

Walla Walla police add three drones to fleet

Three officers received FAA licenses to fly the unmanned aerial vehicles

By EMILY THORNTON
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA — Residents could notice more buzzing in the air, particularly near crime scenes, as three drones are among the Walla Walla Police Department’s tools.

Three officers received their Federal Aviation Administration licenses to fly the unmanned aerial systems, which were bought recently, according to Walla Walla Police Sgt. Eric Knudson. He added officials have discussed having the machines for about a year, as they’ve become increasingly useful.

“In 2017, it was estimated that about 347 police departments, sheriffs’ offices, and EMS and fire departments in 43 states were flying drones,” according to an April 2019 report on the USDOJ’s Community Oriented Policing Services “Community Policing Dispatch” website. “And it is expected that this number



Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Photo/Greg Lehman

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will grow dramatically.” Benton and Franklin counties already have drones, Walla Walla Detective Chris Ruchert said, and have used them for crime scenes, such as officer-involved shootings.

“I think it’ll be a really valuable tool for us to have,” she said.

Officer Logan Morris, Officer Eric Eastman and Ruchert attended a pre-paratory course in March and successfully tested in September.

Ruchert said they weren’t

quite ready to use them routinely for crime scenes, but likely would use Morris on the drones in an emergency, as he has had practice with his personal machine. She said more practice would ensure drones wouldn’t crash or put people in danger.

“It’s a new program for us,” she said. “We’re still getting confident and proficient. ... It’ll be exciting when we’re fully functional. There’s always a learning curve during training.”

Ruchert said she’s flown the machines a few times

and it was fun. However, she knew the additions weren’t meant for play and wished the department had them sooner, such as during a recent case involving a barricaded person, a situation that required SWAT assistance.

“It would have been helpful to have it in the back of the house without the suspect knowing what we were doing,” she said, adding the machines could get a perspective of the scene without putting officers in potential harm’s way.



Walla Walla Union-Bulletin Photo/Greg Lehman

Walla Walla police Detective Chris Ruchert demonstrates the department’s new drone recently.

“Personally, I’d rather lose a \$3,000 drone than an officer,” she said.

Having the DJI Mavic 2 Enterprise Dual, one of the WWPd’s drones, also would’ve helped during a recent silver alert involving a missing woman, Knudson said. Several officers searched on foot in the dense woods near Fort Walla Walla, he said, but the drone’s thermal imaging could’ve been used.

The other two drones bought by the WWPd were the DJI Mavic 2 Enterprise Zoom and the DJI Spark, for training.

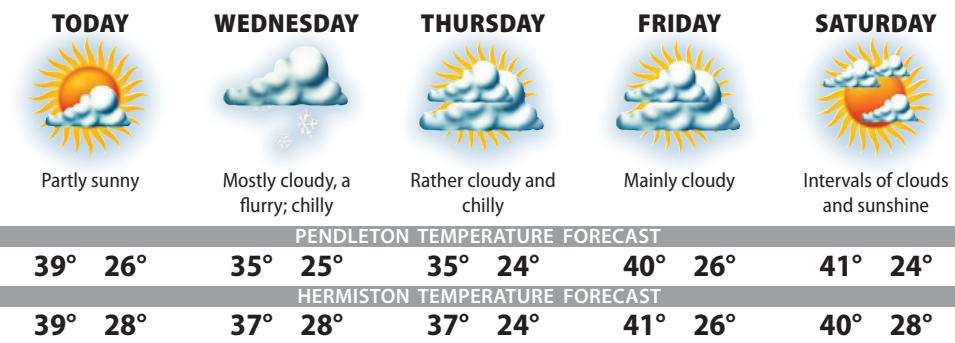
The \$8,502 worth of drones and equipment will be used to protect “lives and property when other means and resources are not avail-

able or are less effective,” according to a WWPd social media post. Police won’t use the UAS for “random surveillance activities, and our operators will follow the guidelines established by the FAA for operation.”

“We’re not going to send a drone up and spy in people’s yards,” Ruchert added.

