

# Cities, counties gear up for winter roads

Salt rock to be used for first time in Eastern Oregon

By JADE MCDOWELL  
East Oregonian

As winter officially begins, cities and counties are gearing up for snow.

Hermiston's snow removal strategy is broken up into three phases covering 180 lane miles, according to information from the city's street department.

During phase one, crews clear and maintain main thoroughfares through the city such as Highway 395 and Highway 207. During phase two they prioritize hills, downtown commercial streets, municipal buildings and the airport, in addition to clearing public parking lots late at night or early in the morning when there are few cars parked there. During phase three equipment is sent out to various residential neighborhoods and rotates through the streets in a counterclockwise direction, taking a break to re-clear main thoroughfares if needed.

"It is usually possible to plow all the streets utilizing the city's limited staff and equipment within a couple of days," the city's snow-removal plan states. "If we get hit with a second storm and have to return to phase one streets, phase three operation stops until we get caught up again. We do try to pick up where we left off."

It is against Hermiston's city ordinance to pile snow removed from sidewalks and driveways onto the street, and the city asks that people pile the snow on their lawns instead.

"Throwing the snow from your driveway or sidewalk into the street creates a situation where when our plowing operation comes by we plow it back into your driveway area creating a larger amount for you to clear again out of your driveway," the city wrote.

It can also obstruct lines of sight for drivers, and block drain inlets and



The HART (Hermiston Area Regional Transit) bus run by Kayak Public Transit drives down its route on West Moore Avenue last January in Hermiston.

gutters where melted snow is meant to drain. Parking in driveways or parking lots instead of the street during a snowstorm is also appreciated, as it makes it easier for plows to navigate.

Umatilla County Public Works Department is paying \$8,500 for a 30-year-old snow plow from the state of Oregon surplus vehicle pool. The county board of commissioners approved the purchase Wednesday.

The four-wheel drive truck weighs about 50,000 pounds and has a sander, an 11-foot plow on the front and a wing plow. The county has one of these plows already, and it allows a driver to clear a road in one pass.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has new equipment and tools to take on the winter, including using salt in Eastern Oregon.

ODOT in a written statement reported it has five new plows that tow special trailers to help clear two full lanes of road at the same time.

Crews will run the new trucks on about 200 miles of Interstate 84 between Boardman and the Idaho border, on Interstate 82 south of Umatilla and on some secondary highway sections.

The special trailer has

a 26-foot retractable plow blade and turning wheels, according to ODOT, that can swing the unit into the travel lane on the right side of the truck. That blade, plus the 12-foot-wide blade on the front of the plow, means the tow plow can do the work of two regular plows.

The tow plows also have hoppers that can disperse salt or sanding rock.

Craig Romine, ODOT's Meacham coordinator, said in a written statement the new plows "will free up our rigs to assist others in Pendleton and La Grande, or to put more focus on old Highway 30 with the bus routes."

The transportation department also boosted the number of its dual-wing plows from one to six for use along Eastern Oregon multi-lane freeways. Those vehicles can clear two freeway lanes in one pass and move snow off to the left side of the roadway.

The dual-wing plows are ideal for freeways that have median space and no center concrete barrier, according to ODOT, as well as areas with high winds and drifting snow, such as Ladd Canyon east of La Grande.

The department also reported expanding its rock salt pilot project.

The state approved using the salt for sections of I-84 between the Idaho border and Boardman, I-82, plus other Eastern Oregon routes, as well as expanding its use on about 100 miles of I-5 from the Siskiyou Pass to just north of Canyonville. The state also might use rock salt in other areas that have severe weather conditions.

ODOT advised motorists to drive according to the conditions and stay several car lengths behind winter maintenance vehicles. The road in front of the plow is going to be in worse condition, so wait until the plow pulls over to pass. And plows can have blades on the right and left sides of the truck, so drivers should use caution when passing a plow and never pass on the right.

ODOT also recommends washing vehicles after driving on wintry roads to remove ice and possible deicer or salt residue.

