

Accused killer to get sanity eval at public's expense

By EMILY THORNTON
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — The man accused of murdering a Whitman College employee last summer has been ordered to receive a sanity or diminished capacity evaluation at the public's expense.

Colby J. Hedman, 24, which Pendleton police list as a transient from the Hepner area, was ordered in November 2019 to receive three months of "compe-

tency restoration treatment" at Eastern State Hospital in Medical Lake after lawyers doubted his ability to stand trial.

This new order, for a sanity or diminished capacity evaluation, was signed Friday by Walla Walla County Judge John Lohrmann and grants \$1,000 for an evaluation and report.



Hedman

No specific hospital or doctor was named, but the order allowed defense attorney Robin Olson to retain an expert since Hedman was not able to pay for an evaluation.

The order also stated "funds are reasonable, and an evaluation is necessary to adequately represent defendant in this matter."

Hedman's trial is scheduled for March 24, but that could be delayed as the defense seeks additional information.

Hedman's bail was set at \$1 million in September 2019, after he was extradited from Baker County, in connection with the July slaying of Kyle Martz, 35, of Walla Walla.

Hedman admitted to police at his arrest that he struck Martz with an ax multiple times before stealing his car and fleeing to Oregon, where he was arrested trying to elude officers.

Officials suspect Hedman and Martz didn't know

each other.

Plans to formally arraign Hedman, or hear charges and record his plea, were postponed pending the earlier treatment evaluation. He finally pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder and vehicle theft in late January.

Walla Walla County Prosecuting Attorney Jim Nagle said, in an earlier interview, that Hedman would plead only "if his competency is restored."

However, Hedman's

attorney said at the arraignment he planned to follow up with the insanity evaluation.

Competency refers more to the defendant's ability to understand what's happening in court, while insanity refers to his state of mind during the alleged crime and is used as part of the defense's argument.

Hedman's former attorney, Jesse Montagnino, withdrew as he said he would be moving out of state, records stated.

Field burn



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

A man is silhouetted against the smoke and sky as he watches a field burn near County Road 1096 outside of Pendleton on Thursday afternoon.

Rogers Toyota breaks ground on new dealership

By JADE MCDOWELL
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — North Highway 395 in Hermiston is about to get a shiny new addition.

Rogers Toyota held a groundbreaking ceremony Thursday morning for their new dealership on the corner of Highway 395 and Punkin Center, which will cover 7 acres of ground and include a 30,000-square-foot main building and a detailing shop. It is expected to be complete in November.

Owner Ryan Rogers said when Larry Campbell, who owned Hermiston's former Toyota dealership, asked if he would be interested in buying the dealership in 2014, accepting that offer was "one of the best business decisions ever." The Hermiston community has embraced Rogers Toyota with open arms, he said, making it an easy decision to expand.

"Normally, I would be nervous as heck to put this big of an investment in, but it's a no-brainer," he said.

Rogers' father started the company in 1971. At the time, he was the youngest Pontiac dealer in the country at age 19, Rogers said. His father taught him the importance of putting customers first.

At Thursday's groundbreaking, Hermiston Chamber of Commerce director Kimberly Nevil noted that Rogers Toyota is a major sponsor of many of Hermiston's events, and said she was excited to see their growth.

"Of all the community events the chamber does, Rogers is always a partner,"



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Rogers Toyota of Hermiston officially broke ground on their new dealership and service center Thursday morning in Hermiston.

she said. "We're very thankful for Rogers."

She and Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering both praised the project for helping to develop Hermiston's main thoroughfare through town. The car dealerships up and down Highway 395 have helped make the community a "car dealership capital" in the area, Elfering said.

"We're excited to see this development here on this corner, and excited to see

development all the way up and down Highway 395," he said.

The dealership's general manager, Glenn Silaski, told the *East Oregonian* that the new dealership will address crowding problems at the current location farther south on the highway, from parking to bathrooms. There will be space for more inventory on the lot and twice as many service bays, including three enclosed drive-thru lanes that will shelter people

from the weather as they get out of their vehicle.

The business currently employs 50 people, and Silaski said the extra service bays will result in hiring additional staff after the project is complete.

On Thursday, as heavy construction equipment moved dirt around in the background, Silaski told the community members gathered on a corner of the lot that he understands people are always skeptical that construction projects will stay on timeline, but he had a good feeling about meeting the projected timeline to move into the new building in November.

"Just since yesterday, you can hardly recognize (the site)," he said.

The project is being built by McAlvain Companies, Inc. of Boise.



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I Still Believe (PG)
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Onward (PG)
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BRIEFLY

Winter weather expected this weekend

PENDLETON — A winter weather advisory is in effect from 5 p.m. Friday until 5 p.m. Saturday, according to the National Weather Service.

A late season winter storm will affect most of Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon Friday through Sunday with heavy snow in the mountains and light to moderate snow in the lower elevations, the NWS said, adding that drier air will spread from the north with snow tapering off over most of Eastern Washington on Sunday, while Eastern Oregon will see drier conditions Monday and Monday night.

Snow accumulations are expected to range from 1-2 inches on Friday night to less than 1 inch possible on Saturday and Sunday in the Pendleton area.

Near Meacham, 1-3 inches is possible on Friday night, with 1-2 inches possible on Saturday and Sunday. Overnight lows are expected to plummet into the low 20s on Friday night and mid-teens on Saturday and Sunday night.

Northeast Oregon forests seeking committee members

PENDLETON — The Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee is seeking nominees for new members to serve on a vital Resource

Advisory Committee. The committee is tasked with recommending projects to improve forest health, watersheds, roads and facilities around Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests.

The projects that are funded through the RAC are varied in focus and scope, ranging from fish passage restoration to constructing new trails. Beyond getting important work done, projects have also utilized youth crews which provide young people with unique opportunities to develop a love of the outdoors while gaining valuable hands-on work experience.

RAC committee members are officially appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture for a term of two years, and although not compensated for their work, members can get reimbursed for travel expenses to, during and from meetings. In order to ensure that the group can accomplish its goals, members are expected to participate in two full-day meetings each year. Residents of Baker, Crook, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Union, Wallowa, and Wheeler counties are particularly encouraged to submit applications although others may apply.

Nominations will be accepted until Sept. 30, 2020. Instructions can be found at the SRS RAC website, www.fs.usda.gov/main/pts/specialprojects/racs.

— EO Media Group

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