

# Crash takes out Hermiston police plan for a vehicle to help with evidence gathering

By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

The Hermiston Police Department's plan to create a vehicle to help with evidence gathering took a hard shot Tuesday due to a crash.

Umatilla County Fire District last year donated a 2006 Ford ambulance to the police department. Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said it has a lot of miles and the ball joints needed replacing, but the engine is a diesel and runs well.

The ambulance looked like the right vehicle to outfit so the department's evidence technician could respond to certain crimes, such as a storage unit burglary, and gather evidence rather than have an officer dust for fingerprints while calls for service pile up. Edmiston said the project would not replace the evidence vehicle that Oregon State Police sends to major crime scenes.

Hermiston police sent the ambulance to a Tri-Cities business to give it a



Contributed photo by Hermiston Police Department  
**A crash Tuesday in Umatilla likely damaged the frame of the former ambulance — behind the sedan and pickup — which the Hermiston Police Department planned to turn into a vehicle for gathering evidence at certain crime scenes.**

new coat of paint along with police striping, and recently left the vehicle at Duke's Auto Plus, 30600 Highway 730, Umatilla, to replace the ball joints.

But a little before 11 a.m. Tuesday the plan

crashed. Literally.

Oregon State Police reported a Dodge Ram pickup towing a trailer was heading east on Highway 730 near Duke's when a Kia Sedona pulled out and struck the right front axel

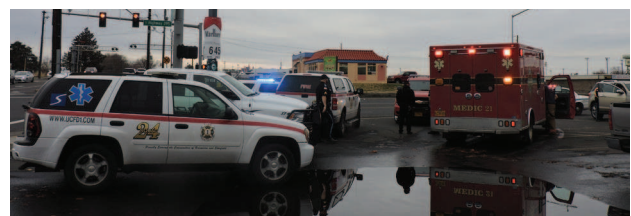
of the trailer. The Dodge's driver lost control, went off the road and into the parking lot of Duke's, striking a Toyota Camry and the old ambulance.

The crash likely totaled the Kia, according to state police, damaged the front bumper of the pickup, along with its right side and the right side of the trailer and munched the rear of the Toyota. The ambulance sustained exterior damage that does not appear too significant, Edmiston said, but the impact probably bent the frame on the vehicle, which had insurance coverage of \$17,000.

"So that would likely mean it's totaled," Edmiston said.

Marcelino Salas Canare, 67, of Umatilla, drove the Kia. Oregon State Police cited her for failure to yield the right of way, driving while suspended and driving uninsured.

Edmiston said that was the topper to the whole mess and it was disappointing the department did not get to try out the project.



Staff photo by Jayati Ramakrishnan  
**A driver hit a pedestrian while turning north onto Highway 395 from East Highland Avenue on Wednesday afternoon.**

## Pedestrian hit crossing 395

East Oregonian

A car turning onto Highway 395 in Hermiston hit a pedestrian on Wednesday afternoon. The pedestrian, a 15-year-old male Hermiston High School student, did not suffer any serious injuries, said Hermiston Police Captain Scott Clark.

John Foster, 75, was turning north onto Highway 395 from East Highland Avenue, when the student ran out onto 395, angled to the crosswalk, to cross westbound heading back toward the school. Foster was already making the turn, and struck the

student with the right front quarter-panel of his Chevy Equinox.

Foster stopped immediately and cooperated with police. He said he did not see the student.

"Not at all, or I wouldn't have made the corner," he said. "I think the reason I didn't see him is he darted out trying to catch his friends. I'm not saying he was in the wrong, it just happened that fast."

Clark said he didn't anticipate issuing any citations, but the student could be cited for a pedestrian-related offense under state law.



Staff photo by Allen Norman  
**A fire destroyed a house at 618 S. Columbia St. in Milton-Freewater on Tuesday.**

## Milton-Freewater house destroyed in fire

East Oregonian

MILTON-FREEWATER — Milton-Freewater firefighters extinguished a house fire Tuesday, but the home is a total loss.

The Milton-Freewater Fire Department answered the call-out at 12:18 p.m. for the fire at 618 S. Columbia St. Chief Shane Garner said three engines and a ladder truck responded, along with crews and equipment from the Milton-Freewater Rural Fire Department.

