



Photo contributed by Oregon State Police

The passenger in this pickup died Wednesday on Highway 74 north of Lexington.

Man killed in crash near Lexington

East Oregonian

LEXINGTON — Joshua Kenneth Herrig of Heppner died Wednesday in a car crash near Lexington.

Oregon State Police reported troopers and other emergency personnel at about 5:30 p.m. responded

to the report of a single-vehicle crash on Highway 74 near milepost 31, just north of Lexington.

The preliminary investigation revealed a 1999 Dodge pickup was traveling north on Highway 74 when the driver lost control of the vehicle and rolled several times.

State police identified the driver as Anthony Enriquez, 42, of Ukiah. An ambulance took him to Pioneer Memorial Hospital, Heppner, for non-life threatening injuries.

The crash ejected Herrig, the passenger. He died at the scene. He was 35.

“Alcohol, speed and safety restraints are being

considered as factors in this crash,” state police reported.

Police closed the highway for more than three hours to investigate the crash. The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office, the Heppner and Lone fire departments and the Oregon Department of Transportation assisted state police.

Candidate forum slated for April 11

East Oregonian

Hermiston voters interested in meeting city and county political candidates in person will get the chance at a forum hosted by the Greater Hermiston Area Chamber of Commerce.

The forum is April 11 at Armand Larive Middle

School, 1497 S.W. Ninth St., in Hermiston.

The evening will start with refreshments and a chance to mingle at 5:30 p.m., followed by a forum with Hermiston City Council candidates at 6 p.m. and candidates for the board of county commissioners will take the stage

at 7:30 p.m.

Running for Hermiston City Council are Mark Gomolski, Jackie Linton and incumbent Lori Davis for Ward 1, Shean Fitzgerald and Roy Barron for Ward 2, Kyran Miller and incumbent Jackie Myers for Ward 3 and Michael Engelbrecht and incumbent

Doug Smith for Ward 4.

Running for the board of county commissioners are Tom Bailor, Rick Pullen and incumbent George Murdock for Position 1, and John Shafer and incumbent Larry Givens for Position 2.

For more information call the chamber at 541-567-6151.

Sheriff Palmer sues Grant County

Attorney fees sought for public records lawsuit

By SEAN HART
EO Media Group

Controversial Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer is suing Grant County for attorney fees related to a public records lawsuit filed in 2016.

Palmer and Civil Deputy Sally DeFord filed a complaint in Grant County Circuit Court March 16 against the county and the Grant County Court, asking a judge to declare that Palmer and DeFord are not liable for attorney fees from a lawsuit filed by *The Oregonian* newspaper,

which first reported this story Wednesday.

The Oregonian sued Palmer, DeFord and the sheriff’s office to compel the disclosure of public records in May 2016. The suit was dismissed when the records were disclosed, but *The Oregonian* was awarded \$28,337 in attorney fees.

Palmer and DeFord also incurred \$41,355 in fees while represented by a private law firm, Hostetter Law Group, according to the new complaint, which claims the county must cover all of the fees.

Palmer and DeFord’s attorney, Benjamin Boyd of Hostetter Law Group, declined to comment for this story. County Judge Scott Myers said he would not

discuss pending litigation.

The suit claims the county has a duty to defend Palmer and DeFord because *The Oregonian’s* lawsuit was based on “alleged acts or omissions” in the performance of their duties. Palmer and DeFord requested that the county provide legal counsel for their defense, but the county did not respond in a timely manner, so they retained private counsel, according to the suit.

Except in cases of malfeasance in office or willful or wanton neglect of duty, Oregon law requires public bodies, such as the county court, to defend its officers for acts occurring in the performance of their duties.

The Grant County Court declined to pay for the attorney fees in a unanimous decision in December 2016 after investigation determined the action was not covered by the Oregon Tort Claims Act.

Myers previously said Palmer’s actions regarding the records were personal, not in his official duties as sheriff. He said District Attorney Jim Carpenter ordered Palmer and DeFord to produce the records when they were requested by *The Oregonian*, but the records were not released until the lawsuit was filed.

Myers said the county’s insurance company has also indicated it will not cover the sheriff in this matter.

SANDVEN: Named new principal at Pendleton

Continued from 1A

Sandven eventually moved on to Sandy High School, where she was named the assistant principal of curriculum and instruction, two subject matters she was interested in.

She’s been the principal of Rainier Junior/Senior High School since 2014 and she’s currently earning her doctorate at the University of Oregon.

