



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian  
Fireworks sit on a table at the Black Cat fireworks stand Monday, June 28, 2021, in Hermiston. Lesley Phillips, who runs the stand, said she received roughly half her products due to shipping hangups.

# Fireworks stands seeing shortages

Stands could run out before the Fourth of July

By JADE MCDOWELL AND BRYCE DOLE  
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Shipping problems are causing a fireworks shortage at local stands, according to suppliers.

Lesley Phillips, who runs the Black Cat fireworks stand near Grocery Outlet in Hermiston, said much of the inventory she ordered is on a ship at the Port of Tacoma thanks to a shortage of longshoremen and truck drivers. As a result, she said Friday, June 25, she thinks she may be sold out before the Fourth of July.

"I advertised we would be here until the Fourth, and then two days later I found out I'm only getting half my shipment," she said.

The problem seems to be a national one — Phantom Fireworks, one of the nation's largest retail fireworks companies, put out a statement urging consumers to buy early this year.

"Like many other industries, the fireworks industry has also experienced delays due to shipment challenges facing the global market," said Alan L. Zoldan, Phantom executive vice president. "The good news is that we prepared early in antici-



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian  
Fireworks line tables at the Black Cat fireworks stand Monday, June 28, 2021, near Grocery Outlet in Hermiston.

patation of high demand again this year, and are encouraging Phantom customers to do the same."

Phillips said she has heard from other people who sell fireworks in the area that they are also having problems.

"We're all kind of in the same boat (no pun intended) because it all comes from China," she said.

Cami Satterwhite, who runs two fireworks stands in Pendleton, and has for the last 15 years, said her shipment of fireworks this year was about \$10,000 short. That's about half her typical supply.

Satterwhite and her husband run the stand to raise funds for the Pendleton Lighthouse Church and the Lighthouse Christian Academy. She expects they will lose about \$2,000 worth of profit this year due to the shortage. And they will be sold out well before July 4.

"If people want them, they better come get them," she said.

Satterwhite said her brother, who owns a fireworks booth in The Dalles, and a friend who owns a stand in Baker City, each told her they only received about half their usual supply this year. None of them said they have any clue why there is a shortage, and they have received no explanation from their suppliers.

To Satterwhite, she said it's sad to see her tables not be covered and surrounded by tall stacks of fireworks this year. But part of her is also glad she'll be sold out early so that she can get out of the triple-digit heat wave consuming Oregon.

Hermiston-area residents can support veterans by purchasing their fireworks from the stand hosted by Hermiston's American

Legion Post 37 outside of Walmart.

Post Chaplain Aaron Wetterling, a Vietnam veteran, said in a news release that veterans will be staffing the stands and all proceeds from the sales will go to support veterans.

"We are Vets helping Vets," he said. "That's what the American Legion is all about."

Wetterling said all volunteers selling fireworks at the American Legion took two "intense" training classes on fireworks and had to pass a test, so they know what they're talking about if shoppers have questions. They can direct people toward something that won't produce loud noises that might scare pets, if that's what they're looking for, for example.

"Your average department-store clerk doesn't know a 'Revolution' from a 'Pop-it,'" Wetterling said. "We do."

Like other fireworks stands, Cathy Stolz of the American Legion said their stand received fewer fireworks to sell than in previous years, particularly when it comes to the big packages, as fireworks remain stranded in ships off the West Coast.

The fireworks stand is guarded each night by American Legion members, she said, and during the day features a large swamp cooler and fans to help keep the temperature down.

# Enterprise transient suspect in setting Pendleton fire

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office arrested an Enterprise transient Saturday, June 26, for setting a fire that burned hundreds of acres in the Stage Gulch area of Airport Hill, Pendleton.

The sheriff's office booked Michael Dean Summers, 36, into the county jail on a lone count of first-degree arson.

Sheriff's Lt. Sterrin Ward said Pendleton police were in the area of the fire. Summers caught their attention when they found out he made comments suggesting he set the fire.

"He was saying he was sending up smoke signals," Ward said, "and he made a comment about 'God made me do it.'"

Summers also appeared to be suffering from exposure to the high heat, and an ambulance took him to CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton. Ward also said Pendleton police wasted no time in contacting the arson investigator with the sheriff's office.

