

Diesel spill closes Highway 395

East Oregonian

A diesel truck collided with an Eastern Oregon Telecom work truck on Friday morning, spilling fuel on the roadway at North Highway 395 and East Punkin Center Road. The north-bound lane of Highway 395 was closed for several hours while the Oregon Department of Transportation and a hazardous materials team cleaned up the spill.

Umatilla County Fire District Battalion Chief J.W. Roberts said he did not know how the crash happened, but no one had any serious injuries. The truck spilled about 75 gallons of diesel fuel onto the roadway over about 100 yards. The road was closed from Joy Lane to East Punkin Center Road.



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan

A diesel truck hit an Eastern Oregon Telecom work truck at North Highway 395 and East Punkin Center Road on Friday morning, spilling diesel all over the road.

Test scores indicate continuing low performance

East Oregonian and Associated Press

Oregon elementary students have rebounded from last year’s dip in reading and writing skills, but academic achievement remains mostly low across the state, according to state test scores.

Umatilla County’s two largest school districts — Hermiston and Pendleton — both hovered around the state’s proficiency averages in English language arts, math, and science, but found themselves on different sides of the divide.

Hermiston surpassed the state average in all three categories. It scored particularly well in science, where

it bested Oregon’s 60.2 percent average by nearly six points.

Pendleton failed to meet or surpass any of the state’s proficiency averages, although a half-point difference in cumulative math scores was negligible.

The district struggled most in English language arts, where only 50.2 percent of students demonstrated proficiency, a 4.7-point drop from the state average.

Across the state, the percentages of students demonstrating mastery in math this year are the lowest in the four years that Oregon’s students have taken the nationally benchmarked Smarter Balanced tests.

Mastery in reading and writing has barely moved in four years, staying below 60 percent in elementary and middle schools.

Results in the state’s middle and high schools have largely remained hard to pin down, as numerous families have allowed their children to skip the tests. About 15 percent of 11th-graders skipped the tests this year, resulting in unreliable results.

The tests are intended to measure if students’ learning is on track for college and careers.

“We see this as an area we need to work on,” said Colt Gill, director of the state Department of Education. “I would not point to a

highlight.”

The tests have shown an academic preparedness gap between low-income students and others, as well as a gap between white students and students of color.

Low-income students were down by 30 percent in mastery of reading, writing and math skills compared to their richer peers. Latino, black and Native American students similarly lagged by 25 percent to 30 percent.

The reading and writing scores of Native American students gained by 5 percent this year following a 4 percent drop the previous year, Gill said. But fewer than 95 percent of Native American students in the state took the tests this year.

BRIEFLY

Candidate forum scheduled for Oct. 10

HERMISTON — Voters will have a chance to get to know people running for local elected office at a candidate forum on Oct. 10.

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce and KOHU & The Q will host the forum Oct. 10 from 5:30-7 p.m. in room 134/135 at the Hermiston campus of Blue Mountain Community College, 975 S.E. Columbia Drive.

Umatilla County Board of Commissioners candidates Rick Pullen and incumbent George Murdock will participate, along with Hermiston City Council Ward 1 candidates Mark Gomolski and incumbent Lori Davis.

The event will begin with refreshments and a chance to mingle with candidates at 5:30 p.m. Umatilla County Board of Commissioners candidates will speak first at 6 p.m. followed by city council candidates.

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

City council to discuss zoning amendment Monday

The Hermiston City Council will discuss a handful of minor amendments to land use ordinances Monday.

The council will meet at 7 p.m. at city hall, 180 N.E. Second St.

The city will consider a request to amend its zoning ordinance to allow florist shops in its R-3 duplex residential zone. According to a memo from city planner Clint Spencer, the application comes from a woman who has been operating a florist shop in the R-3 zone since 2017 and has been notified by staff that it was not an approved use for that zone.

A second amendment the council will consider Monday would align Hermiston’s code of ordinances with state law about open space for nursery schools, removing language stating there must be 100 square feet of outdoor play area per child and instead requiring “enough open space for chil-

dren that meets the requirements for certified child care centers by the Early Learning Division of the Oregon Department of Education.”

