

Suspect in New Year's Eve shootout on Interstate 84 dies

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The Pendleton Police Department in a press release Saturday, Jan. 1, reported the suspect law enforcement pursued on New Year's Eve from Union County into Umatilla County died.

Police identified the suspect as Nicholas Russell Proudfoot, 30, of North Bend, Washington.

The pursuit began the morning of Friday, Dec. 31, after the theft of a vehicle in

Ukiah at 6 a.m., according to a press release that day from the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office. The Union County Sheriff's Office at about 10:45 a.m. attempted to stop the vehicle in Union County.

The report from Dec. 31 stated law enforcement caught the suspect at 11:53 a.m. and took him into custody at gunpoint. Officers took the suspect to a hospital for medical attention.

But the press release Jan. 1 from the Pendleton Police

Department presented more information.

Pendleton police reported the chase ended on Interstate 84 at approximately milepost 223 on Cabbage Hill, about 13 miles east of Pendleton.

The suspect fired several rounds at an Oregon State Police trooper and civilians as he fled and carjacked occupied vehicles on the interstate, Pendleton police reported. The trooper and one civilian, who was a victim of a carjacking, returned fire at the suspect.

"The incident ended after the suspect's stolen vehicle became disabled," according to the press release, "and he was found unresponsive with an injury to his head."

Pendleton police reported law enforcement performed life-saving efforts and an ambulance took Proudfoot to a hospital, but he succumbed to his injuries Dec. 31 at 9 p.m.

No civilians or law enforcement officers were injured during this chase and shooting.

At approximately noon

that day, Pendleton Police Department, at the request of the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office and in compliance with the Umatilla County Deadly Physical Force Plan, assumed control of the investigation. Police also reported there will be an autopsy to determine the manner and cause of Proudfoot's death.

The investigation of multiple crime scenes led to the shutdown of I-84 between mileposts 237 and 223 on both the east and westbound sides

until about 9:30 p.m. Dec. 31. The investigation also is relying on resources from Hermiston Police Department, Umatilla Tribal Police Department, Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Union County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police and its crime lab and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

"Once the investigation is complete," according to the press release, "all material will be turned over to the Umatilla County District Attorney."



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

A road grader Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021, plows a section of Westgate in Pendleton. The National Weather Service reported the Pendleton area experienced temperatures slightly warmer than normal during December.

December temps were warmer than normal

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Temperatures during December in the Pendleton area were slightly warmer than normal, according to preliminary data received by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Weather Service in Pendleton.

The average temperature during the month was 34.7 degrees, 1.5 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 42.2 degrees, 2.7 degrees above normal, according to the monthly climate summary.

The highest temperature was 68 degrees recorded Dec. 1.

Low temperatures averaged 27.3 degrees, 0.4 degrees above normal. The lowest temperature for the month was minus 7, recorded Dec. 31.

There were 21 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees and six days when the high temperature stayed below 32 degrees.

Precipitation for the month

totaled 2.01 inches, 0.54 inches above normal. Measurable precipitation — at least .01 inch — was received on 15 days with the heaviest, 0.84 inches reported on Dec. 19.

Precipitation in 2021 totaled 9.38 inches, which is 3.28 inches below normal. Since October, the water year precipitation at the Pendleton airport has been 4.39 inches, which is 0.39 inches above normal.

Snowfall totaled 17.8 inches with at least 1 inch of snow reported on six days. The heaviest snowfall was 4.6 inches on Dec. 30.

The highest wind gust was 48 mph, which occurred Dec. 11.

The outlook for January from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for below normal temperatures and above normal precipitation.

Normal highs for the Pendleton airport during January are 41.8 degrees and normal lows are 28.9 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.43 inches.

Fire marshal calls on public for hydrant care

By ERICK PETERSON

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Scott Goff, fire marshal for Umatilla County Fire District No. 1, is urging locals to make sure fire hydrants are clear of deep snow.

"During the winter it is helpful, as the snow gets deeper, that a path from the street to the hydrant and a minimum 3-foot (distance) around the hydrant is kept clear," stated Goff, in an email to the East Oregonian.

He added, though, there are problems even without snow, as landscaping, including fences, can block or obstruct a hydrant from view.

"Keeping vegetation trimmed so that hydrants are visible from the street is helpful," he said. "We did experience some delay in accessing a hydrant at a residential structure fire this fall that was obstructed from view by landscaping. While this did not change the outcome of the fire incident it did cause a delay in establishing a water supply to fight the fire."

Hermiston alone has 715 hydrants, and they are all important to the work of firefighters, Goff said.

