

Pendleton police cagey on Friday night shooting details

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Pendleton Police Chief Chuck Byram on Monday, Aug. 16, said he is being cautious about releasing much more information on the Aug. 13 shooting that resulted in a gunshot wound to one male.

According to Byram, “an altercation ensued” between two individuals on foot and a male in a car in the area of Southwest Emigrant Avenue and Southwest Second Street. One of the two on foot drew a gun and fired multiple rounds at the car, striking the male in the car once in the abdomen.

The pair then fled on foot, according to Byram, and an ambulance took the wounded male to CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

The police chief did not have information about his medical condition, nor did he release the identification of anyone involved. There also have been no reports of any arrests.

The shooting occurred shortly after 7 p.m., accord-



A law enforcement officer walks toward the scene of a shooting Friday, Aug. 13, 2021, at the corner of Southwest Emigrant Avenue and Southwest Second Street in downtown Pendleton.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

ing to witnesses, and ended in front of 40 Taps, 337 S.W. Emigrant Ave., where a black Honda stopped on

Southwest Fourth Street. The car had at least one bullet hole in the body, a smashed driver’s side

window and a flat rear tire, also on the driver’s side.

The popular establishment gave this statement on

its Facebook page:

“We appreciate all of our friends and customers concerns, the recent

shooting did not occur at 40 Taps. Everyone at 40 Taps is fine, we have been closed for the night due to where the unfortunate incident happened and ended in front of 40 Taps. Thank you for everyone’s concern.”

Police placed more than a dozen numbered yellow plastic evidence markers over shell casings along Southwest Second Street between Frazer and Emigrant avenues. Most of the markers were in the northeast corner of the parking lot of Western Auto Home & Appliance, 320 S.W. Emigrant Ave., around a white GMC Denali pickup.

The driver of that pickup did not want to give his name but said the vehicle was not involved in the violence — he just made a poor calculation about where to park.

He said he was working nearby when he heard gunshots at 7:08 p.m. and drove after possible suspects because his pickup has a dashcam video. He claimed he even spoke to the victim of the shooting outside 40 Taps before police arrived and an ambulance whisked him to a local hospital.

He then drove through the Western Auto parking lot and stopped at the corner. But that was right in the mass of bullet casings. One casing, he said, ended up stuck in the tread of his tire because he drove over it.

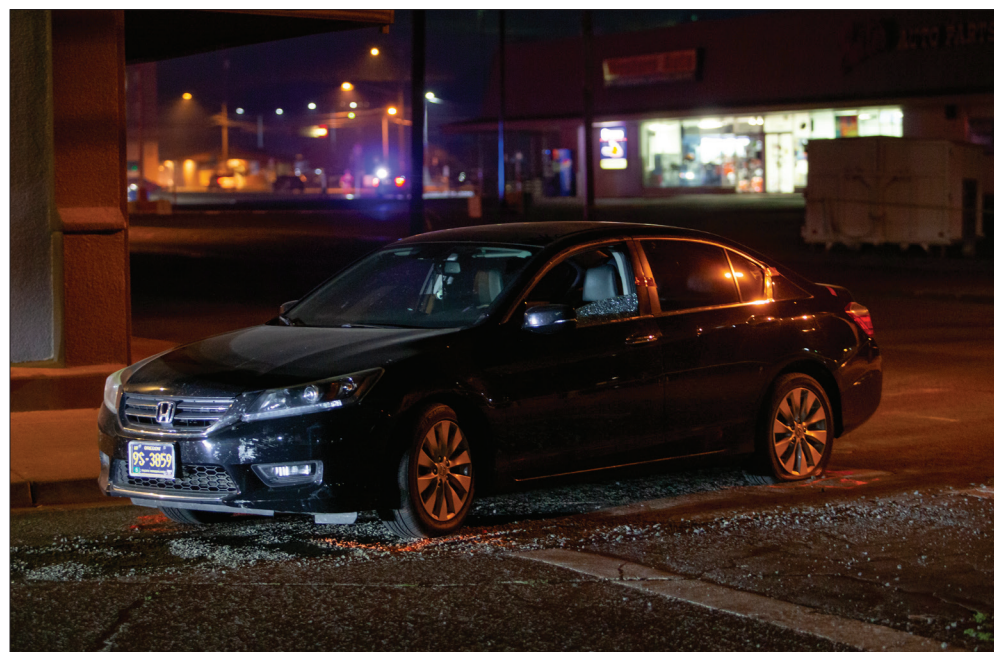
Pendleton police, during the initial investigation, blocked off Emigrant Avenue between Southwest Second and Fourth streets. As the investigation continued, police narrowed the area of most of the Western Auto parking lot and also brought in Oregon State Police to assist with the investigation.

