

# Police suspect driver of drinking in crash that killed bull rider

By **BRYCE DOLE**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Police suspect the driver in a Sept. 16 crash that killed a Pendleton Round-Up bull rider had been drinking and was driving recklessly, according to court documents and Oregon State Police Sgt. Seth Cooney.

A search warrant affidavit issued Sept. 22 shows police sought evidence of second-degree manslaughter, driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving, third-degree assault and

recklessly endangering another person in relation to the crash near Echo.

Jate Frost, 20, a bull rider from Randlett, Utah, who competed at the Round-Up, was the driver of the Volkswagen Jetta, according to police and documents. Richard Schleicher, 24, of Stockton, Kansas, died in the crash. Frost and another passenger, Jesse Hopper, 21, of Magnum, Oklahoma, were hurt.

Cooney said police have yet to obtain medical records indicating whether Frost had been drinking, but said “at this point, we have

reason to believe he had been consuming alcohol” prior to the incident. Cooney also said police are awaiting records for possible vehicle malfunctions or evidence showing the vehicle’s impact speed.

He noted the investigation had been delayed because Frost was hospitalized in Washington, making it difficult to obtain medical records. He said police continue to gather evidence, adding: “We’re crossing our t’s and dotting our i’s” he said. Frost has not been charged or arrested in the incident, accord-

ing to Cooney and public records.

Police found “numerous” alcoholic beverage containers in the crashed Jetta that were “in plain view,” documents show. Police also found opened and unopened containers of Coors beer and Twisted Tea “within the passenger compartment.”

Hopper, who said he was the back right seat passenger, told police, “Frost was the driver and had drank approximately one or two beers,” records show.

Hopper also said, according to the affidavit, “Frost was driving as

usual, which is ‘hauling ass.’”

The collision occurred on Interstate 84 east of Echo when the Jetta rear-ended a commercial truck carrying a load of potatoes. Truck driver Ediberto Carrillo, 31, of Hermiston, told police he had been driving around 55 mph at the time of the crash. He was not injured, police said.

Search warrant affidavits often are public documents. Oregon State Police trooper Luke Sitts wrote the affidavit for the search warrant, and Umatilla County Circuit Court Judge Robert Collins issued it.

## SIGNS OF FALL



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Fall colors begin to adorn trees Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021, on the North Hill in Pendleton.

# County dishes out funds in COVID-19 program

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Local organizations that helped with COVID-19 vaccination efforts received a funding boost.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners in its bimonthly meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 6, approved more than \$230,000 in funds for organizations that participated in the county’s Community Rewards Program, a COVID-19 vaccine incentive program. The funds — which come from federal funding for areas to improve their vaccination rates — go to organizations in ZIP codes where more than 60% of eligible residents are vaccinated.

The program saw three areas reach this benchmark: Pendleton, Hermiston and Helix. Each community received a baseline \$10,000, plus additional funds based on population.

Hermiston received the most money — \$116,108.95. Four organizations were given more than \$29,000 in the program: Good Shepherd Medical Center; Eastern Oregon Mission; Clearview Disability Resource Center; and the Hermiston Lions Foundation.

Six Pendleton organizations received their cut of \$99,257.46. Each organization got more than \$16,500. The organizations are the Oregon East Symphony; Pendleton Center for the Arts; Altrusa International Foundation; First Presbyterian Church of Pendleton; the Pendleton Cultural Foundation; and the Peace Lutheran Church.

The tiny town of Helix was the first to exceed the 60% milestone. Two organizations there split nearly \$16,000. They are the Helix Park District and

the Helix Community Church. The funds concluded the county’s sole incentive program.

The commissioners also approved the following items in the meeting:

- The purchase of a new motor grader for about \$350,000.
- The purchase of a stacker conveyor of more than \$35,680.
- The purchase of guardrail supplies for about \$8,700.
- Moving a senior deputy from the sheriff’s office patrol division to serve as an interim patrol sergeant.
- The purchase of dispatch equipment for \$33,058.
- Funds to repaint the exterior of the Guardian Care Center, Pendleton, and a request for proposal for new boilers in the building.
- Adding a touch screen system to the Umatilla County Jail for \$11,450.

# Brothers arrested in assault of elderly Heppner man

East Oregonian

HEPPNER — The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office arrested a pair of brothers Sunday, Oct. 4, on suspicion of assaulting a man.

Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack said deputies arrested Ryan Walton, 38, of Hillsboro, and Kurtis Walton, 35, of North Plains, for fourth-degree assault and first-degree criminal trespassing with a firearm.

The sheriff’s office reported John Patterson, 70, confronted the two men Oct. 4 while they were leaving his ranch near Heppner after he heard gunshots nearby. Matlack said Patterson tried to prevent the brothers from fleeing through a gate on his property by turning the key and shutting the car off.

Matlack said it’s unclear what happened next, but there appeared to be a fight and Patterson ended up on the ground with his hat off. Patterson’s wife told police the men threw her husband over the fence and fled north on Highway 207 in a blue Chevrolet.

The sheriff’s office reported Patterson has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and was having difficulty breath-

ing after the incident. But Matlack said police did not notice any serious injuries to Patterson.

