

Rec supervisor recognized for stepping in on shooting

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — A city employee, who stepped in during a recent shooting, was recognized for “actions above and beyond the normal call of duty” during the Hermiston City Council’s meeting on Monday, March 8.

Brandon Artz, the city’s recreation supervisor, was the previously unnamed city employee that Hermiston Police Department had praised for “quick thinking” on Feb. 10 when police arrested Howard Califf, 46, of Hermiston on several charges, including attempted murder.

According to the initial news release from police, Califf arrived armed at a home in the 250 block of East Gladys Avenue that he had previously lived in, and then been barred from by a court order. He allegedly fired several rounds inside the residence and at a male relative of the home’s owner, at one point shooting the victim’s dog as it attempted to defend its owner. The dog is expected to make a full recovery, police said.

The home where the incident took place is near the buildings being used as temporary city hall offices, and during the city council meeting Artz said he was just leaving one of those offices when he saw a man lying down next to a dog and went



City of Hermiston/Contributed Photo
Brandon Artz, right, receives a certificate of recognition for Mayor David Drotzmann, left, during a Hermiston City Council meeting on Monday, March 8, 2021.

to investigate.

“As I rolled down my window I said, ‘Hey buddy, do you need some help?’ and he said, ‘Yes, somebody just shot my dog,’” Artz said.

He said he spotted a handgun lying near the scene and immediately dialed 911 as he got out of his vehicle. He then saw a man coming out of the home there and kicked the gun under his vehicle so it was out of easy reach.

“I stood over the gun, and there was an altercation still with that, but I wanted to make sure that gun was safe and that nobody was going to be able to use it to harm anyone,” he said.

Artz said he successfully kept the man from getting to the gun until police arrived in under two minutes and secured the scene.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said Artz’s actions were a good example of a resident seeing something

out of place and following their gut feeling about it.

“Without going into detail because this is a pending matter, it could have ended a lot worse, so we absolutely appreciate Brandon’s assistance,” he said.

Mayor David Drotzmann presented Artz with a certificate of recognition from Drotzmann, Edmiston and City Manager Byron Smith, thanking him for his actions.

Califf remains in the Umatilla County Jail on one count of attempted murder, two counts of unlawful use of a weapon, one count of burglary in the first degree, one county of menacing, one count of animal abuse in the second degree, one count of interfering with a peace officer, one count of reckless endangering, one count of unlawful possession of a firearm and one count of resisting arrest. His bail is listed at \$390,000.

Spicerkuhn retains Hermiston council seat

HERMISTON — Philip Spicerkuhn will officially retain his Hermiston City Council seat representing Ward IV after a special election. Spicerkuhn was appointed as an interim councilor in November 2020 after the resignation of Doug Smith, and ran unopposed in the Tuesday, March 9, special election to fill the rest of the term.

According to unofficial results from the Umatilla County elections office posted at 8:27 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9, 819 voters turned in ballots, with 726 votes for Spicerkuhn, 74 write-in votes and 19 ballots turned in with no bubbles filled in.



Spicerkuhn

Walmart scheduling COVID-19 vaccine

UMATILLA COUNTY — All Walmart stores in Oregon began scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments on Wednesday, March 10, according to a news release.

As new appointments become available, slots will appear online at www.walmart.com/COVIDvac

LOCAL BRIEFING



Oregon State Police/Contributed Photo
This photo shows the damaged bumper of a vehicle left behind at the scene of a fatal hit-and-run in Hermiston in 2019.

cine. Times vary by store. Vaccines are available to those currently eligible under Oregon Health Authority guidelines, including those age 65 and up and certain professions.

Vaccine appointments are also available at a variety of other locations now, including Safeway, Bi-Mart, hospitals, and several local health clinics

OSP asks for additional help in fatal hit-and-run

HERMISTON — Oregon State Police are once again asking the public for help in an unsolved hit-and-run in Hermiston that took the life of Antonia Cobarubias, 41.

Cobarubias was struck and killed on Aug. 31, 2019,

at approximately 2:30 a.m. on North Highway 395.

According to Oregon State Police, the suspect vehicle is likely a red Acura Integra from between 1994 and 2001 with aftermarket features.

The vehicle left behind its bumper and a mirror.

Cobarubias’s family is offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to an arrest and conviction in the case.

The Oregon State Police is still requesting anyone with information regarding this to contact the Oregon State Police by dialing *OSP or contact the Oregon State Police Hermiston Office directly by dialing 541-567-3215.

—EO Media Group

Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation replace interim director

East Oregonian

MISSION — As it continues its search for its next executive director, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation appointed a new interim director to replace its outgoing one.

Paul Rabb will succeed Chuck Sams as interim executive director, the latter leaving to fulfill an

appointment to the Northwest Power and Conservation Council by Gov. Kate Brown.

A press release highlighted Sams leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, where he oversaw the Tribes’ spread prevention efforts and vaccine rollout. Prior to his stint as interim director, Sams worked as a communications director and deputy executive director

for the CTUIR, in addition to time spent working in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

“I can’t thank Chuck enough for his service to the Tribe,” Kat Brigham, chair of the CTUIR Board of Trustees, said in a statement. “We are sad to see him go, but happy that he has received such a prestigious appointment from Governor Brown. We know that he will work

for the benefit of the entire region. We wish him nothing but the best.”

Rabb will replace Sams as interim executive director starting on March 12.

The Tribes’ finance director since 2015 and a former housing director, Rabb was the commander of the CTUIR Incident Command Team during the February 2020 floods, which severely damaged

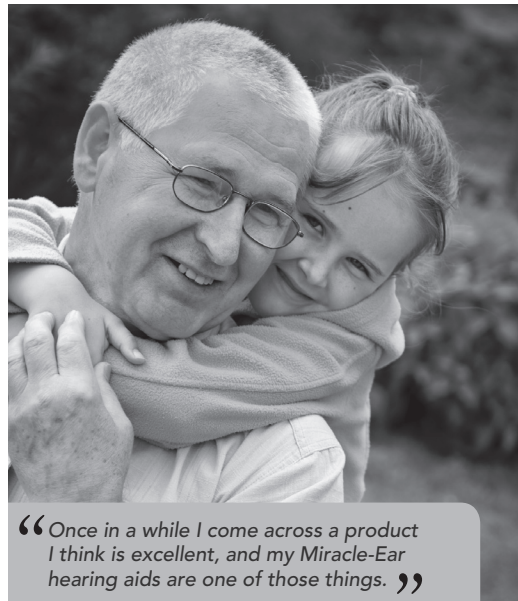
tribal infrastructure and several homes on the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The CTUIR has been led by an interim director since the resignation of former Executive Director Ted Wright in November 2020.

The CTUIR is still in the midst of a national search for its next executive director and expects to make a selection this summer.

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