Rainier Junior/Senior High School has an enrollment of 480 students between grades 7-12. According to

the Oregon Department of Education, Rainier’s high school had an 86.3 percent graduation rate in 2016-2017 school year.

Fritsch said there were three finalists for the job, and those three candidates participated in multiple activities during the selection process. In addition to their formal interview, candidates met with the district administrative team, two different staff groups, a student leader group and a parents group, went on a district tour and met individually with Fritsch.

The process was a slight departure from the last time Pendleton High School hired a principal, when the district held an open house for the finalists and introduced them to the public. Fritsch said he used a process he was familiar with from his time as an administrator in Longview, Washington.

Sandven replace Principal Dan Greenough, who submitted his resignation letter in January but has not commented publicly on his decision to leave a job he’s held for five years, although Fritsch relayed that Gree-

nough was looking for “new opportunities.”

That new opportunity was revealed on Monday, when the Hermiston School District announced Greenough as the new principal of Desert View Elementary School.

Sandven will be expected to maintain Pendleton High School’s strong academic performance, which has resulted in good marks in the state report card and a 94.7 percent graduate rate in 2016-2017.

Sandven will start her new job July 1.

New districts will impact services, taxes for some

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
East Oregonian

In May, Umatilla and Morrow County voters will decide whether to add two new districts to the tax rolls, which would fund support staff and operations for the Oregon State University Extension Service.

If passed, the districts would add 33 cents per \$1,000 to taxpayers’ bills. In Umatilla County, the tax would yield about \$1.7 million, and in Morrow, about \$700,000. For a \$150,000 home, it would add about \$49.50 to an annual tax statement.

As the vote approaches, locals are looking at how the district will impact their tax bill, as well as the services it would provide.

Mary Corp, the Extension Service’s regional administrator, has been discussing the tax with various groups in both counties. If passed, the tax would go toward increasing education programs such as 4-H and hiring field support staff for the extension service, as well as some structural improvements.

“You can only use supplies and defer maintenance for so long,” she said.

She said so far, reception for the idea has been fairly positive.

“People have been very receptive and interested in learning more about the idea,” she said.

She said there has been some concern about compression, and how adding a new taxing district would affect other districts.

“It really varies tax lot by tax lot what the impact would be,” she said. “There has been some concern in Milton-Freewater, [which is] not currently under compression. In that local government pool, if the extension was added, it would put them at about \$8, a couple of dollars

under the cap.”

Umatilla County Assessor Paul Chalmers said voters can look at their own tax statements and calculate how the extension district tax will affect them. Taxpayers can find their own tax code area on their property tax statement, then go to the county website and access the tax rates for everything in their code area. The tax rates are available at www.co.umatilla.or.us/at/index.html. Compression, as set by Measure 5 and Measure 50, limits government taxes to \$10 per \$1,000 of assessed value. That number does not include schools, which have a separate compression rate.

Because taxpayers are limited to that \$10 cap, those in areas that are already at that level will not see an increase in their overall taxes. Instead the amounts paid to individual tax districts will be compressed to fit under the limit, which means less money for ambulance districts, library districts and others in areas in compression.

“Part of the irony with the property tax system now is that people can calculate and figure out that it’s not going to affect them, but they still get to vote on it,” Chalmers said.

Compression is more likely to be triggered in incorporated areas, such as the city of Hermiston or Pendleton, because city taxes often make up a large chunk of government-related taxes.

Corp said the extension service has always had financial support at the county level. State and federal dollars have been directed toward faculty and science positions, and local dollars were often sent toward support staff, rent and utilities. Money for those services has always come out of county general funds, she said. Even if voters approve the district, the county may still allot some funds to the extension service.

Hermiston schools to hire elementary deans of students

East Oregonian

Hermiston School District will hire deans of students for all five of its elementary schools for the 2018-2019 school year.

Interim superintendent Tricia Mooney said the positions were created as a result of increasing enrollment at the elementary schools, and a need for additional support. She said elementary school principals were currently working through the selection process. Mooney said duties for the new hires would vary slightly throughout the schools, but would include overseeing student attendance, the talented and gifted program, and academic support processes.

Mooney said the position is not the same as a vice principal.

“These are not administra-

tive positions, rather they are TOSAs (Teachers on Special Assignment),” Mooney said in an email to the *EO*. She said the positions are part of the Hermiston Association of Teachers work group.

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