

Court document give details on recent local homicide

By **BRYCE DOLE**
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — A local woman faces federal charges of first-degree murder in the death of a man she claimed sexually abused her throughout childhood.

Skylar Crowe, 22, is facing charges in the death of Richard Higheagle, 38, according to an affidavit FBI Special Agent Rex Shark filed Sept. 30 in federal court for an arrest warrant. Much of following information is from the affidavit.

Umatilla Tribal Police on Sept. 29 at approximately 7:40 p.m. responded to 49 Willow Drive on the Umatilla Indian Reservation and found Higheagle, who appeared to have been stabbed once through the chest. He died at a hospital about an hour after police found him.

Crowe that night drove herself to the Umatilla Tribal Police Department. She told Shark she stabbed Higheagle with a kitchen knife and “admitted that she intended to kill him,” but said

she was “remorseful that she had killed him.”

Crowe told Shark she had lived under Higheagle’s roof while he was married to her mother and he had sexually abused her through grade school and middle school, and said he also abused her sister until she was 16.

A second source, who federal investigators do not name but describe as Crowe’s intimate partner, told officials he saw Crowe stab Higheagle. He told officials that during the first month of their rela-

tionship, Crowe told him she had “had been raped repeatedly by Higheagle during her childhood” and also “told him repeatedly during their four years together that she wanted to kill Higheagle.”

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jaelyn Jenkins, the former Umatilla County chief deputy district attorney, reviewed the affidavit, accompanying complaint and arrest warrant, according to court records. Jenkins, now based in Portland, is the lead prosecutor in the case. Conor Huseby, a federal

public defender based out of Portland, is Crowe’s attorney.

Tribal police booked Crowe into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on Sept. 28, and the U.S. Marshals Service transferred her to the Multnomah County Jail, Portland. Federal court records show Crowe had a detention hearing Tuesday, Oct. 12, and Magistrate Judge Youlee Yim You approved her conditional release the following day. The federal court in Portland set Crowe’s arraignment for Oct. 29 at 1:30 p.m.

SNOWY BLUES



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Snow blankets the forest Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021, along Interstate 84 in the Blue Mountains outside Pendleton.

Excess dust leads to power outage

More than 7,000 people left without power for several hours Wednesday

By **ERICK PETERSON**
East Oregonian

MILTON-FREEWATER — A fire led to a power outage Wednesday morning, Oct. 13, for the town of Milton-Freewater and some surrounding areas, including College Place.

Milton-Freewater City Manager Linda Hall said an accumulation of dust was the likely cause of the fire to the 69-kilovolt transmission line.

“It’s very common when you go a long time without rain — and wind and summer storms accumulate — a layer of dirt or dust builds on the lines,” she said. “When you

get your first rainstorm after that, it’s conductive, so it causes a fire on the line.”

In this case, Hall explained, the pole carrying the major transmission line also caught fire and was heavily damaged. The fire triggered a shutdown to the area’s electrical system.

This is a problem affecting cities all over the world, Hall said. It has happened before in Milton-Freewater, but she said it has been a while.

“It’s not super common, but it’s not super rare,” she said.

Hall said she believed power would be restored at 2 p.m. that day.

City hall was able to stay open, thanks to backup generators. Ambulance and fire services remained operational, Hall said. Traffic lights were out, however, and police were responding to problems

resulting from the power outage.

Milton-Freewater has a population of 7,050 residents. A person answering calls at the police station referred to her situation as “Grand Central Station” as many people called to learn what was happening and how soon the power would flow again.

Without power, the Milton-Freewater School District was not able to receive calls or emails, but made a statement on Facebook. The district posted schools would provide lunches to students and continue bus service on time. Staff would be outside the school buildings to “assist with student check out.”

A Facebook post from the city recommended keeping refrigerator and freezer doors closed to keep food cool.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Semi driver killed in train crash at railroad crossing

ECHO — A train Tuesday, Oct. 12, struck and killed a semi driver at a railroad crossing on Cunningham Road in Echo.

Lt. Sterrin Ward with the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office said Lester Myles Sickles, 42, of Kennewick, died at the scene after the train hit the semitrailer’s cab. Law enforcement responded at about 3 p.m.

