

PR schools super did not call dispatch about assault

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

The investigation continues into Tuesday's assault at Pilot Rock High School.

Pilot Rock Schools Superintendent Steve Staniak admitted he should have done more to tell police about the confrontation between a 15-year-old boy and 18-year-old Justin James Smith.

The juvenile ended up in critical condition at a Portland hospital, and Smith ended up in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.

Staniak during a phone interview Thursday morning said school employees knew of the assault when it happened around 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, and the first

steps were to separate the students and make sure they were safe. The school arranged for a ride to take the 15-year-old home and the older student walked off campus.

After that, Staniak said he called a Pilot Rock police officer about the incident, and that officer directed him to report the assault to dispatch. Staniak nor anyone else with the school made that call.

"In hindsight," Staniak said, "I should have done that."

Staniak said the injuries from the fight did not appear serious, and he figured he could follow up with police Wednesday morning.

Pilot Rock Police Chief Bill Caldera said a resident on Tues-

day around 3 p.m. asked if he was aware of the fight at the high school involving two students. Caldera said he answered, "No," but the report kicked off the ensuing police investigation and resulted in Smith's arrest for second-degree assault, a class B felony.

Police found out the two students first had a dust-up Sunday at the Pendleton Walmart, according to Caldera, that led up to the clash at the school. The juvenile suffered serious injuries, and a family member took the boy to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. From there, an emergency aircraft flew him to Oregon Health & Science University, Portland.

He was in critical condition

Tuesday, and Caldera said he learned Wednesday afternoon the boy regained consciousness.

The *East Oregonian* tried to contact the family but has yet to hear back.

The Pilot Rock Police Department's daily bulletin shows a caller Tuesday at 4:43 p.m. also reported an assault at the high school. Caldera said that call was about the same incident and came from someone who knows one of the two teens.

Caldera also said his department was busy continuing the investigation and conducted perhaps 20 or more interviews Wednesday at the high school.

"We've been interviewing kid after kid after kid after kid," he

said. "We're right in the middle of it."

The Umatilla County District Attorney's Office on Wednesday arraigned Smith on the assault charge. State court records show Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer set bail at \$50,000 and a probable cause hearing in the case for Wednesday, May 15.

The district attorney's office, Pendleton Police Department and the OHSU Department of Public Safety assisted in the investigation. Caldera also encouraged anyone with information for the investigation to call the county's dispatch center at 541-966-3651 or the Pilot Rock Police Department 541-443-1224.



EO Media Group/File

A bill that would constrain certain new dwellings under Oregon's "forest template" law is encountering resistance from landowners who argue it unfairly infringes on their property rights.

Opponents say bill infringes on property rights

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
EO Media Group

SALEM — A bill that would constrain certain new dwellings under Oregon's "forest template" law is encountering resistance from landowners who argue it unfairly infringes on their property rights.

The template law was created in 1993 to allow for some new construction in forest areas that have already been fragmented by housing.

A property can qualify for a new home under the law if a sufficient number of existing dwellings and parcels are found within a 160-acre "template" surrounding it, depending on the forestland's productivity.

Concerns about some landowners adjusting property lines and exploiting other "loopholes" in the statute led to the proposal of House Bill 2225, which would prohibit new dwellings based on changes made before 2019.

While the legislation drew some objections earlier this year, it passed the House 37-23 in April. During a public hearing on May 7, several landowners urged the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources against approving HB 2225 or at least delaying its implementation.

"This law will devastate the values of everything I own," said Casey Jones, a site developer who has bought several properties that qualify for

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The committee has scheduled a May 21 work session to vote on the bill, sparing the proposal from an upcoming legislative deadline.

template dwellings.

One of the main complaints was a provision in the bill that would only allow one template dwelling per property.

Becky Miles, a Lane County landowner, said her family wouldn't have bought two forested parcels if they'd known such a restriction would come into effect.

"It makes it worthless to us," she said. "There is no way we would have spent the time or money to purchase those if it was one more hindrance or crippling effect on that."

Barbara Silver, also a Lane County landowner, said the bill punishes people who live farther from cities and objected to the notion they "manipulate" property lines to exploit the template law.

"Landowners were forced into doing that just to make their land work for them," she said.

When the statute was enacted, lawmakers anticipated that more than one dwelling could be built on tracts created from an original template property, said Dale Riddle, vice president of legal affairs for the Seneca Sawmill Co.

