

EAST OREGONIAN

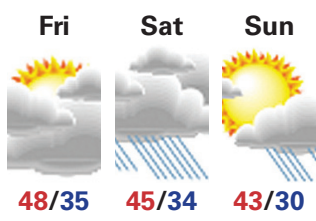
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2017

142nd Year, No. 32

WINNER OF THE 2017 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

One dollar

Weekend Weather



PENDLETON Police say theft suspect failed to drop pistol

Condition of man that
was shot is unknown

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

Pendleton police reported an officer shot a theft suspect Wednesday night near Walmart after he fled a confrontation and did not drop a pistol.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts said an ambulance took the male victim to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, where he underwent surgery and was flown to Oregon Health & Science University, Portland, for further treatment. No officers were injured and the condition of the man is unknown.

Roberts did not identify the victim nor the officer who shot the man. The officer is on an automatic 72-hour leave. Roberts said Oregon State Police would handle the investigation.

The shooting occurred around 8:45 p.m. near the busy intersection of Southwest 20th Street and Court Avenue in Pendleton. In a written statement Thursday morning, Roberts said officers responded to Walmart for a theft in progress. Loss prevention employees described the suspect to officers. Police confronted him near the front of the store, according to the statement, and he "failed to comply with verbal commands."

The man took off running through the parking lot. Officers caught up to him on Southwest 20th Street. Roberts said the officers saw a dark colored pistol, and the officer fired when the suspect failed to drop it. Roberts did not identify the type of pistol.

Pendleton police, Umatilla County sheriff's deputies and Oregon State Police troopers all responded to the scene, along with Pendleton ambulances. Police blocked access to Southwest 20th

See SHOOTING/8A

WESTON



Senior planner Nick Foster, with Kittelson & Associates Inc. of Boise, third from right, talks with Weston Mayor Jennifer Spurgeon, second from left, while doing a walking tour of the area around Athena-Weston Middle School on Thursday in Weston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Schools hope to step-up street safety

District looks to improve sidewalks, crosswalks for students

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

As the sun crept over the Blue Mountains, students came at Weston Middle School from all sides.

During the usual morning rush before school starts, students Thursday trekked down the steep decline of Wallace Street to access the school from its south side. Other kids hoofed it from the north through Broad Street, vying for space with cars and buses as they all made their way to the set of concrete stairs that lead to the main entrance.

The young pedestrians spend most of their walk to school in the street, not necessarily because they want to, but due to the fact that there isn't another option.

A group of officials from the city of Weston, the Athena-Weston School District, and a consulting



Student exit school buses in front of Athena-Weston Middle School on Thursday in Weston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

firm watched foot traffic patterns early Thursday morning in an effort to figure out a way to increase pedestrian safety at a school surrounded by few sidewalks.

Over a two-day period the group held a joint city council-school

board meeting, a walking tour of the middle school and a series of open houses on the topic.

The events rose out of a transportation plan Weston adopted a few years ago. According to Nick Foster, a senior planner with transportation

consultant Kittelson & Associates, Weston's poor pedestrian access was one of the top issues raised by the community during the planning process. When Weston received a grant to focus on the middle school, the city rehired Kittelson.

The new set of plans comes as the school district carries out capital improvement projects associated with an \$8 million bond. That bond has already spurred the school district to consider rearranging the school bus and car drop-off zones.

"We don't want to slow down the bond," said Jennifer Spurgeon, the mayor of Weston and the vice-chair of the Athena-Weston School Board. "That's why this is rapid response."

The city and school district will spend the next few months studying the issue before seeing what they can fix quickly and what would need to be taken care of later through additional dollars.

Weston fifth grade teacher Jackie Culham and middle school principal Ann Vescio pointed to Wallace

See SCHOOL/8A

HERMISTON

Farm Fair seminars highlight latest research, trends

By GEORGE PLAVEN
East Oregonian



Guests mingle with vendors during the Hermiston Farm Fair on Thursday at EOTEC in Hermiston. Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Heading into its second year at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center, the Hermiston Farm Fair continues to add new lectures and seminars highlighting previously overlooked aspects of Columbia Basin agriculture.

Historically speaking, the Farm Fair has focused on the latest and greatest developments in potato production — the signature crop supported by Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

The 44th annual event, however, introduced a number of new presentations Thursday covering topics such as organic crops, precision irrigation and pollinators.

Phil Hamm, station director at HAREC, said he did not know the exact attendance, but estimated it was in the hundreds.

"What we're trying to do is (reach) as many of our stakeholders as possible in our region," Hamm said.

Last year's move to EOTEC from the Hermiston Conference Center has certainly helped, Hamm said, providing a larger venue

See FARMING/8A



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