They found the two-story home "30 percent involved upon arrival," he said, and the three occupants were safe. One, however, suffered a minor scrape and received treatment at the scene.

Crews doused the blaze within an hour, Garner said,

while mop-up took several hours due to the amount of damage to the home.

"The entire structure was weakened and made accessing some areas difficult and in some cases impossible," he said.

Garner also reported the home was a total loss and the cause of the fire is under investigation.

# BMCC to serve Christmas Eve dinner

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
East Oregonian

Students at Blue Mountain Community College are gearing up for the 48th annual Christmas Eve dinner.

The community is invited to the free meal, which is coordinated by student leaders. This year's dinner, which is Monday, Dec. 24, is taking place earlier in the day. The event runs from 2-4 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center, 1601 Westgate. The meal features ham with all the trimmings and dessert.

Abby Pierson, BMCC's assistant director of outreach and recruitment, said they moved the dinner up a few hours to help accommodate volunteers having time to spend with their families on Christmas Eve. Also, she said the earlier time will make it safer for people to travel to and from the meal.

"Last year the weather



File photo  
**Evangelina Olivera serves up pie during a past Blue Mountain Community College Christmas Eve dinner. In its 48th year, the free community meal is Monday, Dec. 24, from 2-4 p.m. at the Pendleton Convention Center.**

was pretty bad," Pierson said.

In addition to the dinner, children are invited to take a special trip through Santa's Toy Shop. Kids will be able to pose for photos with Santa and pick up a free present. In addition to

including student ambassadors, Associated Student Government leaders and work study students. Pierson herself volunteered two years as a student ambassador before being hired by the college.

While assisting with the event comes with her job description, Pierson enjoys being a part of the Christmas Eve dinner. She particularly enjoys seeing volunteers from the community assisting with the event.

People are invited to volunteer with everything from working in the kitchen and serving to assisting in the toy shop.

For more information, including how to get involved or make donations, call Pierson at 541-278-5921 or contact Austin Shick at 541-278-5967 or ashick@bluecc.edu.

Contact Community Editor Tammy Malgesini at [tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com](mailto:tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4539

# Umatilla County's financials in good order, passes the latest audit

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Umatilla County's financial tracking is in good order, according to the latest audit.

The county board of commissioners during its public meeting Wednesday in Pendleton heard from Cameron Anderson with the accounting firm Barnett & Moro P.C., Hermiston, which contracts with the county to perform the audits. He told the board the audit involved an array of tests, and the county's accounting passed muster each time. He said the

audit found no material weaknesses or deficiencies in the county's financial information.

He also noted the cash for the county increased about \$3 million overall from last year, with the general fund bumping up about \$1.4 million.

"Overall, not too exciting a year for the county," Anderson said, "which is good."

Commissioners George Murdock and Bill Elfering voted to accept the audit report. Commissioner Larry Givens was absent.

This was the last pub-

lic meeting of the county board for 2018. The board meets next on Jan. 9 and will have a new commissioner. John Shafer of Athena takes his oath of office Jan. 2 at the county courthouse in Pendleton.

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**Frequent volunteer opportunities include:**

- Customer service/cashier in the gift shop, Inspirations.
- Customer service at the information desk.
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- Day Surgery

If you'd like to discuss how you can join the St. Anthony Hospital family, please call the number below.  
Emily Smith • 541-278-2627 • [emilysmith@chiwest.com](mailto:emilysmith@chiwest.com)

2801 St. Anthony Way, Pendleton, OR 97801  
[www.sahpendleton.org](http://www.sahpendleton.org)

## Inspirations,

the gift shop at St. Anthony Hospital

Located just inside the front entrance to the hospital. Open five days a week, Inspirations is staffed by generous volunteers, who are happy to help you find just what you're looking for, whether you are a visitor, patient or employee. You can find thoughtful gifts, greeting cards, spiritual and inspirational items, stuffed animals, flowers, toys, snacks and refreshments, and special seasonal merchandise.

Profits earned through the operation of the gift shop are used to fund scholarships for students pursuing an education in healthcare as well as to purchase much-needed equipment and supplies for St. Anthony Hospital. This year alone \$11,000 in scholarships were given out.

**To volunteer please call 541.966.0528**

HOURS:

Inspirations is open Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.