Later that day, law enforcement found a car at Anson Wright Park in Morrow County that matched the description from Patterson’s wife. Deputies found the brothers in a nearby travel trailer, and they acknowledged the incident but claimed they didn’t shoot anything on the property, Matlack said.

The sheriff’s office found a gun in the back of the car, and Matlack said deputies determined someone shot through the side mirror, which he said is common when people are hunting from their car. At the same time, law enforcement located a deer that had been shot on the property.

Police arrested and booked the brothers into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, that day. The brothers’ preliminary bail was \$15,000, but they posted bail within two hours of booking, according to the Umatilla County Jail Commander Thoren Hearn.

Matlack said the case now goes to the Morrow County District Attorney’s Office.

# John Mattila returns to Umatilla County for new trial

## U.S. Supreme Court ruling for unanimous juries behind reversal of local verdicts

By **PHIL WRIGHT**  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — John McKenzie Mattila of Weston gets another shot at a manslaughter trial thanks to the change in U.S. law requiring unanimous jury verdicts.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 2020 in Ramos v. Louisiana ruled the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution requires guilty verdicts for criminal trials be unanimous. Umatilla County District Attorney Dan Primus said his office has handled a handful of these cases already.

“We’re taking these cases as they come back,” he said.

A jury in March 2020 convicted Mattila, 26, after three hours of deliberation, of first- and second-degree manslaughter for driving

drunk and causing the death of Adelaida Solis Torres on the night of Feb. 22, 2019.

Mattila faced four counts in all: first-degree manslaughter, second-degree manslaughter, hit-and-run involving a person and driving under the influence of intoxicants. Primus said the jury was unanimous only on the hit-and-run.

The jury voted 11-1 to convict Mattila of first-degree manslaughter and second-degree manslaughter and voted 10-2 on the DUI.

Oregon along with Louisiana were the only two states not requiring unanimous verdicts for criminal trials until the Supreme Court decision. Primus said it’s hard to speculate what the outcome of Mattila’s trial would have been if Oregon also required unanimous verdicts at the time. Perhaps the Mattila trial would have ended with a conviction, he said, or maybe a hung jury.

Now, he said, the trial process is starting over.

The Oregon Court of

Appeal reversed the verdicts on Sept. 27, according to court documents, and Mattila on Sept. 29 returned to the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, from the Oregon Department of Corrections. Circuit Judge Jon Lieuallen has set

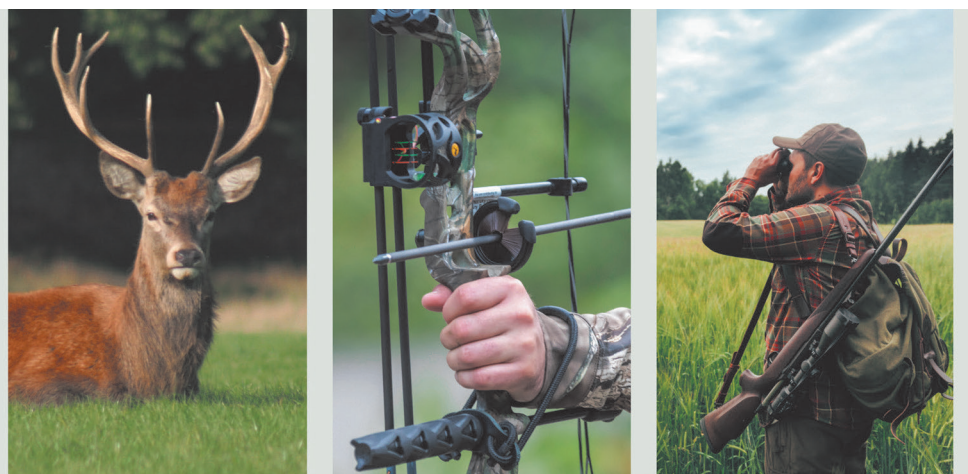
Mattila’s bail at \$500,000, and he has a pretrial conference Friday, Oct. 8.

“We’re in the process right now of meeting with the victims about the circumstances and the posture of the case — why

it’s back,” Primus said.

Dan Pacheco, the deputy district attorney who helped prosecute Mattila the first time, is back on the case, and Primus is joining him, replacing another deputy district attorney who has left.

Primus also said while the case has come back for retrial, that is not the only option. The restart also opens the door to negotiations for a deal, an option Primus said his office has pursued in a few other Ramos-related cases.



**BRAGGIN' RIGHTS**  
HUNTING PHOTO CONTEST

Choose your favorite local hunting photo

VOTING NOW OPEN

eastoregonian.com/braggin-rights

**WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO**  
10/8-10/14  
Cineplex Show Times  
Every seating will adhere to social distancing protocols  
Every showing \$7.50 per person (ages 0-3 still free)

**No Time To Die (PG13)**  
1:10p 1:50p 7:30p 8:10p

**Venom: Let There Be Carnage (PG13)**  
12:50p 3:30p 6:00p 8:30p

**The Addams Family 2 (PG)**  
1:30p 4:30p 5:30p 7:50p

**Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings (PG13)**  
2:00p 5:10p 8:20p

**Cry Macho (PG13)**  
4:50p

wildhorsesort.com • 541-966-1850  
Pendleton, OR I-84 - Exit 216