

Jeepers honor Umatilla County deputy

By NICK ROSENBERGER
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Beginning around noon on Saturday, Aug. 21, a long procession of Jeeps rolled out of the Hermiston Circuit Court on their way to the Pendleton Convention Center to honor Jason Post, a senior deputy with Umatilla County Parole and Probation, who drowned while rafting in June in Wallowa County.

Arranged by Josh Paulus and the Delaware-based Jeepers Back the Blue organization, dozens of Jeeps ranging from a 1955 M38A1 to modern Wranglers and Grand Cherokees adorned in flags drove the 27 miles

from Hermiston to Pendleton and presented Post's wife, Rosanna, and newborn daughter, Dalilah, with a check.

"Someone had heard about the accident with Jason Post from one of the Jeep organizations here and sent an email starting things here," said Paullus, a parole and probation officer for Umatilla County. "From there it took off like wildfire."

Jeepers Back the Blue, which raises and donates money to families of fallen officers, reached out and wrote a check, which Rosanna Post said would be going toward Dalilah's college fund and planning for her future.



Nick Rosenberger/East Oregonian

Family and friends gather Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021, for the Jeepers Back the Blue event in Hermiston to honor Jason Post, a senior deputy with Umatilla County Parole and Probation, who drowned while rafting in June in Wallowa County. The procession of Jeeps drove to Pendleton with an escort from the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office to present Post's wife and daughter with a check.

"I was shocked," she said, "I couldn't believe that somebody all the way from Delaware had heard about Jason."

According to Paullus, the organization raised \$115,000 and had 500 Jeeps at its

annual rally in Delaware in 2020. The money went to 20 families in 20 states, and the organization donated \$20,000 toward scholarships.

With more than 15 Jeeps in attendance, the proces-

sion took off with a sheriff's office escort and arrived at a podium and flags at the Pendleton Convention Center, where Undersheriff Jim Littlefield and Dale Primmer, the director of

Umatilla County Community Corrections, spoke and presented Rosanna Post with the check.

According to Post, the couple met in 2011 while working at Homestead Youth & Family Services, a juvenile treatment center in Pendleton, and married in July 2018. Rosanna and Jason were probation officers for Umatilla County.

"I really just want to thank the community because it really is overwhelming," she said. "It's just crazy how much law enforcement really is a family in a small-town community. They just rally together and support everyone, and it's just really humbling."

Hermiston Herald hires editor

By BRYCE DOLE
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Erick Peterson, a Hermiston resident with years of journalism experience, has joined the Hermiston Herald as its new editor and senior reporter.

Peterson, 45, started his new role with EO Media Group Monday, Aug. 24. In addition to Hermiston, he will cover neighboring communities in both Umatilla and Morrow counties, including Boardman, Stanfield and Umatilla.

"We are excited to have Erick on board," said Andrew Cutler, publisher of the Hermiston Herald. "He brings a fresh set of eyes to the Herald and we are excited to see what ideas he has moving forward."

Peterson was born in Southern California and was raised in West Richland, Washington. Growing up reading the Tri-City Herald, Peterson came to love newspapers while delivering them to his community's doorsteps during his first job. He believes newspapers are integral institutions for keeping the public informed and holding power to account.

"The uglier side of the world needs to be brought to light so it can be repaired," Peterson said. "And reporters have a very important job in exposing that."

Peterson graduated from Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy. But it wasn't until he went to China that he decided to pursue a career in journalism. For 10 years, he traveled through the country and wrote for magazines and newspapers,

covering community news, business and travel stories.



Peterson

Peterson returned to the United States and found a job as an editor at the Review Independent in Toppenish. After working for the Yakima Valley Publishing newspaper for a few years, he left to obtain a certificate in instrumentation and industrial automation, but quickly decided that career wasn't for him. Meanwhile, he reported freelance stories for the agricultural newspaper the Capital Press, which, like the Hermiston Herald, is a member of the EO Media Group.

After meeting his wife, Peterson moved to Hermiston four years ago and began working as a cashier at the local Safeway. He left the job shortly after the pandemic started to take care of his family and help his stepson through online school.

Amplifying the voices of people in his community is what inspired Peterson to apply for the position with the Herald. He said he's thrilled to be joining a paper that has a history of strong local journalism, particularly under the leadership of former editor Jade McDowell.

"The paper's got a terrific tradition," he said. "It's been worked by some fantastic people. Jade is in that tradition. And I want to continue that tradition. I want to contribute to a proud newspaper."

Peterson is married to Nancy Peterson, a longtime Hermiston resident, disability

services employee at Columbia Basin College and Hermiston city councilor. Peterson will not cover city council because of his wife's role.

"We had long talks during the interview process about the potential conflicts of interest that could come from that," Cutler said. "It's important that readers know we take that seriously — whether perceived or real. So Erick will not cover anything to do with the city council."

Peterson added: "There's going to be a lot of questions as to how objective I can be, and I can start off by saying I can't be trusted to be objective" covering city council, he said. "I love my wife more than anything. I love her more than any job I'll ever have. I'm excited about the possibilities of this job, but I love my wife way more than I love anything else."

There are many topics Peterson hopes to bring to the table as the paper's new editor, including the pandemic, climate change, agriculture and religion. In particular, he looks to report on Hermiston's diversity, telling stories about the town's underrepresented and marginalized communities.