As soon as the hospital released Summers, the sheriff's office arrested him for first-degree arson and booked him into the county jail. His preliminary bail is \$250,000.

According to state court records, Summers was on a conditional release from Wallowa County following his arrest June 19 in Enterprise on misdemeanors of second-degree disorderly conduct and



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian  
Fire vehicles park atop a ridge Saturday, June 26, 2021, while fighting a fire along Airport Road outside of Pendleton. The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office later that day arrested an Enterprise man for first-degree arson in connection to the fire.

trespass. Summers has a plea hearing in that case on Sept. 8.

The Pendleton Fire Department responded to a report at 2:29 p.m. June 26 that a fire was burning north of Stage Gulch and Barnhart roads, according to Capt. Stephen Brost of the Pendleton Fire Department. The fire later spread toward Interstate 84, which prompted officials to close the freeway.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office also briefly closed

down Airport Road during the fire, according to Ward.

Officials confirmed crews at around 4:30 p.m. were starting to contain the fire and reopened I-84.

The fire burned in standing wheat, and gusts of wind contributed to its spread, Brost said.

The fire nearly forced people to evacuate from three homes along Stage Gulch Road, Ward said, but firefighters hustled to protect the

homes and no evacuations were necessary.

Multiple agencies responded to the fire, Brost said, including the Echo Rural Fire Department, Umatilla Tribal Fire Department and Pilot Rock Rural Fire Protection District. The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon State Police and the Oregon Department of Transportation also provided assistance.

## LOCAL BRIEFING



Kathy Aney/East Oregonian, File  
Equipment "issues" is the reason CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, reported on Sunday, June 27, 2021, it is diverting emergency room patients requiring inpatient admission to other locations.

### St. Anthony diverts patients

PENDLETON — CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton, reported it diverted its emergency room patients requiring inpatient admission to other locations due to equipment "issues."

"Due to issues with laboratory equipment, we have made the decision to place the emergency room on a short-term diversionary status," CEO Harry Geller wrote in an email Sunday, June 27, at about 10:30 a.m. "Out of an abundance of caution for patient safety, emergency patients requiring inpatient admission will be diverted to the nearest appropriate care facility."

He said St. Anthony should be able to resume standard emergency room admissions within about 48 hours.

The hospital did not clarify what equipment was having issues or what those issues were, other than they were not related to the heat wave.

Ambulances will be diverted to "the nearest appropriate hospital," and patients whose needs can be addressed by an urgent care facility are encouraged to go there instead.

### M-F native to run for county commissioner

MILTON-FREEWATER — A Milton-Freewater woman has announced her candidacy for Umatilla County commissioner.

Cindy Timmons, a Milton-Freewater native and a business owner in the community for more than 30 years, announced Sunday, June 27, she plans to run for the seat on the board of commissioners that Chairperson George Murdock will vacate when he retires in January 2023.

Timmons graduated from McLoughlin High School, went on to earn an agriculture business degree from Blue Moun-

tain Community College and then her bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration from Eastern Oregon University.

A long with helping run a business with her husband, she is a professor at the Blue Mountain Community College Milton-Freewater Center.

Timmons serves on the Umatilla County Land Use Planning Commission, is a Blue Mountain Community College Foundation Board member and the vice chair of Community Action Program of East Central Oregon.

She also is active in the Walla Walla Valley community. She is the incoming president of the Milton-Freewater Rotary Club, serves as a member of Friends of Mac-Hi FFA, a Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days superintendent, a Youth Athletics Board member, a Milton-Freewater Junior Show past president and board member and a lifetime member of First Christian Church.

### Free lunch program running in Hermiston

HERMISTON — Hermiston's free summer lunch program for students is up and running.

According to Hermiston Parks and Recreation, free sack lunches are available for all children under age 18, Monday through Friday. Meals can be eaten on site or taken home. Children under age 5 must be accompanied by an adult.

Locations are Sunset Park, Northeast Fourth Street, from 11:30 a.m. to noon; Victory Square Park, 150 S.W. 10th St., from 12:30-1 p.m.; and Butte Park, 1245 N.W. Seventh St., from 12:15-12:45 p.m.

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