GYM, 6 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Half-court basketball. Adults only.

WALKING FOR WELLNESS, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Pendleton Recreation Center, 510 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. (541-276-8100)

BABY & ME LEARN & PLAY, 10-10:45 a.m., Hermiston Public Library back entrance, 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. Engaging children and getting them excited about music, improving motor skills and sparking creativity while supporting early literacy development. For children ages newborn to 4 years and parent/guardian. (541-567-2882)

STANFIELD SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Stanfield Community Center, 225 W. Roosevelt, Stanfield. Cost is \$3.50 for seniors, \$6 for others. (541-449-1332)

PENDLETON SENIOR MEAL SERVICE, 12 p.m., Pendleton Senior Center, 510 S.W. 10th St., Pendleton. Costs \$3.50 or \$6 for those under 60. Pool, puzzles, crafts, snacks, Second Time Around thrift store 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. For Meals On Wheels, call 541-276-1926. (541-276-7101)

ADULT BEGINNERS' COMPUTERS, 3-4 p.m., Pendleton Public Library meeting room, 502 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Registration is required. Classes tailored to the needs of the attendees. (541-966-0380)

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