For updated information on highway work and current travel information throughout Oregon, visit [www.tripcheck.com](http://www.tripcheck.com) or call the Oregon road report at 511 or 1-800-977-6368.

East Oregonian reporter Phil Wright contributed to this story.

# Stanfield begins internal search for new superintendent

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN  
East Oregonian

The Stanfield School Board determined at a special meeting Wednesday that the board will begin an internal search for a new superintendent, which will last until Jan. 6.

At that point, they will open the search to a wider pool of candidates.

The district is seeking a superintendent to take over for current officeholder Shelley Liscom, who announced at last week's school board meeting that she would resign June 15, 2018.

Liscom, who is in her fourth year as Stanfield's superintendent, cited incompatibility with the board as her reason for leaving.

Liscom also served

as Stanfield Elementary School's principal. Though they did not make an official decision, board members said they want to split the position into two separate jobs. They have not yet begun a search for the principal position.



Liscom

Currently, Stanfield Elementary's assistant principal Lacey Sharp has a restrictive administrator's license and will be able to apply for a regular administrative license in April.

Stanfield Secondary School Principal Beth Burton said if the board wanted to hire internally for the principal position, the process would be to dissolve the assistant principal post and then open the principal position to internal staff only. At that point, she said, Sharp could apply for the position.

## HERMISTON

# Local woman arrested for theft of services

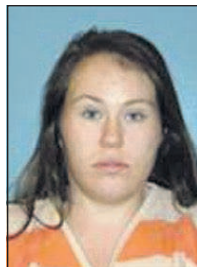
East Oregonian

Hermiston Police arrested a local woman for theft of services at two local businesses on Wednesday.

Officers arrested Lynzee Crane, 20, for negatively impacting two local businesses. According to a press release, Crane went

into the Styling Arena on Hermiston Avenue to get her hair colored, and then said she needed to retrieve money from her vehicle to pay for the \$100 service. Crane then went outside

and did not return. Shortly after, Hermiston Police were called by Stockman's Steakhouse on North First Street. Employees said Crane had left the restaurant without paying for \$53 worth of food. She used a story similar to the one at the salon and fled.



Lynzee Crane

Officers found Crane at a residence in Umatilla, charged her with two counts of theft, and lodged her in the Umatilla County Jail. Crane had charges from earlier this year for identity theft and fraudulent use of a credit card.

# POLITICS: Republican candidates still dominate in Eastern Oregon

Continued from 1A

back to the state with their preferred affiliation, voters were automatically designated non-affiliated.

Since the law was implemented in 2016, 91 percent of the 8,230 Umatilla County voters who were enrolled through "motor voter" were automatically registered as non-affiliated.

That helped account for the jump of non-affiliated voters from 8,424 in October 2015 to 13,141 a year later. But non-affiliated voters had already risen by 22 percent between 2001 and 2015. Registration in third parties — Libertarian, Constitution, Pacific Green, Working Families, Progressive and other smaller parties — has also seen steady growth since the turn of the century.

The ranks of the non-affiliated are growing, not just through inaction during the registration process, but through a conscious choice to opt out of the two-party system.

On Tuesday morning, the students of Brian Johnson's government class at Pendleton High School voted.

By a hand count, only six of the 25 or so seniors in Johnson's class were registered or planned to register with a party.

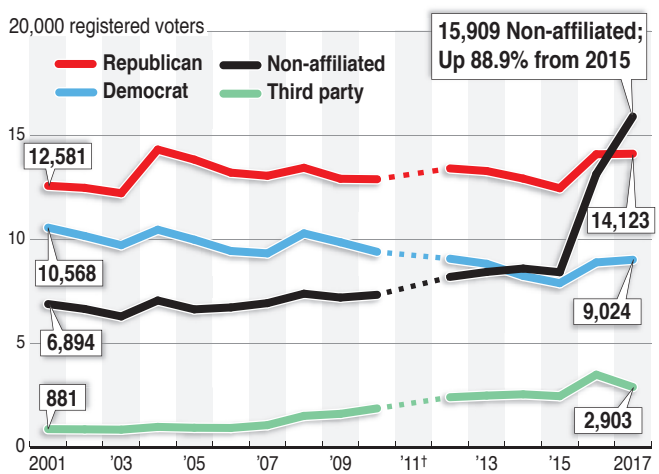
Jessica Daggett said her decision to remain non-affiliated was to give herself more time to familiarize herself with politics before committing herself to a party.

