



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

An inground sprinkler system waters the lawn at The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints in Hermiston on Tuesday afternoon.

Water conservation can help lower bills

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Since water and sewer rates increased in March to pay for repairs and upgrades to the system, high water bills have been a hot topic on social media in Hermiston.

A petition on change.org by Jacob Neighbors, which gained 922 signatures, drew comments from residents who said they were having to take shorter showers or let their lawns go brown to be able to afford their bill.

“Many residents have experienced hard to swallow increases without any changes in water quality, volume, or accessibility,” Neighbors wrote.

While discussion online hasn’t sparked any discussions at city council about lowering rates again, there are some conservation steps that people can take to lower their bill on their own.

During warm weather, the biggest cost for most homeowners comes from watering their lawns, gardens and other landscaping. Many people water their lawn every day, but experts say about four times a week is sufficient for most of the year.

Homeowners have the option of removing plants for “xeriscaping” options like bark chips or rocks, but if they are set on keeping their green, grassy lawn, they can take steps to reduce the amount of water they waste in the process.

Watering in the evening minimizes the amount of water lost to evaporation, and avoiding windy days keeps the breeze from carrying away droplets. Watering in two shorter sessions with a break in between helps prevent losing water to runoff as well.

Raising your lawnmower blades to a higher level and keeping fertilizer to a minimum can also help the lawn retain more water.

Make sure sprinklers are watering the lawn, not the sidewalk or driveway, and repair even small leaks immediately. According to WaterSense, the Environmental Protection Agency’s water conservation program, a leak the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen can waste over 6,000 gallons of water per month.

“Household leaks can waste approximately nearly

900 billion gallons of water annually nationwide,” the WaterSense fact sheet states. “That’s equal to the annual household water use of nearly 11 million homes.”

Water users in Hermiston pay a base charge of \$30 per month, plus 50 cents per 1,000 gallons up to 15,000 gallons and \$3.50 per 1,000 gallons thereafter. That means even a small 6,000 gallon leak can add an extra \$21 per month.

The city offers the EyeOn-Water app for free to all customers, which can help detect leaks. The app allows users to track their water usage by the month, day or time of day and can be set up to send alerts to their phone when usage patterns indicate a leak.

Beyond leaks and lawns, dishwashers and washing machines can also be heavy water users. According to the city of Portland, about 22 percent of the water used in a typical residential home is from washing clothes.

Purchasing appliances, faucets, shower heads, toilets and more with the government’s WaterSense seal of approval can greatly reduce the amount of water a home uses. But if new appliances are not in the budget, people

MORE INFORMATION

For more information on ways to lower your water bill, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

can also help reduce wasted water by waiting to run a load of clothes or dishes until the machine is full.

They can also not let water run any longer than necessary while hand washing items in the sink or rinsing vegetables and fruit.

In the bathroom, letting the sink run while brushing your teeth or shaving and letting the shower or bath run while shaving your legs is sending money straight down the drain. WaterSense suggests running a timer to help keep showers shorter as well.

You can check for toilet leaks by dropping food coloring in the tank of the toilet and waiting several minutes to see if any shows up in the bowl without flushing. According to the EPA, replacing old toilets with new water-conserving models can save families an average of 13,000 gallons of water a year.

Video helps Pendleton police understand Tuesday’s serious crash

By **PHIL WRIGHT**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton police Chief Stuart Roberts said the 73-year-old motorcyclist who crashed Tuesday in Pendleton likely suffered a “life-altering” injury.

The motorcycle and a Toyota Rav4 collided Tuesday around 4:50 p.m. in the intersection of Southwest Dorion Avenue and 10th Street. Finding out what occurred became onerous, Roberts said, when people who claimed they were witnesses had conflicting accounts.

“No two had the same story,” he said.

Officers on Wednesday were able to view video from Dave’s Chevron at 220 S.W. 12th St. and that helped bring clarity to a

terrible moment.

Roberts said the motorcycle and the Toyota Rav4 were traveling side-by-side east on Dorion Avenue, with the Toyota in the northern lane and the motorcycle in the southern lane. As they entered the intersection with 10th Street, the motorcyclist turned left from the southern lane and smashed into the Toyota.

The SUV continued about a block further on Dorion, dragging the motorcyclist before getting stopped on the south side curb. Roberts said that may have caused the rider’s severe injuries.

A Life Flight helicopter took the rider to Kadlec Regional Medical Center, Richland, Washington. Roberts said doctors there have performed surgery on the man, who is intubated

and will remain so for several days.

The motorcyclist had identification showing he was from the area of Calgary in Alberta, Canada, Roberts said, but so far police have had no luck in finding anyone who knows him. Roberts also said the man at the scene uttered “he didn’t want anyone to be advised,” but just what that means is unclear.

The Toyota driver is a local woman, Roberts said, who does not face citations or charges. He added the crash has left her traumatized.

Roberts also urged locals to stay vigilant when on the roads. The summer has produced several crashes already, and Pendleton Bike Week is bringing in thousands of visitors who may not be as familiar with the town.

BRIEFLY

Unstable bridge forces trail closure

PENDLETON — Forest Service officials on the North Fork John Day Ranger District have closed a portion of Big Creek Trail No. 3151 until further notice due to an unsafe bridge that crosses Big Creek approximately 1.5 miles uphill from the North Fork John Day River Trail.

The bridge supports have completely rotted, making the bridge unstable. There is currently no established, safe creek crossing in that area.

The Big Creek Trail No. 3151 will be closed from its junction with the North Fork John Day River Trail No. 3022 north to the junction with the South Winom Trail No. 3153. The loop opportunity provided by the northern part of the Big Creek Trail and the South Winom Trail will remain open. Closure signs will be posted at both junctions, as well as the North Fork John

Day River, Big Creek, and South Winom trailheads.

The ranger district is working on developing a safe crossing for the bridge, with the goal of reopening the trail prior to hunting season.

Pendleton man takes deal in child porn case

PENDLETON — Steven Moses Enko of Pendleton took a plea deal in June and avoided facing trial for possessing child pornography.

Enko pleaded guilty on June 28 in Umatilla County Circuit Court to two counts of first-degree encouraging child sex abuse. Court records show Judge Daniel Hill sentenced Enko, 38, to two years and three months in state prison. He gets credit for the time he was in the Umatilla County Jail. Enko could be eligible for release in April 2021, according to Oregon Department of Corrections information. He also has

to complete three years of post-prison supervision.

Pendleton police investigated the case in 2018 based on a “Cyber Tipline Report” and related information from the Oregon Department of Justice about apparent child pornography, according to a search warrant affidavit. The material included photographs depicting children from about 2-7 years old in sexual acts. Bowen obtained records for social media websites and followed the trail to Enko.

The district attorney’s office charged Enko with 13 counts of encouraging child sex abuse and dismissed 11 of those per the deal. According to the plea petition, Enko admitted to having a visual recording of child pornography since late December 2017. Taking the deal nixed his trial, which would have began July 2.

Enko now is in the inmate intake center at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, Wilsonville.

Staying Safe in Wildfire Season



Wildfire season is here, and safety is top of mind for you and us.

As wildfires become more frequent and intense, we’re taking even more steps to keep you safe—especially in areas with higher risk of fires. We’re trimming vegetation around power lines, adding more weather monitoring equipment and expanding our preparedness efforts by working with local, state and federal emergency services.

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Crawl (R)
4:50p 7:20p 9:30p

Spider-Man: Far From Home (PG13)
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4D 4:10p 9:50p

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