"That's not gaming the system. That was well-negotiated," he said.

Forest properties that

qualify for such template dwellings will eventually run out and the law doesn't allow for the creation of new qualifying parcels, said Mike Evans, a land use consultant.

"There's a finite number of parcels that allow for rural residential development," he said.

Proponents of HB 2225 argued that the revisions were necessary to prevent unintended subdivisions in forested areas, which elevate the risk of wildfires.

"We're gaming the system," said Rep. Ken Helm, D-Beaverton. "We're aggregating and accumulating more forest dwellings in our productive forest zones and wildland-urban interface than is good policy."

The template statute was supposed to discourage home-building in Oregon's most productive forests but that's not how the law has played out, said Meriel Darzen, an attorney with the Crag Law Center.

"You're really into the thick of industrial-managed harvest areas where residential development is not really conflict-free," she said.

Detective encourages parents to monitor teens' smartphone use

By JADE MCDOWELL East Oregonian

A smartphone in every pocket has made it harder than ever to keep teens out of trouble.

Umatilla County Sheriff's Office Det. Kasey Ward said a combination of monitoring and education by parents is crucial to preventing the kind of cases he sees, ranging from date rape to child pornography charges related to sexting.

He described teenagers sending nude photos and sexually explicit messages as an "epidemic."

"It's become common," he said. "They have the mindset of 'everybody does it now.'"

The consequences can be grave, however. The "cute boy" on the other end of the social media app could actually be a "50-year-old pervert," Ward said, who could use the photos to blackmail the teen into worse things, or post the pictures on a child pornography site. He said when he checks a national database to find the victims of images pulled from locals' phones, sometimes he finds the photos are up to a decade old and still circulating.

"Once you put it out there, once you hit send, there's no taking it back, and God only knows where it will end up," he said.

Even if teens are trading sexually explicit photos with someone who is known to them, Ward said there are plenty of teenage boys who delight in showing private nude photos of their girlfriend to their friends. He said teens often think they're safe sending photos over apps such as Snapchat, which ostensibly deletes the photo after a few seconds, but it doesn't prevent people from taking a screenshot.

At best, Ward said, such an incident can result in a loss of reputation. At worst, the photos could be used as blackmail after a breakup or could cause multiple teens

to end up as registered sex offenders for life.

"If a girl sends a sexually explicit photo to a boy, she just manufactured child pornography, he just received it and if he sends it to his friends he distributed it," Ward said.

He said any minor with a smartphone or other internet-connected device should password protect it in case it gets lost or stolen, but parents should "absolutely" have the password and make it a practice of asking their child to hand over their phone for random searches.

It's important to open every app, Ward said, as photos can be hidden under icons that look like a calculator or other unassuming app. And the child should know that if they're caught deleting messages or their browsing history their phone will be confiscated.

If parents have a suspicion that something illegal is going on, they can sign a release for the sheriff's office to search the phone using a device that pulls everything — including deleted photos and messages — into a format where detectives can easily search for keywords or snapshots of every recent website visit. Ward said sometimes parents are very surprised to find out what type of pornography their young son or daughter was looking at before clearing their browsing history.

There are parental-control options on the market that can notify parents of their child's web activity or block certain sites. Ward

said those can be helpful, but they're not fool-proof. Teens today are incredibly tech-savvy and they all have friends with web-connected devices at school.

"Kids get curious about sex and the opposite sex and now they have a device in their hand where they can look things up privately," he said. "When I was a kid you had to have a friend with a dad who had a Playboy magazine."

That's why it's important that parents have conversations with their children, Ward said, about what they might find online and how someone might take advantage of them there. Ward also encourages parents to have conversations with their children about topics such as consent and the dangers of drinking to the point of blacking out at a party. Teens tend to think of rape as something that happens "with a stranger grabbing you in the parking lot," but the vast majority of sexual assaults are perpetrated by someone known to the victim.

Ward has seen many local cases where the perpetrator (and often their parents) don't think what they did was rape or assault, because the victim was not actively fighting back. A boy might have had sex with a half-unconscious, intoxicated girl at a party or offered a girl a ride home, only to take her somewhere deserted and refuse to take her back until she agreed to have sex with him.

"Teens often have no idea how the laws work and what applies to them," he said.

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