

Parking issues frustrate businesses

Businesses claim loss of customers due to lack of parking

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian



Staff photo by Jade McDowell
Vehicles are parked in front of Her Shabby Shed on Third Street in Hermiston on Friday afternoon. Owner Cynthia Traner said employees of surrounding businesses often park in front of her business because they don't have off-street parking of their own.

HERMISTON — If you've ever argued with your neighbor before, it may have been over parking.

Frustrated residents sometimes call the police or city hall to complain about someone parking in front of their home or business, but there isn't much to be done. Unless it's blocking a fire hydrant, driveway or other type of no-parking zone, anyone can legally park on the street in front of your property.

"On-street parking is for everyone," Hermiston City Planner Clint Spencer said.

Trying to use signs or paint to prevent people from using public, on-street parking is against the city's code of ordinances.

Cynthia Traner owns the mercantile Her Shabby Shed at 165 SW 3rd St., on a block that contains several former homes that have since been turned into businesses, including a salon and law offices. She said most of the older homes where companies are now operating out of don't have driveways or parking lots, causing their employees and company vehicles to take

up on-street parking in front of neighboring businesses.

"I have lost business as several of my customers said they came by and was no parking like before, and furthermore I can't even park in front of my shop to load or unload merchandise," she wrote in a message to the *East Oregonian*.

She said she understands that the on-street parking is public, but she wishes the city would change its parking requirements for businesses operating in mixed commercial and residential areas.

Spencer said there are requirements for businesses to have off-street parking, but the city passed an ordinance in 2017 stating that businesses within 500 feet of

certain municipal parking lots can count that parking as their off-street parking. The neighborhood where Traner's business sits is near a city-owned lot on Orchard Avenue, which allows them to count those spaces as their own off-street parking.

"The city passed the resolution to encourage some of those houses to convert to commercial use," Spencer said.

He said they have tried to add more parking spaces to commercial areas of the city, including switching some on-street parking downtown from parallel parking to diagonal parking.

Traner said she plans to attend a city council meeting

MORE INFORMATION

Other parking rules include: Vehicles should be parked facing the same direction as the adjacent lane of travel, within 12 inches of the curb. People can't live out of an RV parked on the street. Vehicles should not be parked on the street for the sole purpose of selling the vehicle or selling merchandise out of the vehicle.

Vehicles should not be parked within 15 feet of a fire hydrant, and vehicle owners should remove their vehicle as soon as possible from in front of any building where the fire department is responding.

soon to ask the city to consider adding more requirements for off-street parking.

The city of Hermiston has an entire chapter of its code of ordinances devoted to parking, and Spencer said many people are unaware of what's in there. For example, trailers, boats, broken-down cars and other methods of transportation "incapable of being moved by its own power source" are in violation of city code if stored on the street for more than 72 hours.

BRIEFLY

District to host meetings on bike and walking routes to school

PENDLETON — Pendleton School District officials are trying to figure out the best way for students to walk and bike to school, and they're inviting the public to come help.

From Oct. 7-10, the district is hosting a series of "walk audits" and community meetings "to identify how to improve streets near the school to support families in getting to school safely," according to a press release.

The district received a grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation to create a "Safe Routes to School Plan," spurring the district to hire Alta Planning + Design, a national firm with an office in Portland, to help them assemble it.

Each walk audit will start at the flagpole at each school and is open to the public. The walks are scheduled to last for an hour with a community meeting immediately following.

For more information, contact Pendleton School District Superintendent Chris Fritsch at 541-276-6711 or at cfritsch@pendletonsd.org.

A schedule of each event is included below.

Oct. 7

Pendleton Early Learning Center, walk at 2:15 p.m., meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Oct. 8

Pendleton High School and Hawthorne Alternative High School, walk at 7:30 a.m., meeting at 8:30 a.m.

McKay Creek Elementary School, walk at 2:30 p.m., meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Oct. 9:

Sherwood Heights Elementary School, walk at 7:45 a.m., meeting at 8:45 a.m.

Sunridge Middle School, walk at 2:15 p.m., meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Oct. 10

Washington Elementary School, walk at 7:45 a.m., meeting at 8:45 a.m.

Multiple fires near Hermiston Thursday night

UMATILLA COUNTY — A number of vehicles and a building were damaged in a series of separate fires Thursday evening in western Umatilla County.