Fire apparatuses carry limited amounts of water for firefighters to take initial actions at a fire scene, he said, whereas "a hydrant provides a constant flow of water to fire apparatus beyond what is carried."

Local hydrants are otherwise dependable even in the winter, Goff said, because

they are the "dry barrel" type. That is, "when the hydrant is shut off, a drain opens well below the frost line underground," he said, and the portion of the hydrant and piping above the frost line, then, do not have water in them to prevent freezing during the winter months.

"We are in constant communication with the water purveyors in our fire district who inform us of known hydrants that are not usable," he said.

Hydrants are required to be flowed at least once a year, he said, and water departments usually handle that when flushing of the water system or conducting maintenance.

Privately owned hydrants also exist in town, and it is the responsibility of the owners to flush and maintain them, Goff said.

Like any other piece of equipment, he said, hydrants should be kept in working order if firefighters are to avoid unhappy surprises. And the public also can play a role in helping firefighters.

"The hose lines from the hydrant to the apparatus also play a significant role in the water supply," Goff said. "We still encounter people driving over hose lines, which, if damaged, has to be replaced, which could delay putting additional water on a fire as each piece of hose damaged often has to be replaced by two additional sections."

Doing that requires firefighters to stop working on a fire and instead replace hoses.

Resolution runners plow ahead



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

Runners lead off the pack of participants in the New Year's Day Resolution Run on Saturday, Jan. 1, 2022, at Riverfront Park in Hermiston.

City moves ahead with South Hill road project

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The city of Pendleton is moving forward with a \$2 million fund to build a new road for housing on the South Hill.

At a Dec. 21 meeting, the Pendleton City Council unanimously approved an agreement with Umatilla County to establish a \$2 million revolving fund to help cover the costs of building the street. Public Works Director Bob Patterson told the council it would need to create a fund in the future to house the money once it's disbursed.

The city has taken some

early steps to secure easements to build a new road that would connect Highway 11 and Highway 30. City officials believe the new road could open up land capable of sustaining hundreds of new housing units.

Given that a revolving fund can't be drawn down without replenishing it, the city plans to pair the \$2 million with a reimbursement district where housing developers reimburse the city for the costs of the road and other infrastructure once they start building houses. But even with the \$2 million in hand, the

city likely will need to raise money from other sources to fully fund the project.

Kim Puzey, the general manager of the Port of Umatilla, said he's met with city officials about contributing money toward the road building effort, but a commitment would require approval from the port commission. Puzey said there were no city representative at the last port commission meeting in December and would be unable to proceed with discussions until both sides met.

"We probably won't be discussing it in their

absence," Puzey said.

Mayor John Turner, himself a former commissioner, confirmed he and City Manager Robb Corbett have met with Puzey about the port participating in the revolving fund.

Turner said he and Corbett have been busy trying to address end-of-the-year tasks, but he anticipates returning to the port commission in January to continue discussions. While there's uncertainty whether the port could offer financial support during the current fiscal year or next, Turner said he was confident a deal could be worked out.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Local police arrest two in connection to car theft

STANFIELD — Two Keizer residents are in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, after local police arrested them Sunday, Jan. 2, for vehicle theft.

Kenneth Wayne Felton, 25, faces an initial charge of vehicle theft, and Darcie Noel Wetzel-Barnett, 28, faces charges of vehicle theft and felon in possession of a firearm, according to state court records.

Pendleton police in a press release Jan. 3 reported officers at 11:49 a.m. Jan. 2 responded to the Pendleton Walmart on a report of theft of merchandise.

An employee told police a male and a female left the store with a suitcase containing more store property and paid for nothing. The employee gave police the license plate number of the red Hyundai Sonata the pair were in. Police found

the car was stolen out of Keizer.

An alert about the car went out to local law enforcement. A Stanfield police officer at about 12:16 p.m. spotted the car at the Pilot Travel Center, 2115 S. Highway 395, Stanfield. The officer with backup from Umatilla County sheriff's deputies arrested Felton and Wetzel-Barnett.

A Pendleton officer arrived and secured the property from Walmart and added misdemeanor

theft charges against the pair. Stanfield police took control of the car. Police also arrested Wetzel-Barnett on a Marion County probation violation warrant.

State court records show Wetzel-Barnett has a conviction for 2019 for misdemeanor theft and Felton has convictions from 2017 and 2021 for vehicle thefts and other crimes in Marion and Hood River counties.

—EO Media Group

Ciudad de Umatilla y Umatilla Morrow County Head Start

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Segunda Anual

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