

Woman injured in collision with semi

East Oregonian

A woman driving a pickup was injured in a collision with a semi truck near the intersection of Diagonal Road and East Punkin Center around 4 p.m. Wednesday.

The extent of the driver's injuries weren't immediately available, but Fire Chief Scott Stanton said she was treated at the scene before being taken to Good Shepherd Hospital for further care. The driver of the semi declined medical attention.

The front of the gold Toyota Tundra was smashed and it was resting next to a fence on the eastbound side of the road, facing the wrong way. The semi was smashed above the front wheel on the left side of the vehicle, and debris littered the roadway.

Diagonal Road was blocked, and drivers were rerouted through Baxter Road. State Trooper Jerrad Little said he did not know how the crash occurred, but he thought the semi truck was driving west and the pickup truck was driving east.



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan
UCFD Battalion Chief J.W. Roberts and Chief Scott Stanton assist after a Toyota Tundra collided with a semi at Diagonal Road. The driver of the truck was taken to the hospital with injuries.

Fireworks spark two blazes in Pendleton

East Oregonian

Fireworks caused back-to-back blazes in Pendleton in the hour after the Fourth of July ended.

Pendleton Fire Chief Mike Ciraulo also said both sites had evidence of illegal fireworks.

The city fire department responded Wednesday at 12:03 a.m. to a fire at Northwest Furnish Avenue and 12th Street. Flames fully engulfed a large garbage can, Ciraulo said, and had spread to the side of a detached garage.

After extinguishing the flames, Ciraulo said the investigation showed improperly disposed of fireworks were the cause. He estimated the garage sustained damage in the thousands of dollars. He also said the investigation found remains of mortars from illegal fireworks.

Ciraulo said the occupants claimed they put the used fireworks in water in the container and went to bed

about two hours earlier. He said they denied setting off the illegal pyrotechnics.

While the crew wrapped up at the home, they got a call at 12:40 a.m. for a brush fire with plenty of fuel at 701 S.W. 15th St. The burn threatened two houses at Southwest Hailey Avenue and 15th Street.

With firefighters still at the ready, Ciraulo said "we were able to jump on that right away."

An aerial firework was the cause, he said, and the flames never reached structures.

The Fourth of July holiday weekend was busy for the Umatilla County Fire District in Hermiston, with about six more calls throughout the weekend than last year.

Only one fire, on Northeast Misty Drive, was started by fireworks, according to the fire department. The fire melted the vinyl siding on a portion of the home's exterior, and one person was cited.

PENDLETON

New superintendent to take on human resources duties

East Oregonian

Pendleton School District Superintendent Chris Fritsch has only been on the job for one day, but he may have already taken on more responsibility.

Fritsch said Wednesday he will assume human resource duties after budget cuts required the district to eliminate its human resources director position.

Brad Bixler, who held the job during the 2016-

2017 school year, was one of several employees laid off by a district-wide reduction in staff.

The former Highland Hills Elementary School principal and Pendleton High School principal was hired to cover the human resources duties left behind by former Assistant Superintendent Tricia Mooney, who took a similar position with the Hermiston School District.

Following the layoff,

Fritsch said Bixler found a similar position in the North Bend School District.

With Bixler and Mooney gone, Fritsch said the district's tentative plans are focused on directing its funds toward the classroom rather than finding a replacement.

At his previous job as the assistant superintendent for the Longview School District in Washington, Fritsch said he had six years of human resources

experience.

Fritsch said he and other district staff members will cover Bixler's human resources duties.

As Fritsch settles in as the district's new superintendent, he plans to meet with Michelle Jones, director of business services, and Matt Yoshioka, director of curriculum, instruction and assessment, to see how budget cuts will affect the district going forward.

Umatilla County approves moves for school mental health

By PHIL WRIGHT

East Oregonian

Umatilla County Board of Commissioners approved a program Wednesday to provide mental health workers for the Hermiston School District. The program, however, is contingent upon funding from the Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Initiative.

Amy Ashton-Williams, the county's human services director, in a memo to commissioners explained her department has been negotiating with GOBHI to provide the Hermiston School District's mental health program.

"We are currently working out the exact dollar amount that GOBHI will fund for this program," according to her memo, "knowing it will be a minimum of \$300,000."

The memo stated Lifeways provided the services for the past five years while the school district voiced "concerns about the level of care provided and the consistency of such care."

The district wants a program that "emulates the care and consistency" of the county's Community Access for Resource Effectiveness program.

The \$300,000 would pay for a mental health services program manager with an

annual salary and benefits of \$93,000 and three mental health associates, with annual salary and benefits of \$68,000-\$74,000. Human services also wants GOBHI to provide another \$135,000 to buy three vehicles and pay for an additional substance abuse counselor who would split time between the Hermiston School District and county human services.

The county does not plan to advertise the openings until GOBHI provides the funding. Jennifer Blake, the county's human resources manager, told commissioners during the public meeting Wednesday in Pendleton the county incurs

no cost for the program.

Commissioners Larry Givens and Bill Elfering voted in favor of the proposal. Commissioner George Murdock is out of town.

The county also approved the purchase of a 2001 paint truck for \$8,500 for the road department. County public works director Tom Fellows told the board his department pays \$6,000-\$10,000 a year to use Morrow County's truck. Buying the used vehicle from the state's surplus would save the county money in the long run, he said, and the truck also comes with \$10,000 worth of replacement parts and paint equipment.

Capps sells radio stations to La Grande media group

East Oregonian

Capps Broadcast Group announced Wednesday that its six radio stations in Pendleton and Walla Walla will be sold to Elkhorn Media Group of La Grande.

Although Capps is being purchased by an outside company, Elkhorn owner Randy McKone said he has an insider's perspective on the media markets, having managed Capps' stations for more than two decades.

"Same face, it's just a changing of the guard," he said.


McKone, who already owns radio stations in La Grande, Baker City and John Day, didn't anticipate making any changes to the stations or their staff.

"Most of the staff are folks that I brought in or worked with," he said.

McKone will assume management over Capps on Aug. 1, pending Federal Communications Commission approval.

Capps stations are split between Pendleton and Walla Walla, although all can be heard in Pendleton. KUMA, a news and talk radio station, and KTIX, an ESPN Radio affiliate, are both based at 2003 N.W. 56th Drive, near the Pendleton airport.

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SECOND PRIZE – \$312 value

- Three Premium Grandstand concert tickets (Section G, Row C)

THIRD PRIZE – \$312 value

- Three Premium Grandstand concert tickets (Section G, Row D)

Deadline for entry: Monday, July 10 at 12 noon. Winners will be drawn July 10 at 1 p.m. and contacted that day. Winners will be announced on July 11 in the East Oregonian and on the EO's Facebook page.

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No purchase required. One entry per person. Sweepstakes open to residents of Oregon and Washington age 21+ only. Complete rules can be found at www.eastoregonian.com/eo/sweepstakesrules.

EAST OREGONIAN

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