

**HERMISTON**

# Splash and Dash keeps Funfest cool

By **JADE MCDOWELL**  
East Oregonian

A frenzy of splashing and dashing officially broke in Hermiston's new festival street during Funfest on Saturday.

The annual summer celebration in downtown Hermiston included a ribbon-cutting for the new street followed by Splash and Dash 2018, a race between teams of three pushing one team member around cones in a wheeled tub full of water.

"We hope this becomes an annual tradition," city parks and recreation director Larry Fetter said. "The winners will have their name engraved on this very nice trophy and we hope to add names every year."

The first spot on the trophy belongs to Hermiston's Rotary Club, which won the championship heat against the U.S. Air Force team.

Rotary president Tony Garberg and team members Haylee Harper and Brad Wayland said they hoped the city continued the tradition every year so that Rotary could defend its title.

"It was a blast," Harper said.

Garberg said they didn't practice ahead of time, and Wayland gave credit to "old age wiles" for their win.

Eight teams total competed, and Umatilla County Fire District 1 was on hand with a truck to refill tubs with a fire hose and shower contestants with extra water as they pulled the tubs around a series of orange traffic cones. There was a Seattle Seahawks-themed team and the "Hawaiian bobsled team." The Hispanic Advisory Committee was represented by the Three Amigos — city councilor Clara Beas Fitzgerald, city council candidate Mark Gomolski and HAC chair Jose Garcia.

Patty Ortiz, Rosie Delgado and Ana Pimeyro named their team "Amo ser Latina," a Spanish play on words that meant both "I love to be Latina" and "I love to be the bathtub." They said they didn't do much to prepare, other than having enthusiasm, positive thinking and match-



Members of the U.S. Air Force team compete against Amo ser Latina during the Splash and Dash at Funfest in downtown Hermiston on Saturday.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell



Santa Claus gives the Air Force Splash and Dash team a pep talk before the races on the new festival street at Funfest on Saturday.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell



The Bram Brata Steel Drum Band performs on the new festival street at Funfest.

Staff photo by Jade McDowell

ing T-shirts. "We did our shirts, that's a start, right?" Pimeyro said.

Before the Splash and Dash, city manager Byron Smith and city planner Clint Spencer cut the ribbon on the new festival street. Smith said the street had been talked about for at least 10 years before it became a reality, and credited Spencer with putting it into motion. He also thanked a long list of other contributors, including the contractors and engineers, the city committee that worked on the design and the downtown merchants who were supportive of the project despite the impact of construction the last few months.

"I know it wasn't pleasant all the time, but thank you for your patience," he said.

While the festival section of Northeast Second Street hosted the tub races and live entertainment, Funfest stretched down several blocks of Main Street. Crowds downtown listened to bands, bought food and snow cones, watched lawnmower races, got free popsicles handed out by Santa Claus and participated in activities like the bouncy house and dunk tank while trying to stay cool.

Contact Jade McDowell at [jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com](mailto:jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4536.

# Outages bring darkness twice in three days

McNary substation stops power fault after three others fail

By **KATHY ANEY**  
East Oregonian

Power failures doused the lights twice over the weekend in the Pendleton area.

A 17-minute outage on Sunday night affected 12,500 Pacific Power customers. Darkness ensued just after 9 p.m. and returned at 9:20. Tom Gauntt, of Pacific Power, could give only a limited explanation because of the utility's relationship with the Bonneville Power Administration.

"We get some of our energy from them," Gauntt said. "This was an interruption on their end."

BPA spokesman David Wilson said the outage involved three breakers on BPA transmission lines that failed to handle a surge of electrical current, known as a fault. The first breaker, at the North Powder substation, didn't trip. Two other breakers, one at the La Grande substation and the Round-Up substation southeast of Pendleton, also malfunctioned. A breaker at the McNary sub-

station finally opened up. The outage involved 103 miles of line.

"It shouldn't have gone that far," Wilson said. "The first breaker should have opened up and stopped it. We're trying to figure out what happened and why."

He said heat could possibly have been a factor. Wilson didn't know what created the fault, but said they are generally caused by lightning strikes or branches that come in contact with power line.

