

Umatilla man sentenced for strangling woman near kids

East Oregonian

PORTLAND — A Umatilla man was sentenced Tuesday to time served, having already served 22 months in custody, plus three years supervised release for strangling his significant other in the presence of their four children.

According to court documents, Joel Malcom Salt, 29, a Navajo Indian, violated a tribal protective order in April 2017, by going to

the crime victim's house. The woman is an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, who lives on the reservation with their four children.

When Salt arrived at the house, he grabbed the victim by her hair, threw her to the ground in front of their children and dragged her to the bedroom. Once in the bedroom, Salt pinned the victim to the floor, punched her and strangled her, caus-

ing her to lose consciousness several times.

To divert his attention, the woman told Salt their children probably left the house to tell her father, who lived next door. After hearing this, Salt released the woman and left the room to check. While he was out of the room, the woman escaped out of the window and ran to her father's house. Her father retrieved the four children and called the police. Salt fled before

police arrived, but was later arrested.

A federal grand jury in Portland returned a one-count indictment in June 2017, charging Salt with assault by strangulation. He pleaded guilty to the charge in November 2018.

During sentencing, U.S. District Court Judge Anna J. Brown ordered Salt to attend an intensive batterer's intervention program and to undergo substance abuse and mental health treat-

ment. Among other conditions of supervision, Salt is prohibited from entering the Umatilla Indian Reservation or contacting the woman and their children without advance approval of his probation officer and notice to the United States Attorney's Office.

This case was investigated by the Umatilla Tribal Police Department and FBI Portland's Safe Trails Task Force. It was prosecuted by Jennifer Martin, Assistant

U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

The Safe Trails Task Force unites FBI and federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in a collaborative effort to combat the growth of crime in Indian Country. STTF allows participating agencies to combine limited resources and increase investigative coordination in Indian Country to target violent crime, drugs, gangs and gaming violations.

EOU strengthens online marketing, recruitment and retention

La Grande university partners with Learning House

East Oregonian

LA GRANDE — A new agreement with Learning House, a Wiley brand, opens expansive opportunities to empower online students through Eastern Oregon University's high-quality programs.

Learning House will work with EOU staff to manage online enrollment, provide online student retention services, conduct market research, and execute marketing campaigns for EOU Online. These add-on marketing, recruitment and retention services



EOU file photo

A new agreement with Learning House, a Wiley brand, opens expansive opportunities to empower online students through Eastern Oregon University's high-quality programs.

do not replace current EOU staff but require close cooperation between Learning House and the university. The agreement goes into effect and EOU will begin working with Learning House immediately.

"EOU is a leader in providing high quality programs to online students," said EOU President Tom Insko. "This partnership will allow us to significantly increase enrollments and expand market awareness

of the great online programs offered and grow the number of lives impacted by an EOU education. Our goal is to be serving 5,000 students through online programs by 2029."

A cross-campus committee of faculty, staff and an online student representative convened last fall to identify potential partners and survey faculty and staff about the prospect of working with an enrollment management company. This winter, after selecting Learning House, the group adjourned, and the university began evaluating a draft contract.

The university maintains full responsibility for online academics, and Learning House will not be involved in program devel-

opment or curriculum. The agreement affects marketing, recruitment, retention and consulting services for online programs, and EOU will continue to attract and enroll on-campus students independently. Funding for the agreement comes from a revenue-share after students have enrolled and are taking classes.

Psychology professor Robert Butler participated in the committee last fall, and said he was pleased with Learning House and its willingness to honor EOU's culture and identity as a small, rural university.

"Wiley and Learning House are focused on helping Eastern Oregon University realize its goals in a way that aligns with its unique mission and culture," said

Todd Zipper, co-president of Wiley Education Services and Learning House, a Wiley brand. "Together we can ensure that more students have access to the university's programs in order to achieve their career ambitions."

After the campus committee adjourned in January, anthropology professor Linda Reed-Jerofke remained on the contract evaluation team. Reed-Jerofke said she was opposed to the offer a different company put forward last year, but is satisfied with the proposal from Learning House and its participation in the process, noting that the university needs to expand its marketing and advertising, but lacks the funds to do it.

Hermiston council approves annexation of land for planned 39-home subdivision

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

The Hermiston City Council approved annexation of 9.35 acres of property off Elm Avenue for a planned subdivision on Tuesday.

The subdivision, at 1290 W. Elm Ave. across from the Oxbow Trail entrance, would have an estimated 39 single-family dwellings, according to the annexation application submitted to the city.

