

# EAST OREGONIAN

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2019

143rd Year, No. 230

WINNER OF THE 2019 ONPA GENERAL EXCELLENCE AWARD

\$1.50

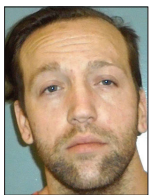
**HERMISTON**

## Change of plea in murder case

Vincent Shermantine takes deal; David Sommerville faces murder charges

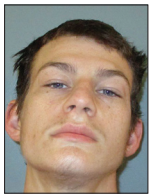
By PHIL WRIGHT  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Vincent Wesley David Shermantine no longer faces a murder charge for the 2018 killing of Eric Navarrete of Hermiston.



Shermantine

Shermantine, 30, of Hermiston, pleaded guilty Tuesday to first-degree robbery and unlawful use of a weapon, according to state court records.



Sommerville

The Umatilla County District Attorney's office in April charged Shermantine with those two crimes plus murder and felon in possession of a weapon. Circuit Judge Dan Hill accepted the change of plea at his courtroom in Hermiston and remanded Shermantine to the custody of the sheriff's office pending his sentencing.

The court also sealed the plea petition, and District Attorney Dan Primus said he did not want to talk about the plea while the case continues against Shermantine's co-defendant, David Edgar Sommerville.

The state accused Shermantine and Sommerville of robbing Navarrete at gunpoint on June 4, 2018, and then Sommerville in the course of the crime shot and killed Navarrete.

Sommerville, 20, of Boardman, has pleaded not guilty to two counts of unlawful use of a weapon, murder and aggravated murder, the only crime that carries the threat of the death penalty in Oregon.

Oregon has 29 men and one woman on death row, according to the Oregon Department of Corrections. The state's last execution was May 16, 1997, with the lethal injection of Harry Charles Moore. The governor's office in 2011 placed a moratorium on the death penalty.

See Plea, Page A7



# What's in store for WINTER?

By ALEX CASTLE  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — It might be time to check that those winter jackets and boots are still in the back of your closet where you left them in the spring.

Or so says the Old Farmer's Almanac, at least.

According to the reference book's 2020 edition released last week, Eastern Oregon should expect colder temperatures with above average precipitation and snowfall this winter.

The almanac positions Eastern Oregon in the Intermountain region, which stretches as far south as Flagstaff, Arizona, and as far north as the U.S.-Canada border. In total, the region encompasses nine different states between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains.

For the 2019-20 winter, the Intermountain region will reportedly be characterized by "low temps, deep powder." Across the country, the almanac is predicting "frequent snow events — from flurries to no fewer than seven big snowstorms from coast to coast."

In February, Pendleton recorded all-time highs in snowfall after being covered in 32.5 inches during the shortest month of the year. That's nearly double the previous record of 16.8 inches and, according to the National Weather Service, nearly 10 times the average snowfall of 3.4 inches for the month.

While the area saw some more snowfall in March this year, the Old Farm-

See Winter, Page A7

## HERE'S A PREDICTION

Old Farmer's Almanac says colder temperatures, above average precipitation and snowfall this winter in region



Staff photos by E.J. Harris, File

**TOP:** Travis Hamman uses a bobcat to move snow while working with NW Installations snow removal service in Pendleton in February 2019. **ABOVE:** Pedestrians and vehicles navigate snow-covered roads on Dec. 28, 2017, in downtown Pendleton. According to the Old Farmer's Almanac's 2020 edition released last week, Eastern Oregon should expect colder temperatures with above average precipitation and snowfall this winter.

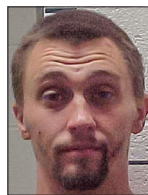
## Washington murder suspect no longer fighting extradition

By CHRIS COLLINS  
EO Media Group

BAKER CITY — Washington murder suspect Colby James Hedman ended his fight to stay in the Baker County Jail.

Hedman, 23, a former Heppner resident, waived extradition Wednesday in Baker County Circuit Court before Judge Greg Baxter. That action means he soon will leave for Washington where he will face charges of first-degree murder and theft of a motor vehicle.

Baker City attorney Damien Yervasi represented Hedman, while assistant district attorney Michael Spaulding represented the state. Baxter told Hedman while Wash-



Hedman

ington authorities have 21 days to retrieve him from the Baker County Jail, he expects them to act sooner because of the first-degree murder charge.

"I'm pretty sure Washington will come down and get you within the week," Baxter told Hedman, who appeared via video from the Baker County Jail.

Upon his return to Washington to face the more serious charges, the state will dismiss the Baker County charges. Spaulding told the judge that Bob and Robbie Borders, who live on Taggart Lane north of Baker City where Hedman is accused of stealing two of their vehicles, supported the state's action.

Hedman has been in the Baker County Jail since his arrest July 9 on two counts of unauthorized use of a motor vehicle and one count of attempting to flee or elude police,

both Class C felonies; two counts of second-degree criminal mischief, Class C misdemeanors; and one count each of reckless driving, second-degree criminal trespass and failure to perform the duties of a driver involved in an accident, all Class A misdemeanors.

A grand jury indicted Hedman on the charges on July 11. Baxter set bail at \$100,000, requiring the full amount to be paid before Hedman could be released, rather than 10 percent as is allowed in some cases.

The Washington fugitive warrant charges him with first-degree murder in the death of Kyle J. Martz, 35, of Walla Walla, and theft of Martz's Toyota pickup truck from Martz's home at Walla Walla on July 8.

Hedman has been held in lieu of \$1 million fixed bail on those charges.

The Baker County incident began

about 10:30 p.m. the night of July 8 when county, city and state police responded to a call from Bob Borders reporting the theft of his 1988 Ford F350 pickup from his property. While attempting to elude police during the incident, police said Hedman returned to the Borders' home and took a second vehicle, a 2000 Jeep Wrangler.

Before they were called to the stolen vehicle report, police had been notified Hedman was a suspect in the Walla Walla murder and was driving a Toyota pickup, which they later found abandoned on the shoulder of the eastbound freeway lanes where he had run out of gas.

According to police, Hedman admitted he struck Martz with an ax multiple times the night of July 8 before stealing the victim's vehicle and fleeing to Oregon, where he was arrested after trying to elude police.