Officials have notified the family members of the driver, Ward said, and the investigation is ongoing.

County reports 4 COVID-19 deaths; toll rises to 140

PENDLETON — Four more Umatilla County residents have died with COVID-19, the county health department reported this week, raising the county’s pandemic death toll to 140.

Umatilla County Public Health on Tuesday, Oct. 12, reported 96 new presumed

and confirmed coronavirus cases and three deaths. The next day, the department reported 58 news cases and one more death. According to health department, the four COVID-19 fatalities are:

- A 77-year-old man who tested positive Nov. 20 and died Dec. 5 at a private residence. He had unspecified underlying health conditions. He was county’s 137th victim of the disease.

- A 72-year-old man who tested positive Aug. 31 and died Oct. 2 at a private residence. Officials have yet to determine if he had underlying health conditions. He was the county’s 138th victim.

- A 76-year-old woman who tested positive Sept. 30 and died Oct. 10 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston. She had unspecified underlying health conditions. She became the county’s 139th victim.

- A 79-year-old woman who tested positive Sept. 6 and died Oct. 3 at Good Shepherd Medical Center. She had unspecified underlying health conditions and is the county’s

140th COVID-19 victim.

Umatilla County has reported 14,138 COVID-19 cases since the pandemic began, according to data from the county health department. More than 17% of the county’s residents have tested positive for COVID-19 since March 2020.

Hermiston City Council tables action on local laws

HERMISTON — The Hermiston City Council’s agenda for its meeting Monday, Oct. 11, had three updates to local laws. The council, though, voted to table all three to a future meeting.

The action drew a rebuke from Mayor Dave Drotzmann.

The council was going to consider updating following local laws:

- The code enforcement provision to give the code enforcement officer the authority to enforce parking violations, establish the option to cite violations to a hearing officer, establish a parade permit process and simplify

the regulation of bicycles.

- The nuisances ordinance to clarify and add a number of definitions and update language to current best practices.

- And structural maintenance regulations to clarify and update definitions, remove redundant material and establish the path of appeals.

But in each case, councilors raised concerns, particu-

larly about appeals processes for possible violations, and one by one, the council voted to table the updates.

City Manager Byron Smith suggested that in the future, the council review proposals and send their questions in advance of the meeting so staff can be ready with information.

Drotzmann was more direct. He told the council it had asked staff to provide

these proposals earlier in the week so there was time to review language before the meeting.

“So please review the stuff ahead of time,” he told the councilors and get questions to staff before the meeting instead of “putting them on the spot.”

The council did not set a time for when it would consider the updates.

—EO Media Group

www.rm-nw-auctions.com

RM/NW
MARKET MAKERS
IN REAL ESTATE

FALL 2021 REAL ESTATE AUCTION

Imnaha Riverfront Retreat with Two Homes and One Cabin

78833 Imnaha Highway
Open House
Saturday, October 16, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
SEALED BIDS DUE NOVEMBER 10, 2021
Broker Cooperation Invited
CALL NOW FOR FREE COLOR CATALOG #2104
1-800-845-3524
Realty Marketing/Northwest, Broker
2310 NW Everett Street, Suite 250 – Portland, Oregon 97210

45 YEARS SALE

ANNIVERSARY

Its All On Sale..Every Department
Begins: Tues. 10AM-6PM
Many in Stock Items on SALE!
All Special Orders 10% OFF !!
Shop and SAVE all Month

Sofas

ASHLEY
Sofa or Loveseat
Starting at
\$ 549.

Adjustable Beds

Starting at
\$ 999.
Queen Set

RECLINERS Starting at **\$ 399.** **Don't Miss This SALE**

Harmony Beautyrest HUGUE SAVINGS **SAVE BIG** **Mattress Sets Bedroom Sets Recliners And More...**

Lift Chairs
Starting at
\$ 699

45 YEARS
Thank You

Bedroom Sets
20% OFF

NOW Interest Free Financing **Greg's Home Grown Sleep Center** **Sofas 'n More**
OAC 541-567-1099
North Hwy 395 Cottage Plaza
Were The Store Your Looking For...