

SCHOOL: Most Pilot Rock students come by bus or car

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Street as one of their main concerns. Despite the lack of sidewalks, the steeply graded road is heavily traveled by students looking to enter the cafeteria for breakfast service, a journey made more treacherous during the winter.

The educators said staff members know to drive slowly down the street, but Vescio said she would also like to see more crosswalks on both sides of the school. One of the existing crosswalks is obscured by a retaining wall, making it difficult for drivers to see students trying to cross the street.

Spurgeon said these issues come with the territory of trying to modernize a historic school that started its life as a teaching college.

In order to install sidewalks and crosswalks, city and school officials will have to contend with old right-of-ways and the steep terrain of the surrounding area.

"It's not an ideal situation in this hilly area that we live in," he said.

Foster said Kittelson will return to Weston in the spring with its recommendations.

Weston is like many small towns in Eastern Oregon

where sidewalks tend to peter out once the downtown area gives way to residential neighborhoods.

Echo School District Superintendent Raymon Smith said the city has done a good job of surrounding Echo School with sidewalks. The school's pedestrian issues are focused at its student parking lot across from its Rieth Road entrance.

Without a crosswalk, Smith said most students elect to jaywalk, a problem that's exacerbated further when parents drop off their kids in the middle of the street in front of the entrance. Smith said he is talking with the city and Umatilla County about installing a crosswalk at the entrance.

Although there are not many sidewalks beyond Highway 395 in Pilot Rock, Superintendent Steve Steniak said there aren't many student pedestrian problems in the city because not many students walk to school. Pilot Rock school buses will ferry children to school from as close as a half mile away.

As a result, Steniak said, most young Pilot Rockers come by bus or car.

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SHOOTING: Witnesses said they heard multiple shots

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Street. Medical supplies remained in the middle of the street just north of the access road to Taco Bell and the nearby Walmart on the west side and the parking lot of Walgreens on the east.

Monte Ludington, deputy district attorney, went to the scene in place of District Attorney Dan Primus, who is at the Oregon District Attorneys Association conference in Glendon Beach. Primus has made it a point to respond in person or send staff to officer-involved shootings in the county.

Witnesses said they heard multiple shots, perhaps as many as seven or eight, but police haven't released further details.

Roberts said Thursday morning that police learn to shoot until they neutralize the threat. Contrary to movie portrayals of gunfire, he said, one bullet does not send a body flying.

Roberts also addressed statements on social media criticizing police for shooting the suspect as he ran.

"I'm not saying that was the circumstances here," he stressed, but if it were, case law could be on the side of police.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 1985 in



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Crime-scene tape wraps around a light pole Wednesday night in Pendleton on the corner of Southwest Court Avenue and 20th Street near the site of an officer-involved shooting.

the case of Tennessee v. Garner found police can use deadly force to stop a fleeing suspect if they believe the person poses a serious threat of death or injury to others. Roberts said evidence at the scene backed up what officers saw.

Roberts said any more information would come from the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office. Primus did not return a call Thursday.

The last officer-involved shooting in Pendleton was in 2012.



Staff photo by E.J. Harris
Hank Stahl, with Stahl Farms, and Cyd Bothum, with Hermiston Foods, shoot baskets at the Simplot booth at the Hermiston Farm Fair on Thursday at EOTEC.

FARMING: Local organic production is on the rise

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to bring in more presenters and hold more sessions. This year's trade show featured 48 different vendors, including multiple farm suppliers, Energy Trust of Oregon and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency.

Attendees filled the room for a morning seminar on pollinators, which discussed the importance of bees and bee habitat in agricultural systems. Andony Melathopoulos, with OSU's Pollinator Health Extension Program, said Oregon is home to more species of bees than there are east of the Mississippi River.

"It's a hotbed of diversity," Melathopoulos said. "People are just amazed by them."

Melathopoulos went on to explain how farmers can treat their crops for weeds and pests while taking care not to harm pollinators. He ran through a litany of available products, demonstrating how to properly read labels and determine if and when a grower should apply certain chemicals in the field.

"Without a doubt, pollination is very important for the production of many crops," Melathopoulos said. "I hope people came out of this session knowing pest control is possible and compatible with pollinators."

For the first time, the Hermiston Farm Fair also organized a seminar dedicated specifically to growing organic crops. It takes three years before a farm can be certified organic, and growers must adapt to a very strict set of approved standards.

Local organic production is on the rise, said Alexandra Stone, a former organic farmer and cropping system specialist for OSU. In eastern Washington, Stone said organic sales grew sixfold at the farm gate between 2005 and 2015, from \$100 million to \$600 million.

"There's already a lot of organic production out here," she said.

Yet demand for organics

is still outpacing production in the U.S., with imports exceeding exports by \$1.1 billion, Stone said. With that in mind, she led a survey among 20 farmers in the room to determine what they want and need from the university to tap into the organic marketplace.

Of those polled, 79 percent said they expect demand for organics will continue to increase, yet 40 percent said they did not have the tools to control pests and disease. The vast majority of farmers said they would benefit from some kind of technical training through OSU, with more than half favoring a hybrid online undergraduate and professional development certificate program.

Later in the afternoon, Clinton Shock with the OSU Malheur Experiment Station detailed how precision irrigation can optimize yields and save farmers money, all while protecting the environment.

"We really want high and stable production of horticulture and crops," Shock said. "Precision irrigation is really the key."

Shock said researchers are working to determine a set of criteria known as the soil-water tension for different crops, which essentially describes the amount of energy a plant must expend to suck up water in the ground. If the tension is too high, a plant may shut down. If the tension is too low, water may leach away nutrients, leading to waste.

But if a grower knows the soil property, Shock said they can find the sweet spot. That means healthier crops for less money. Plus, as a side benefit, he said the more efficiently nitrogen is used, the more it protects groundwater quality.

"A lot of the public thinks growers are not innovative, or stuck in the mud," Shock said. "That just isn't so."

The Hermiston Farm Fair will continue Friday at 8 a.m. at EOTEC before coming to a close at noon.

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