The outage also affected customers of Oregon Trail Electric Co-Op, which owns the North Powder substation.

Another outage in the Pendleton area happened a couple of days earlier on Friday afternoon.

"It started at 4:06 p.m. and affected about 800 customers," Gauntt said. "It looks like a fuse on a transformer failed."

Power returned to some customers before others. By about 7 p.m., almost half saw their lights come back on. By 9 p.m., only 169 customers remained in the dark. At midnight, power was fully restored.

Contact Kathy Aney at [kaney@eastoregonian.com](mailto:kaney@eastoregonian.com) or 541-966-0810.

## Two house fires on Saturday

Local firefighters had a busy weekend, responding to house fires in both Hermiston and Umatilla on Saturday.

Around 1:19 p.m., a house fire started on Rilie Lane in Umatilla. Umatilla County Fire District fire marshal Scott Goff said the blaze started as a grass fire caused by a bird that got into a power transformer behind the residence.

Goff said the fire spread into the garage and through the home, destroying it. The resident of the manufactured structure was not

home at the time.

Around 6:18 p.m., crews were dispatched to another house fire on Madrona Avenue in Hermiston.

Goff said the cause is still under investigation, but it started on a covered porch and traveled up into the walls and attic space. He said while the home may be salvageable, there was also a lot of water damage from extinguishing the fire.

He said the two residents were home at the time of the fire and escaped without any injuries, but they were not able to save their dog.

# Convenience store owners say safety is challenging

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**  
East Oregonian

Convenience store clerks are the keepers of many American treasures — beef jerky sticks, scratch-its and Slurpees, to name a few. But they also face a more dangerous occupational hazard than most — the possibility of being robbed at gunpoint while working.

Though it's not a frequent occurrence, convenience stores in Umatilla County periodically see armed robberies. In the past three years there have been robberies at several stores, including Sinclair Station, 7-Eleven, 11th Street Market, all in Hermiston, Center Market in Stanfield and the Astro Station in Pendleton.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2015, first-line supervisors of retail sales workers suffered the most workplace fatalities nationwide, at 40. There were 35 fatalities for cashiers, 34 for police and sheriff's patrol officers and 27 for taxi drivers. Robbers were the most common perpetrators, followed by coworkers, and then by spouses or domestic partners.

Local store owners and managers said while such

incidents are scary, they're hard to predict and prevent.

Gurpal Singh and Jaswinder Kaur, managers of the Center Market in Stanfield, said their business has been robbed twice, once in December 2015, and in February 2016. In the first incident, the thief took \$379 and in the second, about \$1,100. The first time, Kaur was working alone and was robbed at gunpoint. The second time, Kaur was training a new employee, and the robber did not take out a weapon. Both robberies took place around 1 or 2 a.m.

The thief in the first robbery, Alfredo Lopez Rodriguez, was sentenced to 70 months in jail. The second theft has not been solved.

Singh noted that in one of the incidents, security camera footage later revealed that the robber had come into the store three times that day.

He said the police have been diligent about checking in on the market, and will often station themselves on a nearby street to keep watch during overnight hours.

He said the store is insured against theft, and the business policy is simple: don't argue with the robber, and cooperate.

"What's important is your life," he said. "Not the money,

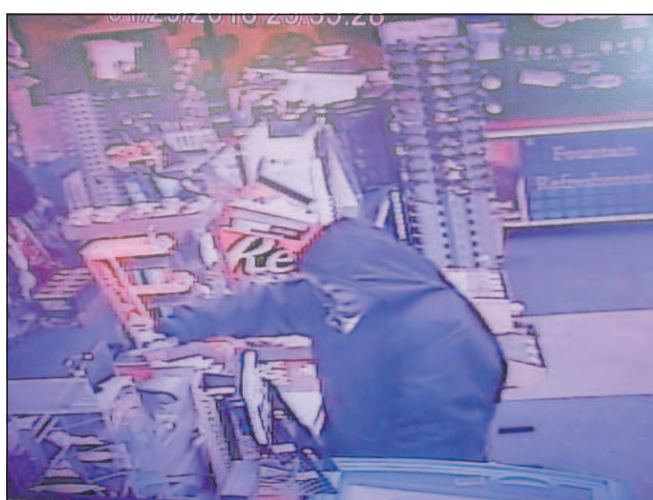


Photo courtesy of Hermiston Police Department

Surveillance footage of an armed robbery at 11th St. Market in January. This suspect has still not been caught. The suspect brandished a gun and took the small amount of cash that was in the register, and immediately left.

not the store."

