

Walla Walla General Hospital to close

By SHEILA HAGAR
The Union-Bulletin

Walla Walla will become a one-hospital town July 24 with Monday's announcement that Walla Walla General Hospital will close.

A planned absorption of Adventist Health Service's Walla Walla General Hospital into Providence Health & Services' Providence St. Mary Medical Center has been halted and will not go forward, Adventist Health said.

"Adventist Health received word that unexpected regulatory challenges have arisen which could linger for an undetermined duration of time and could ultimately prohibit the anticipated transfer of membership," spokeswoman Judy Leach said in the release.

"Because of this new development, Adventist Health and Providence Health & Services have ceased planning for the transfer of membership and Adventist Health has announced its intention to instead close facilities effective Monday, July 24."

Hospital employees were informed Monday morning.

The closure means 72 fewer hospital beds and Providence St. Mary as the

only acute care hospital in the Walla Walla Valley. Walla Walla General was founded in 1899.

The closure will include all Adventist Health services in Walla Walla — the hospital as well as Adventist Health Home Care Services and Adventist Health Medical Group.

Walla Walla General has faced mounting financial challenges over the last decade, during which time Adventist Health has explored multiple options to provide a sustainable model for the hospital, Leach said.

Adventist Health has invested more than \$68 million in the hospital in recent years, added Joyce Newmyer, president of Adventist Health Pacific Northwest Region and Board chair for WWHG.

Leach said it is anticipated many employees and physicians will pursue local job options, but that Adventist Health has position openings at 19 other hospitals in the western United States.

Kevin Michelson, chief executive of Walla Walla Clinic, said that although it is too early to know what the halted merger will look like for the community, his clinic is open to exploring opportunities with WWHG providers.

Two local residents hospitalized after crashes

East Oregonian

Two Umatilla County residents went to hospitals following separate crashes in Washington.

The first occurred Friday at about 8:25 p.m. near Kennewick when an inattentive driver caused a three-car wreck, according to a written statement from the Washington State Patrol.

Tammy N. Hammitt-Jackson, 25, of Richland, was driving a 2008 Mazda MX3 eastbound on Highway 240 when she struck a 2013 Nissan Altima driven by Christopher C. Medina, 30, of Hermiston, then collided with a 2013 Toyota Camry driven by Maucimino Manuel, 48, of Kennewick. Medina and a passenger, Antoinette J. Candelaria, 30, of Kennewick, suffered injuries while a 1-year-old girl in their car did not.

The *Tri-City Herald* reported Trios Health, Kennewick, treated and released Medina and Candelaria.

Washington State Patrol reported Hammitt-Jackson and Manuel were not harmed and the cause of the crash was Hammitt-Jackson's "inattention" while driving. She received a citation for second-degree negligent driving.

In a separate, unrelated accident Britney L. Kelp, 24, of Milton-Freewater was driving west on Highway 12 about 11 miles east of Dayton when a deer just before 4 a.m. ran in front of her car. Washington State Patrol reported Kelp swerved to miss the animal and rolled the 1997 Toyota Camry.

An ambulance took her to Dayton General Hospital, where medical staff treated and released her.

Hermiston Post Office offering passport fair

East Oregonian

Hermiston residents looking to travel abroad can take advantage of the Hermiston Post Office's passport fair to apply for a passport Saturday.

The post office's regular passport hours are 9-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-4:30 p.m. on weekdays. Appointments are required and can be made by calling 541-564-9721.

On Saturday, June 24 the post office is offering passport appointments from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Spots are limited, so customers are urged to call 503-294-2350 to make an appointment as soon as possible.

Hermiston postmaster Scott Green said in a news release that he hopes having the special Saturday event will make it "quick and convenient" for customers who can't usually make it to the post office during their weekday hours. He recommends applying for a passport at least two months before international trips, and it is recommended applicants print and fill out the appli-

cation at usps.com/passport ahead of time (applications must be signed in front of the passport acceptance clerk, however).

Proof of U.S. citizenship and a copy of that proof are required. Options include a previously issued U.S. passport, certified birth certificate issued directly by the government (not the hospital), consular report of birth abroad, naturalization certificate or certificate of citizenship. A current government ID must also be presented, including naturalization certificate, valid driver's license, current government ID or current military ID.

The passport application also requires a recent passport photograph, which can be taken at the post office for a \$15 fee.

The cost of a passport book is \$135 for adults and \$105 for applicants under 16, and the cost of passport cards are \$55 for adults and \$40 for those under 16. Children under 16 must be accompanied by both parents when applying for a passport or passport card.

PENDLETON Cancer survivors rally for relay

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Carrie and Ray Larson of Pendleton uprooted their lives this past winter so Ray could battle prostate cancer.

The featured guest speakers at Saturday's Relay for Life of Umatilla County in Pendleton, the couple said the American Cancer Society made Ray's treatments possible.

Ray received his cancer diagnosis late last year, his wife told the modest crowd at Roy Raley Park, Pendleton, and on Christmas day they left their home for treatment in the Tri-Cities. They would not be back again for nine weeks.

Much of that, Carrie said, was because the harsh winter made driving back and forth impossible. She also said she has muscular dystrophy and worried how she would care for her husband.

That, Ray said, is where the American Cancer Society stepped in.