Umatilla County Fire District 1 responded shortly after 4:30 p.m. to a semitruck on fire at Milepost 2 on Highway 37. No one was injured in the blaze and the fire was contained after 6 p.m., according to Battalion Chief Corey Gorham.

UCFDI responded as mutual aid to a call of a metal shop on fire by the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District. The call went out just before 7 p.m. for the fire at 81830 North Highway 395. The shop contained a cement truck and a full-sized pickup truck. Both were damaged and the building was extensively damaged, Gorham said. No one was in the building at the time, and no injuries were reported. The fire was contained within the hour.

Later in the evening, UCFDI responded to another semitruck on fire around 9 p.m. at Lamb Weston in Hermiston. No injuries were reported, but the truck and trailer had extensive damage.

All three incidents are currently under investigation, Gorham said. He said that the fire marshal is out of town at this time.

— East Oregonian staff

Council changes goal setting process

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton City Council now has a permanent process for setting goals.

According to City Councilor Scott Fairley, the council unanimously voted to amend its rules of order and procedure to remake the way it approaches goals at a meeting Tuesday.

The council adopted its current set of goals — improving infrastructure, economic development, housing, and land devel-

opment — in 2017 and has readopted it since that time.

But Fairley said the city hasn't always found a way to allocate resources toward that goal, which the new rules try to rectify.

The rules require the council to meet with staff at least once each summer to go over the goals, discuss funding challenges, and establish goals for the following fiscal year.

In the months that follow, the council will accept input from the public, finalize the goals, and direct the city to come up with strate-

gies to achieve them. Then, in the winter and spring, the council will decide how to fund the goals and include it in the city's annual budget.

From now on, the city manager is also evaluated on their ability to implement the benchmarks set by each goal.

Fairley said the new rules won't lessen political risk or the decision making ability of the council, but it should enable the council to enact policies that can change the status quo.

The council will meet

again for a workshop on Tuesday, where members will discuss an annual report from the Pendleton Downtown Association and homeless camping.

The council is also set to meet privately to discuss "real property." Although the agenda isn't specific, the council convened in executive session on Sept. 24 to talk about proposals for the old fire station at 911 S.W. Court Ave.

The council will meet at 7 p.m. at the council chamber annex in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave.

Local high schools ready to ramp up completion rates for FAFSA

By **JESSICA POLLARD**
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — October isn't just for Halloween, it also means filing for financial aid.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid is officially open for high school seniors considering going to college next year. And this time around, Oregon is hoping to boost completion numbers.

In August, the Oregon Department of Education and other partners rolled out a challenge for high schools to try and get as many students to fill out the FAFSA — or the ORSAA for undocumented or deferred action students — as possible. The goal is to increase completion rates by 5%.

"This can be a really

stressful time for students and their parents. I would recommend they have conversations about who is going to pay and how," said Liz Marvin, who is the College Bound coordinator at Hermiston High School.

Hermiston High School, along with other area schools, including Pendleton, Stanfield and Umatilla high schools, are participating in the statewide challenge.

A press release from the ODE states that Oregon's class of 2019 had a combined completion rate of almost 60%, which lags behind other states. The state education department hopes to bump that number to 64% of the class of 2020 filling out one of the forms.

According to data released in August from the

National College Access Network, the number of completed FAFSA applications in Oregon for the 2019-20 school year was just over 26,000, up by 1.3% from the year prior.

The network also stated that seniors who fill out FAFSA are 84% more likely to immediately enter college. Completion of the form is also associated with a 100% increase in the amount of lowest income students who enroll into college out of high school.

Marvin said parents who worry they won't qualify for aid should fill out the application, which is often required for application to other scholarships.

At Hermiston High School, a financial aid day will be hosted on campus on Oct. 19. Marvin said the

school usually has financial aid experts on hand and opens up computer labs so students will have support filling out their aid applications.

"We would like everybody to do everything they can so they have options after high school. We're busy all throughout that day," she said.

Filling out the FAFSA

application can be completed online at studentaid.gov/afsa or via the myStudentAid app released last year. Students and their families will need Social Security numbers, recent tax returns, some basic financial information, as well as a list of schools they are interested in and other basic information.

Marvin said although

she's not a fan of student loans, filling out the federal application is the only way to become eligible for many of them, if that's how a student has to pay for college.

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