

HERMISTON

Ranch & Home delays opening

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

Retailer Ranch & Home no longer expects to meet a Jan. 1 deadline for opening, but the Hermiston city council will discuss a recommendation Monday to still offer \$107,800 in incentives if the store opens its doors by a new deadline of March 1, 2018.

In January the council approved a deal with the outdoor lifestyle retailer, which already has locations in the Tri-Cities and Milton-Freewater, to reimburse the company for its building permit, system development charges and \$10,000 of water and sewer extensions — a package worth an estimated \$107,800 — if it gained its occupancy permit by Jan. 1, 2018.

The city would also reimburse the company \$185,000 for road improvements on the northeast side of the property if the company convinced a grocery store of at least 25,000 square feet to build on the property by Oct. 1, 2018. Both incentives would be reduced by 10 percent each month the company did not meet the deadline, for up to six months.

City Manager Byron Smith announced at the Oct. 9 city council meeting that he had met with Ranch & Home owner George Dress, who told him that problems in getting subcontractors had slowed the construction process and the



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Ranch & Home is currently under construction on Highway 395 south of Hermiston.

store would likely not open until February or March. A memo to the city council in the Oct. 23 agenda packet also stated that Ranch & Home was working on “a couple of options” for trying to recruit a grocery store but that things have been “progressing slowly.”

The memo from Smith recommends that the council amend the agreement with Ranch & Home to move the deadline for occupancy to March 1, 2018 and the deadline for recruiting a grocery store to

Oct. 1, 2019.

Ranch & Home is currently under construction on south Highway 395 next to Hermiston Foods.

The council will discuss amending the agreement during its meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday at city hall, 180 NE Second St. in Hermiston.

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

Lawyer appeals triple murder conviction for Umatilla man

By **KRISTIN M. KRAEMER**
Tri-City Herald

Jurors who convicted a Umatilla man in the execution-style killing of three people didn't have a clear picture of what happened in that rural Benton County cornfield, an appellate lawyer said Thursday.

There was no DNA evidence, no shoe or finger prints, nothing to prove that Francisco J. Resendez Miranda was responsible for shooting the Pasco friends or that he was even there in August 2014.

What evidence was found was never connected to a specific person. Attorney Tanesha La Trelle Canzater called them “Individuals A, B and C.”

So when it was time for the jury to deliberate after a three-week trial, they should have been allowed to consider an alternative charge for Resendez Miranda.

“The evidence was such that we don't know what happened on the farm. We don't have eyewitnesses in the case,” Canzater told three state Court of Appeals judges at hearing in Walla Walla.

Resendez Miranda was convicted of three counts of

aggravated first-degree murder. His new lawyer argued that jurors should have had the option of second-degree murder.

Canzater, a Bellingham attorney representing Resendez Miranda on his appeal, and Benton County Prosecutor Andy Miller argued the case during a hearing on the Walla Walla University campus in College Place.

The court, which is based in Spokane, went on the road for the afternoon to hear arguments in four cases from southeastern Washington.

Chief Judge George B. Fearing of the Tri-Cities said they picked the site because it is his alma mater.

Canzater is asking the court to reverse Resendez Miranda's conviction and grant him a new trial in Benton County Superior Court.

Fearing and fellow judges, Laurel Siddoway and Rebecca L. Pennell, did not rule Thursday. The court typically takes a few months to issue a written opinion.

Resendez Miranda, now 26, did not attend the hearing. He was about three miles away at the Washington State Penitentiary, where he's serving a mandatory life sentence.



Resendez Miranda

BRIEFLY

Hermiston man injured in rollover near Port of Morrow

BOARDMAN — A Hermiston man was taken to the hospital after a rollover crash near the Port of Morrow on Wednesday.

According to an Oregon State trooper, Kasey Pankey, 26, was driving westbound on I-84 when he took his eyes off the roadway. When he looked back at the road, he saw he was approaching a vehicle ahead of him quickly. The driver over-corrected, and the vehicle rolled several times into the median and across the highway, coming to rest on the eastbound shoulder.

Pankey was transported to Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston, and the vehicle, a gray Ford Taurus, was towed.

Trooper Mitchell Goldman, who responded to the crash, said the driver said he was not on his cell phone, but had been reaching for a drink. Goldman said other factors may have been at play, such as fatigue.

Walden backs Hermiston drug take back day

HERMISTON — Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, is promoting a prescription drug take back event at the Hermiston Police Department Oct. 28.

The event is a part of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, “which gives people across the country the opportunity to help address opioid abuse in their communities,” a Walden press release states.

“The DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day provides a safe, convenient, and responsible way to dispose of excess prescription drugs, while also providing an opportunity to raise awareness of the opioid crisis and to educate our friends, family members, and neighbors about the potential for abuse of medications,” Walden said. “Here in Oregon, more people died last year from drug overdoses than from car accidents. I hope you'll join me on this Take Back Day as we work together to make our communities safer.”

Walden is the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which will be holding a hearing on opioid abuse in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday.

Umatilla County's take back day will be on Oct. 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Hermiston Police Department, 330 S. First St.

Inaugural leadership class includes Umatilla County men

PENDLETON — Bob Waldher of Athena, Sam Taylor of Echo and Tom Demianew of Pendleton will participate in the inaugural class for the REAL (Resource Education & Ag Leadership) Oregon program.

The Umatilla County men are among 30 individuals chosen from across the state. They were selected from a large pool of applicants and reflect a diversity of resource producers, agribusinesses, advocacy organizations and government agencies.

Bill Buhrig, with Simplot Food Group and REAL Oregon board chair, said the response to the program has been overwhelming. He said the more than 30 applicants exceeded expectations and is a good indicator that the program is long overdue. Oregon, Buhrig said, is modeling its program after a similar program in Idaho.

REAL Oregon is a collaboration of industry and other groups throughout the state that have recognized the importance of developing and grooming natural resource leaders now and in the future. In addition to networking opportunities and learning more about the state, the program will bring current and future leaders together from agriculture, fishing and forestry sectors in a series of five statewide sessions starting in November.

Class 1 includes 10 individuals directly involved in production agriculture, three in timber production and forestry, 11 from agribusinesses or natural resource organizations and six from local, state and federal agencies. The inaugural class will conclude in March 2018 and recruitment for Class 2 will be underway in the coming months. For more information, visit www.realoregon.net.



Demianew



Waldher



Taylor

Dan Primus to address Hermiston chamber

HERMISTON — Dan Primus, Umatilla County district attorney, will talk about his work in holding criminals accountable for their actions during the upcoming Hermiston Chamber of Commerce B2B Luncheon.

Community members, businesses and organizations are invited to attend Tuesday, Oct. 24 at 11:45 a.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The cost for the no-host lunch, which is catered by Sundown Bar & Grill, is \$12 for



Primus

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