

Council to hold first meeting on taxi ordinance

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — The debate over Uber drivers and local taxi service is beginning in earnest, but the city of Pendleton already is playing referee.

On Friday, Feb. 4, the city of Pendleton posted a screenshot of a Facebook blog called "Boycott Elite Tax."

"It has been brought to the City's attention that our logo is

being used in connection with this page," the city's Facebook post states. "The City of Pendleton is not affiliated with this account in any way and has requested the logo be removed."

"Boycott Elite Taxi" is a personal blog with more than 130 followers that posts messages critical of Elite Taxi, the city's only taxi company, and in support of Uber, the ride-hailing company. Its page shows it changed its cover

image from the Pendleton city seal to a cartoon of a taxi driver flipping off a man on the sidewalk as the man leaves a one-star review on his phone.

One of the blog's most recent posts encouraged its followers to attend a Feb. 8 workshop where the Pendleton City Council is set to discuss its taxi policy. The workshop was scheduled after some Uber drivers attended a Jan. 18 city council meeting and requested the city update

its taxi ordinance to allow ride-hailing companies such as Uber to operate within city limits.

The Uber drivers argued allowing ride-hailing would introduce a healthy dose of competition to the city and would give residents another option for transportation. But the owners of Elite Taxi want to maintain the ordinance's status quo, arguing ride-hailing drivers likely would put Elite Taxi out of business but

would be unable to fill the same hours of service or hold contracts with the city for transportation services such as Dial-a-Ride.

The city council uses workshops to discuss issues and learn more about them, but rarely uses the time to vote on them. At the Feb. 8 meeting, the council also will discuss the prospect of burying above-ground utilities on Southeast First Street and Southwest First Street.

An influx in urban renewal money has allowed the city to reconstruct streets all around the downtown area. But the city has held off on the two First streets while it considers spending more money to bury the utilities.

The council meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. at the council chambers in city hall, 500 S.W. Dorion Ave. The meeting also will be available online live via Zoom at bit.ly/3iaPLbo.

Pilot Rock police report man passed off movie prop money

East Oregonian

PILOT ROCK — The Pilot Rock Police Department is raising awareness about a fake \$100 bill the Pilot Rock Market received the evening of Friday, Feb. 4.

"The clerk immediately could tell the bill was counterfeit as on the front of it where 'THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA' is located, said, 'MOTION PICTURE PURPOSES,'" Police Chief Bill Caldera reported in a post on the department's Facebook page.

The wording was on the back of the bill as well, and the bill feels thicker than real money and has a noticeable blue shade to it.

Caldera also reported the suspect was described as a white man in his early 20s, about 5 feet, 8 inches tall and weighing about 170 pounds. He has red hair and wore a khaki long coat and khaki shorts with tennis shoes.

According to the blog propmoviemoney.com, movie and TV productions and others use prop money, which display disclaimers about the money not being legal tender. It is legal to use the fake cash



Pilot Rock Police Department reports a man on Friday, Feb. 4, 2022, passed off this fake \$100 bill at the Pilot Rock Market.

for media, marketing, promotions, training and advertising.

"But try to use it for any

other purposes," according to the blog, "and you could find yourself on the wrong side of the law."

Caldera also asked anyone with useful information to call Umatilla County's dispatch center at 541-966-3651.

OSP arrest Utah man following I-84 chase

East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Oregon State Police arrested a Utah man east of Pendleton after officers pursued him on Interstate 84.

OSP in a press release Friday, Feb. 4, reported troopers spotted Daniel Etherington, 46, of Clinton, Utah, driving near milepost 250 on I-84 in Union County. Authorities in the Salt Lake City area wanted Etherington on charges of aggravated kidnapping and aggravated assault.

Police tried to stop Etherington going westbound near milepost 250, according to the press release, but ended their pursuit when he wouldn't yield. Police set a spike strip near milepost 218 east of Pendleton, but authorities allege Ether-

ington drove around it and then turned around and started driving the wrong way in the westbound lane.

OSP reported Etherington then hit a police vehicle and proceeded to drive off the freeway and into the open fields. Etherington eventually crashed into a ditch, and state police with the help of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and the Umatilla Tribal Police Department, contained Etherington.

Police transported Etherington to the hospital for treatment and then booked him into the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on charges of felony fleeing, reckless driving, reckless endangering, criminal mischief and hit-and-run in addition to the charges from Utah.

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