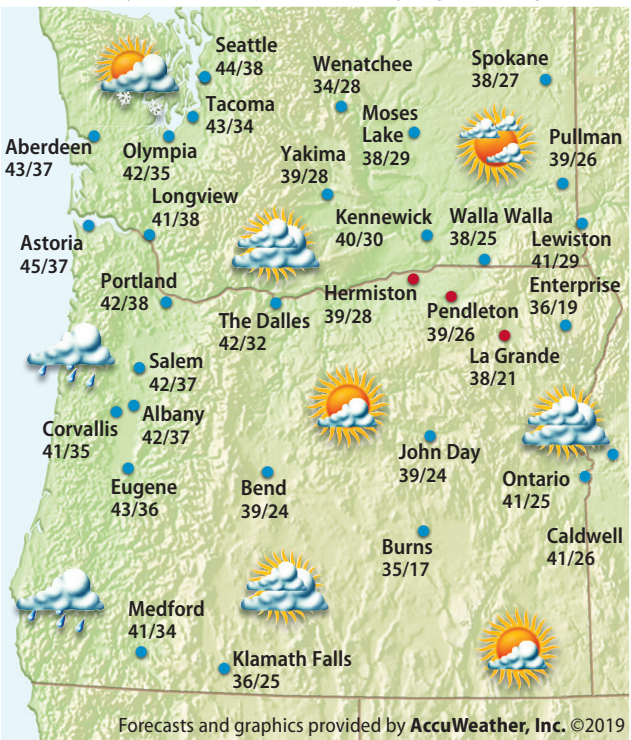
Scenarios likely involving drones include search and rescue, providing visuals, documenting crime scenes, managing disasters, and in deploying officers in barricaded and/or hostage situations. They also may help police understand the scope of an incident. Fatal collisions could be another opportunity for drones to document from overhead, Knudson said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



ALMANAC

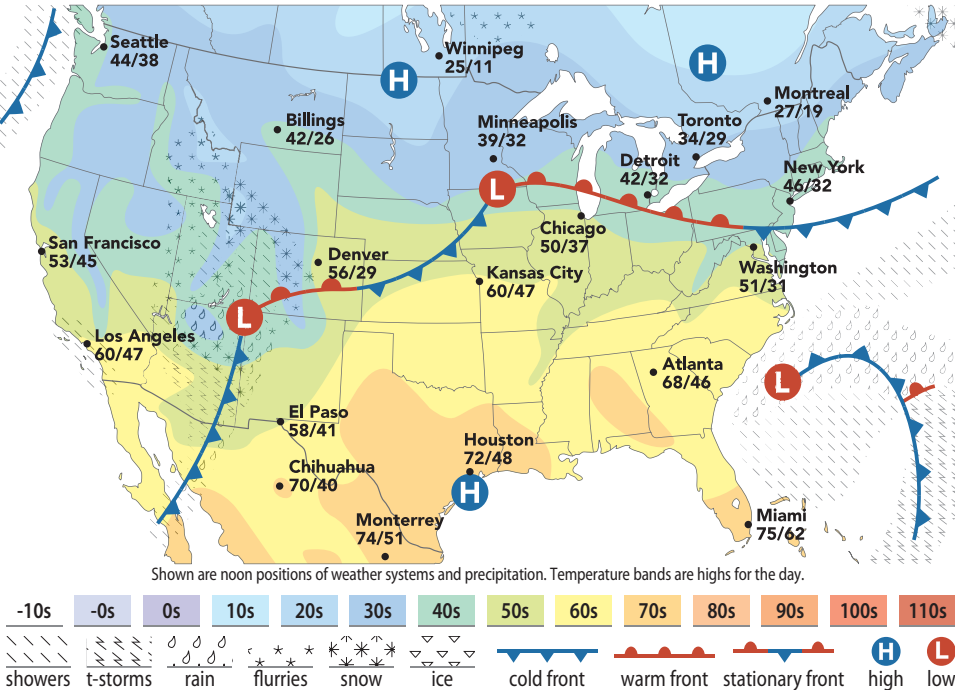
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	46°	39°	
Normals	39°	25°	
Records	64° (1950)	-19° (1983)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.			0.13"
Month to date			0.75"
Normal month to date			1.16"
Year to date			12.33"
Last year to date			9.96"
Normal year to date			12.63"
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	48°	37°	
Normals	38°	27°	
Records	62° (1936)	-17° (1983)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.			Trace
Month to date			0.13"
Normal month to date			1.11"
Year to date			5.08"
Last year to date			7.57"
Normal year to date			9.58"
WINDS (in mph)			
	Today	Wed.	
Boardman	SW 3-6	NNE 3-6	
Pendleton	NNW 4-8	N 4-8	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today			7:34 a.m.
Sunset tonight			4:15 p.m.
Moonrise today			5:56 a.m.
Moonset today			3:15 p.m.
New	First	Full	Last
			