Two other housekeeping amendments would reflect that the state now allows for 12 days instead of 10 for appeals of land use decisions, and would clean up incorrect cross-references in the city’s new noise ordinance.

On Monday the council will also hear updates from staff, committees and an update on the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

Firefighters mop up Cabbage Hill fire

The Oregon Department of Forestry reported significant progress on the Cabbage Hill fire that started Thursday.

According to a Friday press release from the department, firefighters stopped the spread of the fire and spent the day cleaning up hot spots.

The fire burned 125 acres and at its height, it threatened eight homes and 16 outbuildings. Ultimately, no buildings were damaged by the fire.

The fire was initially started by a Bureau of Indian Affairs prescribed burn near Poverty Flat that was exacerbated by strong winds.

Man who beat girlfriend on Umatilla reservation sent to federal prison

By MAXINE BERNSTEIN
The Oregonian/OregonLive

A 53-year-old man who beat, choked and forced his girlfriend to have sex over three days while she was trapped in his trailer on the Umatilla Indian Reservation was sentenced Thursday to more than five years in federal prison.

U.S. District Judge Robert E. Jones called Don Douglas Lovell’s crimes “chronic, terrible, unforgivable abuse.”

Jones sentenced Lovell to five years and four months in prison after hearing testimony from the victim, a tribal police officer and an FBI agent. Lovell pleaded guilty to assault and strangulation.

Lovell’s former girlfriend described how Lovell held her down by her throat and slammed her in the head with a red heavy-duty Maglite flashlight at least twice.

She said she was afraid if she didn’t agree to his demands “the violence was going to get worse.”

The sentencing came on the same day that the U.S. Department of Justice announced more than \$4.8 million in grants awarded to seven tribes and one tribal commission in Oregon to help combat and investigate domestic violence against Native American women.

The violence greatly exceeds that against any other population of women, with 56 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native women experiencing sexual violence and 55 percent having experienced violence by an intimate partner, according to a 2016 report by the National Institute of Justice.

The victim ultimately escaped on Jan. 3 after Lovell left the trailer to go work. She tried to walk in below-freezing temperatures to her brother’s home more than 10 miles away. She made it to an off-duty officer’s home, who called tribal police.

As she was being treated at a hospital, Lovell called tribal and area police, claiming his girlfriend had roughed

him up in a fight, that she had outstanding warrants for her arrest and had stolen his dog, which actually belonged to her.

Abusers like Lovell often use a victim’s arrest warrants or their pets as manipulation to keep them from reporting the assaults to law enforcement, FBI agent Alexander White testified. White, who worked out of the FBI’s Pendleton office at the time, was the investigator in the case.

The former girlfriend acknowledged that she had a warrant at the time for failure to appear in court on a probation violation stemming from a heroin possession conviction.

Lovell’s defense lawyer Alison Clark argued that the woman’s injuries didn’t rise to the level of “serious bodily injury,” which would enhance the prison time for her client. The victim didn’t suffer a concussion from the flashlight strikes to her head, Clark noted. Lovell also never admitted to committing any sexual assault or abuse, his lawyer said. Clark urged a sentence of three years and five months.

Prosecutor Jennifer Martin countered that the victim required hospitalization and a week later still had a black and swollen right eye, bruises to her head and neck and complained of dizziness.

Lovell’s former girlfriend testified that she started “going in and out” after the flashlight attack.

“My head was like mush from this,” she said. “I had never been hit like that ever.”

The judge concluded the victim suffered serious injuries and the flashlight was used as a dangerous weapon, which enhanced Lovell’s sentence. Jones agreed to recommend that Lovell be placed at a federal prison with a medical facility because he has diabetes, Hepatitis C and pulmonary disease.

“Your Honor, I’m very sorry, and please forgive me,” Lovell told the judge.

“It’s not for me to forgive,” Jones said. “It’s for me to give a fair sentence.”

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LIFE ITSELF (R)
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THE PREDATOR (R)
11:30* 2:00* 4:30 7:00 9:40

A SIMPLE FAVOR (R)
11:10* 1:40* 4:10 6:40 9:20

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