Others had already formed a political identity, but still felt uncomfortable joining the GOP-Democrat dichotomy.

Journey Hahn said she was left of the Democratic Party, but felt like supporting smaller parties like Working Families or Pacific Green was a waste of a vote.

Evan Miller considered himself conservative, but

## Umatilla County party affiliation



NOTE: Voter data taken from October of each year except 2006, which is from November due to online data unavailability. † Data unavailable due to redistricting.

Source: Oregon Secretary of State Antonio Sierra and Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

sometimes disagreed with the Republican Party's positions and remained unaffiliated.

Coming from a family with parents with different political ideologies, Stanton Schmitz said he saw the extremity in both political parties and wanted to stay out of it.

Seth Wood was one of the few students who said he was joining a political party. Raised in a Republican household, Wood said he was joining the GOP but in an age where technology and culture were changing all the time, political identity was more fluid than it was in the past. "Our generation is moving away from labels," Marin Kennedy said.

Kim Puzey has been without a label for quite some time.

The executive director of the Port of Umatilla said he was non-affiliated for 20 years.

Puzey used his non-affiliated status to support candidates from both parties. He supported the 2008 presidential campaign of Bill Richardson, the former Democratic governor of New Mexico, and the 2012 campaign of Jon Huntsman,

the former Republican governor of Utah.

Puzey's top issue when evaluating candidates for office is their support for investing in public infrastructure, akin to the projects that were a part of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal or Dwight Eisenhower's interstate highway initiative.

The issue of infrastructure was so strong for Puzey that he switched his registration to Democratic in the 2016 primary election so he could vote for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. Puzey said he was drawn to Sanders' \$1 trillion infrastructure plan.

President Donald Trump's call for an infrastructure bill in the wake of the train derailment in DuPont, Washington, was one of the first times Puzey agreed with the current president.

While Puzey may have left the non-affiliated ranks, he didn't seem surprised that people were flocking to it.

With increasing polarization in Washington, D.C., and in Salem, Puzey said there's a "degree of disenchantment" with both parties.

Despite the growing number of non-affiliated



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Pendleton senior Stanton Schmitz talks about how his political views were influenced growing up with parents that had differing political philosophies.

voters, Republicans still dominate Eastern Oregon.

Trump won the county with 17,059 total votes, a number that's hard to reach without the support of many non-affiliated voters.

Umatilla County's delegation to the Oregon Legislature — Reps. Greg Smith, Greg Barreto and Sen. Bill Hansell — are all Republicans. During the last election cycle, all three ran without Democratic

opposition.

Even with the county's conservative bent, the leaders of both local parties acknowledge the rise of non-affiliated voters.

Whether it's because of dissatisfaction with the GOP's association with the controversial Trump or the "finagling" the Democratic National Committee did during the primary between Sanders and Hillary Clinton, modern voters don't have

a lot of affinity for either party.

Larry B. Moore, the chairman of the Umatilla County Republican Party, said local voter outreach efforts now include targeting non-affiliated voters along with Republicans.

Mark Petersen, the chairman of the Umatilla County Democratic Party, said non-affiliated millennials tend to be Sanders supporters. As Democrats try to unseat U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, and protect incumbent Gov. Kate Brown, it's up to party members to tell the non-affiliated about Democratic candidates and how they align with their views.

As the country continues to polarize, Moore doesn't anticipate the trend toward non-affiliation stopping anytime soon.

"Once you go down that road, it's hard to come back," he said.

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