Dec 25	Jan 2	Jan 10	Jan 17

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 79° in Falfurrias, Texas Low -13° in Antero Reservoir, Colo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



New CBD store opens in La Grande

Parent company, Nugget CBD, also owns locations in Ontario, Idaho

By SABRINA THOMPSON
EO Media Group

LA GRANDE — A store specializing in selling CBD products celebrated its grand opening on Friday in La Grande.

Nugget CBD, a company with locations in Ontario and in Idaho owned by Jenny and Justin Long of Baker City, offers CBD (cannabidiol) in various forms at a new shop next to the Local Harvest Eatery and Pub on Island Avenue. Angela Lees, Jenny Long’s sister-in-law, manages the store.

“All of our stuff is for health and wellness, not recreational use,” Lees said.

Products at the store contain less than 0.3% THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the main psychoactive com-

pound in marijuana that gives the feeling of being high. The low level is a requirement of federal law.

CBD and THC are two natural compounds in plants of the *Cannabis* genus. CBD can be extracted from hemp or from marijuana. Hemp plants are cannabis plants that contain less than 0.3% THC, while marijuana plants are cannabis plants that contain higher concentrations of THC.

CBD products have been said to relieve pain and anxiety and help with sleep.

“I think the biggest issue will be getting people to get past the perception it is marijuana,” Lees said. “(CBD) is a health and wellness product and not anything to be ashamed of.”

While other stores in La Grande sell items containing CBD, including Nature’s Pantry and Desires, Nugget CBD is the only store in town selling only these products.

“I saw a need in the com-

munity with people having to drive all the way to Pendleton to purchase specific CBD products,” Lees said. “The more we talked to people in the area, the more we found everyone was taking it.”

Larry Murphy of La Grande has used products containing cannabidiol in the past to help when he was fighting cancer. He attended the grand opening to see what is now locally available.

“I had cancer twice, and I heard there were a lot of benefits to CBD,” Murphy said.

Murphy said the chemotherapy made eating difficult, and after using some of the CBD candies he was able to eat again.

Lees uses CBD herself to help with sleep and said she has seen products help with pain.

“I see people come in who are in so much pain, and it breaks my heart,” Lees said. “I want to do what I can to help them.”

BRIEFLY

Oregon truck stop stabbing investigated as hate crime

ONTARIO — Authorities are investigating a stabbing in an Eastern Oregon truck stop as a possible hate crime.

The Ontario Police Department said Ronnell Hughes, who is a 48-year-old black man, was at an Arby’s Restaurant about 9:40 a.m. Saturday when he was stabbed multiple times in the neck by Nolan Strauss, 26, of Nebraska.

Strauss, who is a white man, is believed to be a truck driver and remains in Malheur County Jail on charges of attempted murder, assault and intimidation. It’s unclear if he’s represented by an attorney.

Police said Hughes recently moved to the area and was inside the Pilot truck stop seeking employment. He was sitting down at the Arby’s near the Idaho border when he was attacked with a knife unprovoked.

Hughes was taken to an Idaho hospital in “stable” condition.

The Arby’s employees who intervened and subdued Strauss were not hurt.

Police said there’s no indication the two men knew each other or interacted before the sudden attack.

“The motive for the attack leans heavily

towards a racially motivated crime,” police said in a statement.

Oregonians to see increased cost for car registrations

EUGENE — Oregonians will have to pay \$18 to \$110 more per year to register their vehicles come Jan. 1 as the state implements a new tiered fee structure with higher rates for vehicles with better gas mileage.

The change will add the most front-end cost to owners of fuel-efficient hybrids and electric cars, which contribute less money to Oregon’s fuel tax revenues than gas-guzzler vehicles such as sports cars or pickup trucks.

The state said the new fees are necessary to comply with Oregon’s constitution that requires everyone who uses the roads to pay their fair share, and electric car owners can avoid costs by allowing the state to track their mileage.

But while some owners support the change, others say the increases contradict the state’s efforts to reduce emissions and have at least 50,000 electric cars registered by the end of 2020.

— Associated Press

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