Byram said the case remains a top priority for Pendleton police, and he hopes to soon be able to share more information.



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Law enforcement officers walk along Southwest Second Street on Friday, Aug. 13, 2021, at the scene of a shooting in downtown Pendleton.



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A damaged Honda on Friday, Aug. 13, 2021, sits at the corner of Southwest Emigrant Avenue and Southwest Fourth Street near the scene of a shooting in downtown Pendleton.

Pendleton man’s Walla Walla assault case ‘reads like an Old Western’

Judge Brandon L. Johnson denies lower bail request, bail remains at \$150,000

By JEDIDIAH MAYNES
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

WALLA WALLA — A Pendleton man accused of gathering a group of people and attacking a man in Walla Walla he suspected of stealing his vehicle was denied a request for a lower bail amount in Walla Walla County Superior Court

recently as prosecutors alluded to more charges coming for his “posse.”

Charles Thompkins Jr., 63, requested a \$30,000 bail — or \$3,000 cash — Wednesday, Aug. 11, but Judge Brandon L. Johnson denied the request and stayed the bail at \$150,000 at the suggestion of prosecutors.

However, Johnson did allow for a 10% cash equivalent and had Thompkins sign a form establishing conditions of his release in case he posted the \$15,000.

Thompkins still was listed on the Walla Walla County Jail roster Aug. 15. Thompkins is accused of

gathering a group of friends and family to rally against a man he said stole a vehicle from him, according to court documents.

Walla Walla County Sheriff’s Office deputies began their investigation in early July and arrested Thompkins on Aug. 8. He’s expected to be the first of many arrested in this case, prosecutors said.

“This particular case reads like an Old Western,” Walla Walla County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Jennine Christensen said, claiming Thompkins “gathered up a posse” with weapons and drove into Walla Walla with malicious intentions.

Christensen said she was aware of about nine more probable cause statements from law enforcement being submitted to her office in reference to the case recently.

Christensen said the bail should remain high because she had “major concerns” that Thompkins could influence his family and intimidate witnesses if he were released.

A couple dozen people came to court for Thompkins’ hearing. His attorney, Nicholas Holce, said they were mostly family members who were desperate to have Thompkins released so he

could continue running the family business.

The judge said while he acknowledged Thompkins is innocent until proven guilty, all he had to base his decision off was the submitted statement by deputies, which he said raised disturbing allegations.

“When someone steals your car, you call the police,” Johnson said. “You don’t get your own help.”

Christensen said at least one of the three alleged victims would have long-lasting damage to his face.

According to court documents, Thompkins and 10

people, including his sons, drove from Pendleton to the 100 block of Prospect Avenue and confronted the man he believed stole from him.

The group then allegedly beat the man and two other men after intimidating them with loaded guns, according to the documents. One of the alleged victims had to have surgery for multiple breaks and fractures on his face and skull, documents noted.

Thompkins is charged with first-degree robbery, three counts of first-degree assault, first-degree burglary, criminal mischief and harassment.

Police use stun gun to take down Hermiston robbery suspect

First attempt with Taser didn’t stick in chip aisle at local store

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Hermiston police reported an officer on Friday, Aug. 13, used a stun gun to take down a suspect who tried to pull off an armed robbery at a local restaurant.

Lamberto Chairez Soto, 31, of Hermiston, faces numerous criminal counts, Hermiston police reported, in connection to the events that began unfolding shortly after 5 p.m. that day.

A 911 call at 5:11 p.m. from Tienda La Comadre, 547 E. Main St., Hermiston, reported a male brandishing a handgun entered the restaurant and yelled in Spanish for everyone to put up their hands.