Developer Dean Maldonado, of FDM Development, told the city's planning commission the homes would likely sell at \$275,000 to \$350,000.

City planner Clint Spencer told city councilors on Tuesday that the planning commission hearing on the subject had drawn some opposition from neighbors concerned about the fact that the property is zoned R-4, allowing for denser, multi-family development. They voiced concerns about traffic and crowding.

In response to the testi-

mony at the meeting, Spencer said, Maldonado said he had no interest in adding multi-family dwellings to the site. He offered to voluntarily enter into a binding development agreement with the city to only develop single-family homes on lots of at least 8,000 square feet — developing to an R-1 standard but saving the time and expense it would take to go through a rezoning process to change the comprehensive plan.

Spencer said the development agreement made the planning commission comfortable with recommending that the city approve the annexation. The development will still have to go through the platting process and other approvals before being built.

He said water and sewer are available to be extended to the development, and the

developer would be required to pave the unpaved section of West Elm Avenue and add sidewalks, curbs and gutters. He said the new traffic signal at that intersection will help "a lot" with traffic flow.

Mayor David Drotzmann asked about another letter of opposition, sent by owners of a nearby property for sale, who stated there was already "ample" property available nearby for that use. Spencer said the property in question was zoned for commercial use, not residential.

The property for the new subdivision sits behind Lifetime Vision Source, owned by the mayor. The mayor only votes on city ordinances in the event of a tie, and Tuesday's vote was unanimous.

The proposed subdivision off of Elm is one of sev-

eral housing projects proposed or started in the city recently. Last month the council annexed land off Theater Lane into the city for a proposed 53-lot subdivision, and construction has started on a 43-unit apartment complex on Southeast Sixth Street.

"Hopefully this all comes to fruition, because we need it," Drotzmann said.

On Tuesday the council also approved renewing the city's contract with Kayak Public Transit, which runs the city's free public bus system. The city started HART in January 2017.

Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said the agreement for 2019-21 is the same as the HART's first two years — the city pays Kayak \$125,000 a year to run the entire operation.

He said ridership was at about 5,000 rides in 2018, but is on track to reach over 8,000 in 2019. The bus system has expanded its hours and now runs from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday, making 10 loops per day through the city.

"HOPEFULLY THIS ALL COMES TO FRUITION, BECAUSE WE NEED IT."

Hermiston Mayor David Drotzmann

LOCAL BRIEFING

Milton-Freewater development sets grand opening

MILTON-FREEWATER — Milton-Freewater's largest housing development in years breaks ground on Friday.

Developer Barry Weis, of Milton-Freewater, said the area spans 176 acres in all and the first phase offers 72 lots. He called the site of future homes a boon for community.

His company, Legacy Land Development, is holding an open house for the public to celebrate the event at noon on Key Boulevard one block south of Sykes Boulevard.

Services offered for those who hire homecare workers

SALEM — The Arc of Oregon will provide free services to employers of personal support workers and homecare workers in some counties in Eastern Oregon through a new contract with the Oregon Home Care Commission.

The Employer Resource Connection provides free services to employers of homecare workers and personal support workers. Its consultants help empower individuals to be effective, successful employers of homecare and personal support workers by providing tools, resources, and support to manage their in-home services, so they can live as independently as possible at home and in their communities.

For example, a person with an intellectual or developmental disability may need assistance deciding the types of interview questions to ask potential personal support workers.

Employer Resource Connection will be offered to employers of personal support workers in these counties: Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Wasco and Wheeler. Employer Resource Connection will also be available to employers of homecare workers in these counties: Gilliam, Hood River, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Wasco and Wheeler.

Sheriff's office confirms ID of victim in fatal crash near Pendleton

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office confirmed Toni Renee Brown, 21, of Pendleton, was the victim in the recent fatal crash near Pendleton.

The sheriff's office Tuesday at about 8:30 a.m. responded to a report of a single-vehicle rollover off Mill Road near Hoeft Road south of Pendleton. Deputies found a maroon Chevrolet Malibu was resting on its top on Hoeft Road,

which is a two-lane, gravel road.

Brown was the driver and only occupant, according to the sheriff's office, and she was dead before deputies and medics arrived.

The sheriff's office also reported the crash likely occurred several hours before its discovery and possibly during the night.

The Malibu apparently lost traction and the driver overcorrected, which caused the car to skid and roll over.

The sheriff's office also reported it is awaiting for the results of toxicology tests to determine if alcohol was a factor.

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