

HERMISTON

Construction equipment sparks fire at Good Shepherd

East Oregonian

A fire broke out at Good Shepherd Medical Center on Thursday around 11 a.m., causing occupants to evacuate the building. No one was injured.

Good Shepherd spokesman Nick Bejarano said the fire started when some contractors were doing concrete work in the basement, trying to lay fiber optic cable.

He said they struck a piece of conduit behind the concrete, which threw a spark and caused a piece of equipment to catch on fire.

The fire set off the alarm and sprinklers, Bejarano said, and sent smoke billowing through the basement.

Bejarano said only occupants of the basement had to evacuate, including the surgery department and administration. He said a couple of patients had to leave, but they had not yet gone in for surgery.



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

Firefighters respond to a fire at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, on Thursday morning.

Bejarano said because there is still smoke in the basement, and because sprinklers went off, employees

who work on that floor are being sent home for the day.

UCFD crews responded to the incident, as well as

Hermiston police. Echo and Umatilla rural fire departments were called to the scene, as well.

BRIEFLY

Local spots take meds during Take Back Day

HERMISTON — You can turn in old prescription medications Saturday at the several locations during National Prescription Drug Take Back Day.

Oregon Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, announced the Hermiston Police Department, 330 S. First St., Hermiston, is leading the effort Saturday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. for the disposal of excess opioid and prescription medications. And there are other options.

Boardman and Pilot Rock will set up temporary drop-off sites. And there are permanent disposal boxes at the Stafford Hansell Government Center, 915 S.E. Columbia Drive; Carlson's Drug, 821 Sixth St., Umatilla; and the Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center, 73265 Confederated Way, Pendleton. The police departments of Hermiston and Pendleton also have indoor drop boxes.

Walden said more people die in Oregon from drug overdoses than car crashes. The Drug Enforcement Administration's Take Back Day "provides a safe, convenient, and responsible way to dispose of excess prescription drugs," he continued, "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."

Pendleton to hold series of budget meetings

The city of Pendleton will start its annual series of budget meetings on Tuesday.

The budget committee will meet to discuss the proposed 2018-2019 budget on Tuesday at 7 a.m. and May 3 at 6 p.m. The committee could continue to review the municipal budget at 7 a.m. on May 8, May 10 and May 11 if necessary.

The committee will also discuss the Pendleton Development Commission budget on May 10 at 7 a.m.

All meetings will be held in the Vert Club Room, which is accessible from the Southwest Fourth Street side of the Pendleton City Hall complex.

The first meeting will focus on the general fund and where to use the city's share of state revenue.

Once the meetings conclude, the committee,

comprised of the Pendleton City Council and several city residents, will recommend the budget to the council. The council will then pass a final version of the budget.

Pendleton to hold ground breaking for fire station

Mayor John Turner and the Pendleton City Council will be hosting a ground breaking ceremony at the site of the new fire station.

The ceremony will be at 1455 S.E. Court Ave., the site of the old St. Anthony Hospital, on May 17 at 5:30 p.m.

When construction of the new station is complete in 2019, the facility will replace the current Pendleton Fire Station No. 1 at 911 S.W. Court Ave.

The new building is funded through proceeds from a \$10 million bond passed by voters in 2017.

Volunteers invited to cleanup effort, barbecue

PENDLETON — A Parks Cleanup Day is planned in Pendleton.

Sponsored by Pendleton Parks & Recreation and the American Association of University Women, the event is Saturday, May 5 from 8 a.m. to noon at Pioneer Park, 400 N.W. Despain Ave. A barbecue lunch will be provided to volunteers.

When Marty King of the AAUW shared concerns about some park equipment, parks and recreation director Liam Hughes said it provided a perfect opportunity to partner in the cleanup effort. He said they are always looking for ways to engage the community.

"Community volunteer days are a great way for people to get involved and make a difference," he said.

The city requests that volunteers register in advance with Tiffany Hegarty, the city's volunteer coordinator. Hegarty said it assists with the planning process. She can be reached at 541-966-0244, tiffany.hegarty@ci.pendleton.or.us or at city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

The majority of the work will include painting and general cleanup of the play area, picnic tables and stage. The parks department will provide all painting equipment and supplies. People may bring hand tools, such as rakes and shovels.

For other questions, contact Casey Brown at 541-276-8100 or casey.brown@ci.pendleton.or.us.

SUBMIT COMMUNITY NEWS

Submit information to: community@eastoregonian.com or drop off to the attention of Tammy Malgesini at 333 E. Main St., Hermiston or Renee Struthers at 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton. Call 541-564-4539 or 541-966-0818 with questions.



Photo contributed by Barbara Morehead

Sunset on the McKay

The sun sets behind a horse pasture near Pilot Rock on Tuesday. After a week of sunny, warm weather, cloudy skies and rain showers are predicted for the weekend in Umatilla County.

La Grande truck driver missing

PENDLETON — A La Grande truck driver, last seen Tuesday in Pendleton, has been reported missing.

Jacob Aaron Cartwright, 22, was operating a green 2005 Kenworth truck with the company name "Little Tree Transportation" and hauling a white semi-trailer. The license on the vehicle is YAIN63.

Cartwright left the Pendleton area about 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, en route to make a delivery in Nyssa by 7:30 a.m. Wednesday morning. According to

Oregon State Police, GPS data shows that about midnight, Cartwright's truck was in the area of Highway 244 near MacIntyre Road, just west of Hilgard State Park in the Starkey Area.

OSP said that area has been searched by aircraft and continues to be searched by ground rescue personnel. The area is large, remote and heavily wooded with rough terrain.

If anyone sees Cartwright or his vehicle, contact the Union County Sheriff's Office at 541-963-1017.



Photo contributed by Pendleton Parks and Recreation

Snakes have been reported in the rocks near the Umatilla River levee near the Little League park in Pendleton. People are cautioned to stay off the rocks.

Snakes startle River Parkway walkers

PENDLETON — Several snakes were spotted near the Pendleton River Parkway about a quarter-mile away from the Ken Melton Little League Park, according to an email from Casey Brown, the special projects coordinator for the Pendleton Parks and Recreation Department.

Brown said they are likely bull snakes, sometimes known as gopher snakes, and aren't a danger but have startled people walking along the path.

"As a precaution, please be aware that they are there and keep yourself, your family, and your pets off of the rocks," she wrote. "Stay on the levee pathway/River Parkway."

She said the snakes often come out to sun themselves when the weather gets warm.

"If you leave them alone, they'll leave you alone," she said.

Pendleton man pleads not guilty to sexual assault charges

PENDLETON — Dominique Braden Hardesty of Pendleton pleaded not guilty last week to charges he sexually abused two teen girls.

A Umatilla County grand jury on March 14 indicted the 21-year-old Hardesty on seven counts of second-degree sexual abuse, two of third-degree sexual abuse and one of third-degree rape. The state charged him with the crimes three days later.

The third-degree sexual abuse charges are misdemeanors, while the other charges are class C felonies.

According to court documents, Hardesty molested and sexually assaulted one girl from December 2016 through August 2017. The crimes began when the girl was younger than 16 and thus could not give consent. The state accused him of

assaulting the second girl in the summer 2017 when she was younger than 18.

Hardesty remains free on a conditional release. His next hearing is May 31.

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