“The armed business owner defended himself, and the suspect fled the store,” according to the report from Hermiston police.

The suspect took off

running northeast from the front of the business. Police began looking for a stocky Hispanic man about 30 years old wearing a white shirt and jeans, based on a description of the suspect.

Officers canvassed the area and located a 53-year-old woman who lives on the 600 block of East Gladys Avenue. She gave a similar description of the male and reported he knocked on her door.

She told police she opened the door, and a male showed a handgun and forced himself into her home, striking her in the head and demanding money. The suspect took her phone, keys and vehicle, a 2017 black Ford SUV.

Soon after, a Hermiston officer spotted the vehicle unoccupied at the Southgate Village Apartments, 1150 S. First St.

“Upon speaking with people in the area, video of the suspect exiting the car was located on a Ring camera from one of the persons living at Southgate Village and shared with responding officers,” police reported.

A Hermiston officer found Soto in the potato chip aisle at Safeway and attempted to detain him. Soto, according to police, resisted and the officer tried to stun him with a Taser. The darts, however, did not make full contact and Soto fled on foot.

The officer chased Soto out of Safeway, and an Oregon State Police trooper joined the roundup. The foot chase crossed Highway 395 and entered the parking lot of Pho Quan Vietnamese, where the trooper pulled out and fired a Taser.

“The deployment was successful and the suspect was taken into custody,” Hermiston police reported.

Police identified the man as Soto, and found he had a no-bail warrant out of the Oregon Department of Corrections. Police booked Soto in the county jail on the following cases and charges: three counts of first-degree robbery, two counts of unlawful use of a weapon and one count each of first-degree kidnapping, pointing a firearm at another, vehicle theft, second-degree theft and the Department of Corrections warrant.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Hermiston man dies in ATV crash

MEACHAM — The Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office reported an all-terrain vehicle crash Friday, Aug. 13, took the life of a Hermiston man.

The crash also injured a 13-year-old passenger.

The Umatilla County Sheriff’s Dispatch Center at about 2:40 p.m. received a 911 call reporting two people were injured in an ATV accident. Sheriff’s deputies and Oregon State Police responded to the area of Jordan Circle Lane and Meacham Lake near Meacham. Ambulances from the Pendleton Fire Department and Umatilla Tribal Fire Department also rushed to the scene.

According to the sheriff’s office, Cesar Ambriz, 20, of Hermiston, was the operator of the vehicle, and medics on scene confirmed he died.

An ambulance took the 13-year-old passenger to CHI St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

The ATV was traveling on gravel when it went off the road and rolled during a turn.

Stanfield City Council mulls livestock ordinance

STANFIELD — The Stanfield City Council plans to discuss the city’s process for allowing residents to keep livestock, poultry and bees in the city limits.

The council meets Tuesday, Aug. 17, at 6 p.m. at the council chambers, 150 W. Coe Ave.

City Manager Benjamin Burgener said the city has a permitting process for keeping livestock, including for bees, which the council wanted to take a look at possibly updating.

But in the course of that, he said, the council opted to consider if other parts of the local law need revising. For example, he said, perhaps the ordinance could exclude permits for smaller animals, such as rabbits.

The council is not making decisions at its meeting this week to overhaul the permitting process, Burgener said, but the talks could lead to such consideration. Updating the local law would involve public hearings, he said.

In another matter, the council is considering designs for street lights along Main

Street, which is part of the Oregon Department of Transportation’s ongoing upgrades in the area.

Overall, Burgener said, this looks to be a rather mild meeting.

For more information, visit cityofstanfield.com.

County considers UGB request

PENDLETON — The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners is considering a request to expand the urban growth boundary when it meets Wednesday, Aug. 18, at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton.

The city of Umatilla wants the county to co-adopt a change to the city’s UGB that would add 150 acres of boundary, which then the city would annex for light industrial use.

The board also plans to consider a community justice grant application, a community corrections plan and a payment for annual maintenance and license software for the Community Developmental Disabilities Program. The meeting includes an executive session regarding employment.

The meeting is open to the public and begins at 9 a.m. — EO Media Group