Brandt Koo, owner of Hermiston's 11th Street Market, said their approach is similar.

"Our rule is pretty much just give them the cash," he said. "There's no sense dying for a few hundred dollars."

Koo has owned the store since late March, after it was robbed twice in January. He said they try not to keep too much cash on hand, keep the store well-lit, and have several security cameras and alarms.

Hermiston Police Capt.

Travis Eynon said there have not been any specific patterns with robberies at local convenience stores.

"It's hard to say what triggers these kinds of trends," he said. "With some, it's kind of the nature of the business — they can be a target just because they're open at night, or odd hours."

While police are usually on scene pretty quickly, they rarely catch someone in the act, and it can be difficult to track robbers.

"Several of the investigations are still active," Eynon

said.

Koo said that while there was a rash of robberies earlier in the year, he's not too concerned. He said many of his family members have owned stores in larger areas like Los Angeles, where the problem is much more serious.

"They didn't get very much," he said of recent robberies. "Hermiston police have been really good about it."

Kaur said she had a hard time returning to work after the robberies, and attended counseling until recently.

"Now I'm a little better," she said. "I had bad dreams after that."

She no longer works the night shift and generally works with someone else. But at most stores, only one person works at night.

"You have to stay alert," Singh said. "I always say that to my night workers. If you're working in the cooler or in the back, if you hear the bell ring, come out and see who is there."

Singh said the majority of their regular customers have

been supportive, and even protective of their family following the robberies.

"Everyone gave me their phone numbers, said any time, for anything, call us," Kaur said.

**WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO**  
**7/16-17**  
**Cineplex Show Times**

\$5 Classic Movie • 7/18 • 12pm  
**Singin' in the Rain**

---

\$5 Children's Classic Movie • 7/18 • 10am  
**Madagascar**  
Free Small Popcorn & Small Soda

---

**SKYSCRAPER (PG13)**  
6:40  
7:40 9:20

---

**ANT-MAN AND THE WASP (PG13)**  
4:30 7:10 9:50

---

**JURASSIC WORLD: FALLEN KINGDOM (PG13)**  
4:00 7:00 10:00

---

**INCREDIBLES 2 (PG)**  
4:10 6:50 9:30

---

**THE FIRST PURGE (R)**  
4:40 7:20 9:40

\* Matinee Pricing  
wildhorseresort.com • 541-966-1850  
Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216

**Happy 4th of July!**  
From all of us at  
**Backyard By Design, LLC**  
FREE estimates!  
**541-720-0772**  
[www.mybackyardbydesignor.com](http://www.mybackyardbydesignor.com)  
License #188965

**RED HOT SALE!**  
**Up to 10% off...**  
**Patio Covers**  
**Pergolas·Awnings**  
**Sun Rooms**  
**Solar Shades & More!!**  
Hurry! Sale ends 7/18/18

FOUR SEASONS BUILDING PRODUCTS    SUN CONTROL    Sunesta    BUILD THE BEST FOUR SEASONS SUN ROOMS

**Fresh Flowers for all Occasions**  
**Gift Items and Home Decor**

*Put a smile on the heart with the power of flowers.*

**Cottage Flowers**

**HWY 395, HERMISTON**  
**541-567-4305**  
Mon-Sat 8am-6pm • Sun 12pm-5am  
[www.cottageflowersonline.com](http://www.cottageflowersonline.com)

**BUDWEISER CLYDESDALES APPEARING NIGHTLY!**

**FARM CITY PRO RODEO**

**AUG 8-11 2018**

**WED-SAT ★ 7:45 PM ★ HERMISTON, OR**  
TICKETS INCLUDE FREE ADMISSION TO THE UMATILLA COUNTY FAIR

**541-564-8500 ★ FarmCityProRodeo.com**