"Erick's experience as a journalist, both in the inland Northwest and overseas, gives him a broad perspective that will serve him well as our editor in Hermiston," said Kathryn B. Brown, vice president of EO Media Group and publisher of The Other Oregon.

Peterson emphasized he wants to get to know communities in and around Hermiston. He hopes people will reach out with story ideas or just to introduce themselves.

IN BRIEF

Convicted poacher lands in jail for drunken driving

PENDLETON — Convicted poacher Joseph Reid St. Pierre of Pendleton is in the Umatilla County Jail following an arrest for drunken driving. And he could face another round of game violations.

Oregon State Police reported a trooper on Tuesday, Aug. 24, a few minutes after 11 p.m. responded to the Interstate 84 westbound off ramp at milepost 202 for a black Dodge R15 pickup with a male laying across the seat. According to state police, found the 21-year-old St. Pierre wearing clothes covered in blood and the scene smelled of wild game.

St. Pierre awoke and subsequently failed a sobriety test, OSP reported, and the trooper arrested him for driving under the influence of intoxicants (alcohol).

The trooper also took the game — either a deer or elk, OSP did not identify which — as evidence, along with a knife and a rifle. A tow company hauled off the pickup, and a family member took the dogs that were in the bed of the vehicle.

St. Pierre as of the morning of Aug. 25 was in the county jail. He pleaded guilty in 2018 to numerous counts of poaching and violating game laws. Court records show he is serving probation until April 2023, which includes a ban on

firearms. The court also sentenced him to a lifetime revocation of a hunting license.

Court records also show he has previous probation violations and he owes \$52,045 in fines and late payment penalties stemming from the 2018 convictions.

City Council approves bridge analysis funding

HERMISTON — The Hermiston City Council approved a plan to jointly fund a look at putting a bridge across the Umatilla River.

City Manager Byron Smith told the council during its meeting Monday, Aug. 23, that since 2001 the city's transportation systems plan has considered a bridge over the Umatilla River, and now the city's needs for that bridge have multiplied over the past 20 years, and those needs are going to increase.

Hermiston continues to be the fastest growing community in Eastern Oregon, with a population now exceeding 19,000. According to Smith's memo to council on the bridge project, the city is tracking to reach nearly 23,000 residents by 2030.

The project would analyze putting in a bridge to align with either Elm Avenue or Punkin Center Road. Smith said the analysis would cost \$130,000,

and Umatilla County and the city of Umatilla already are on board with sharing the cost. Umatilla has agreed to put in \$30,000, Umatilla County has agreed to shoulder \$50,000, Smith said, leaving Hermiston to put in the remaining \$50,000.

The city has chased federal grants to pay for this examination, Smith said, but continuing to go that route would "really slow things down a lot." And the \$50,000, he added, is about the same amount the city would pay if it obtained a grant.

Councilor Jackie Meyers said this idea has been on the city's burner for 20-plus years, and now it's time to flesh out the technical work of determining which spot is going to work the best.

The council voted 8-0 in favor of a memorandum of understanding outlining the joint funding of the engineering analysis, which the firm Anderson Perry & Associates will do.

The council also met in a closed-door session to discuss the contract with the city manager. Smith has served in the role for seven years. After the session, the council voted unanimously to extend Smith's contract through Aug. 24, 2023, adding one year to his contract. Mayor Dave Drotzmann expressed his appreciation for Smith and his leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic.

—EO Media Group

Boardman Coal Plant, B2H project on agenda

East Oregonian

SALEM — Two large energy projects in Eastern Oregon are on the agenda Friday, Aug. 27, for the public virtual meeting of the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council.

The council will receive an update on the decommissioning of the Boardman Coal Plant and discuss two items concerning the contested Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project, or B2H.

Lenna Cope, a senior environmental specialist for Portland General Electric, which recently retired the coal plant at Boardman, will give an overview of the company's plan to continue decommissioning the plant and request termination of the site certificate.

The council also will review the motion of Irene Gilbert of La Grande, who filed to remove Alison Greene Webster as hearing officer for Idaho Power Company's application for a site certificate for the B2H Project. Gilbert is a member of the Stop B2H Coalition, which opposes construction of the massive 500 kilovolt power line from a substation in Idaho to Boardman.

Gilbert alleges Webster, a senior administrative law judge with the Oregon Office of Administrative Hearings, has shown bias in the case. Idaho Power filed a response

stating Webster has not demonstrated bias and her actions "are consistent with the Energy Facility Siting Council's statutes and rules."

The siting council also will consider an appeal by Michael McAllister on whether the proposed Morgan Lake Alternative route for the power line complies with fish and wildlife habitat standards, soil protection standards and whether the visual impacts of the project "are inconsistent with the objectives of the Morgan Lake Park Recreation."

The meeting starts at 8:30 a.m. and is expected

to finish around 3:15 p.m. To view the full schedule, agenda and materials, along with instructions on how to attend the meeting, got to www.oregon.gov/energy/Pages/index.aspx, click the link for Energy Facility Siting Council and click the Council Meetings link.

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1:10p 3:30p 5:50p

The Protege (R)
1:40p 4:30p 7:50p

Free Guy (PG13)
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