He said he needed medical treatments five days a week for nine straight weeks, and the ACS made sure they had a roof over their head the whole time. The last six weeks they spent at Riverton by Bonaventure: Retirement and Assisted Living Community, Richland. The Larsons said they soon plan to move there.

The money people give to the American Cancer Society, he said, helps people like himself and his wife.

Ray said his last treatment was Feb. 24, and tests a month later showed he was cancer free.

"I'm a survivor!" he declared.

Carol Preston of Pendleton headed up the event. For the first time, Preston said Pendleton and Hermiston joined efforts to create Relay for Life of Umatilla County. Holding it at Roy Raley from



Staff photo by Phil Wright
Cancer survivors and their caretakers turn the corner Saturday in Pendleton during the first lap of Relay for Life.



Staff photo by Phil Wright
Diana Nehila of Pendleton takes a moment to chat as she joins other cancer survivors Saturday in Pendleton for the first lap of Relay for Life. Nehila endured 13 surgeries and other treatment to beat cancer 30 years ago.

10 a.m. to 10 p.m. was in hopes of getting more people to see and participate in the event.

Diana Nehila, 73, of Pendleton, along with her daughter and caretaker, Keysha Nehila, 52, were among the participants. Diana said this was her fifth year of in the Relay, having survived cancer 30 years ago.

Diana, a greeter at the Pendleton Walmart, said she endured 13 surgeries, seven months of chemotherapy and five years of medication to beat the disease.

"This is a big event for me," she said.

Relay for Life raises money for cancer research, help for cancer patients, educating the public on cancer prevention and more. But the event does more than that, she said.

"When you find out you have cancer, you feel like you're the only person in the world who has it," Diana said.

Relay for Life, she said, offers the vital balm of community support.

Contact Phil Wright at pwright@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0833.

ATHENA Hodaka Days revs up this week

By TAMMY MALGESINI
East Oregonian

Do you have the mettle to become a Hodaka Club Iron Man?

Participate or volunteer during at least five activities during Hodaka Days and you can earn an Iron Man patch. Previous Iron Man participants can get a 2017 rocker patch.

It's been 53 years since Hodaka trail bikes and motorcycles were manufactured in Athena. However, hundreds of enthusiasts make an annual pilgrimage to Eastern Oregon for Hodaka Days. Athena City Park serves as celebration central during the Thursday through Sunday event. In addition, activities are held in multiple venues in Athena and Weston.

The event, which also includes activities for non-Hodaka riders, kicks off Thursday from 2-4 p.m. with the Umatilla County TT and Poker Run. The 50-mile ride features back roads of Eastern Oregon. It starts at Suzie's Handi Mart in Weston. The registration fee is \$25 or \$20 for club members.

Friday activities include the 10th annual Bad Rock Reunion Trail Ride from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. It departs from downtown Weston. The registration fee is \$25 or \$20 for club



File photo
Hodaka enthusiasts converge on Athena City Park this weekend for Hodaka Days.

members. The Swap Meet and Hodaka Club Tent will be open from noon to 4:30 p.m. at the park. The evening ice cream social (from 6:30-9 p.m. at the Swanson residence, 424 E. College St., Athena) includes an opportunity to get an up-close look at rare Hodakas and memorabilia.

Saturday offers a full day of fun, including breakfast (6:30-10 a.m.), swap meet (9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), parade (9-10 a.m.), car show (10 a.m. to 3 p.m.), bike show (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.), and silent auction/sale (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.).

The banquet dinner is Saturday at 6:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Hall, Fifth and College streets, Athena. The awards presentation, raffle and auction follows from 7:30-9 p.m. Dinner tickets, which are \$12,

must be purchased in advance.

A special raffle will benefit Athena's Gem Theater restoration project. Up for grabs is a custom bike trailer. Tickets are \$5 each and are available at the Hodaka Club Tent or the banquet. The winner doesn't have to be present.

The event concludes with Sunday's Open Track Time from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Diamond Eye Track. Amateurs and experts are welcome. The cost is \$25 or \$20 for Hodaka members.

For more information, including a full schedule and locations, visit www.hodakadays.org.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4539

Free Medicare seminar is this Thursday

HERMISTON — An informational seminar about Medicare is being offered by the Simmons Insurance Group.

The free event is Thursday at 4 p.m. in Room 133 at Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center, 975 S.E. Columbia Drive, Hermiston. The session is free and open to the public. In addition to the presentation, there will be a Q&A session.

The seminar is designed to help individuals as they transition to Medicare, to understand the different parts of the program and what is covered by Medicare.

Transitioning to Medicare, said Josh Goller, health insurance manager at Simmons Insurance Group, has the potential to cause stress for some people. Goller and his associates look forward to providing the service to help educate people.

"With good planning in addition to a basic understanding of the program, this significant event for many people can be something to be embraced rather than feared," Goller said.

For more information, contact Goller at 541-567-6367 or jgoller@simmons-insurance.com or visit www.simmons-insurance.com.

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\$25 per Person •

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Seating is limited
Call Dave for info and tickets
541.567.8774

Purple Ridge Lavender Festival

June 24th - 9am to 5pm
2891 Bridge Road, Hermiston

Magic in the fields!

Come enjoy the backdrop of beautiful blooming lavender and a masterful quilt expo. Listen to live music as you stroll through the fields of lavender. Experts are encouraged to don their favorite storybook consumes and receive \$2 off admission!

General admission: \$10 • Including beer tasting: \$12

Proceeds go to Agape House and Martha's House