

Armand Larive students earn national recognition for TV program

By ERICK PETERSON
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — On the afternoon of March 1, a middle school teacher and a handful of students busied themselves with the production of a TV broadcast.

They set up lights, turned on a teleprompter and took to their spots. When everyone, and everything, was ready, a young producer cued her anchors, and they began presenting the news.

“Good morning, Bullpups,” one student anchor announced.

Thus, Armand Larive Television, the student-created program of Armand Larive Middle School, Hermiston, started another show.

ALTV produces and broadcasts morning student announcements, which it transmits to all of the school’s students in their classrooms. On occasion, ALTV livestreams Bullpup sporting events. The students also create a monthly storytelling show in which they interview interesting people and present these interviews as in-depth stories.

“You can call it a middle-school version of ‘60 Minutes,’” Rob Doherty, Armand broadcasting advisor and teacher, said of the storytelling programs.

Recently, ALTV did more than present the news; it became the news. The Student Television Network Convention awarded ALTV with second place in the Broadcast Excellence competition for a Christmas program.

The episode included stories on Christmas spirit, women in science and foster parents who are making a difference.

“This is a big deal,” Doherty said of the placing.

ALTV’s history began in 1997, starting as a school



Armand Larive Middle School students and their instructor begin a broadcast recording March 1, 2022. The class recently won national recognition for one of its shows.

Erick Peterson/East Oregonian



Armand Larive Television broadcasters pose with their recent award March 1, 2022. Back row from left: Juliette Goyer Rondon, Sofia Rodriguez, Aspyn Inners and Naima Velasco. Front row from left: Jaideny Orozco and Matea Sepulveda.

Erick Peterson/East Oregonian

club that created weekly announcements for students. It has undergone changes since, growing in recent years. Doherty is the broadcasting advisor and teacher and said the second-place

victory was the highest placing ever for ALTV. He said he has more than 150 students a day involved in the program. These students rotate in and out to study and practice journalism, the advisor said.

In addition to adding students, ALTV has accumulated technology. Doherty said in 2012, ALTV only had one camera. Now, it has 12, as well as additional other equipment — microphones and a formal setup for our show.

The shows, dating to 2012, are available to watch on the ALTV website, altv.us.

Doherty expressed pride in his students, who not only created an award-winning product; they did it on their own.

“I didn’t help the students put that show together,” Doherty said of the particular program that won second place. “They did it entirely by themselves.”

He added their achievement was made even better because of the strength of the competition. ALTV’s contest entry placed second to a larger California school with greater resources.

Six students, a mix of sixth through eighth graders, discussed their work, the award and their feelings following their recent accomplishment.

One of the broadcasters present was Aspyn Inners, 12. An anchor on the program, she said she has strong feelings for broadcasting. She first got involved because of a friend who also was in it. She started taking the classes, she said, and then “fell in love” with the program and the field.

Now, she said, her work is about more than an opportunity to spend time with friends and is more meaningful than winning awards.

“I think (journalism) is about telling a story and putting it in front of people for them to see,” she said.

She added she feels a great responsibility to do this work and make sure she is telling stories truthfully.

The friend who introduced her to the class was Sofia Rodriguez, also 12. She anchored the Christmas program with Aspyn. Sofia said, though, that anchoring is not a full-time job for anyone. Students, she said, rotate through several different positions, which teaches them about different aspects of creating a show.

She did admit to having a favorite position.

“I love anchoring,” she said.

She stated she would like to be an anchor as a career. It was especially exciting for her that ALTV won an award for a program, she said, because she helped anchor it.

“I was super stoked about it,” Sofia said of the victory.

Sharing her classmates’ excitement for journalism, Matea Sepulveda, 14, spoke of the stories she has been able to create with ALTV.

“I’ve done a ton of stories

about important topics, like lockdowns and wearing masks at school and how people feel about it,” she said.

She added that ALTV is a “really fun place to be” and that she is very fond of her teacher and classmates.

Juliette Goyer Rondon, 12, also said she is enjoying herself and learning a great deal.

“I’ve learned how to take good shots, lighting, volume and stuff like that,” she said.

The technical part of the job is gratifying, she said, but her focus remains on telling important stories. She said she likes to find important topics and spread awareness of them to others.

Jaideny Orozco, 11, expressed her own feelings about what she has learned.

“I’ve learned a lot — like how we should respect other people, but also how to shoot videos and edit on other software apps.”

Jaideny, a relative newcomer to the ALTV, said she is enjoying the company of older classmates. Naima Velasco, 14, for instance, has been in the broadcasting program for more than three years.

Naima said her work has changed during the past few years. Her school was closed for much of the pandemic, so she had to be more independent. She filmed with a small Chromebook, which she also used for editing.

“It was a complex process,” she said.

She added the whole world became more complex during the past few years, and this is one reason she finds journalism exciting.

“Personally, I like to focus on stories outside of school,” she said. “I get to thinking about what we haven’t heard of yet, what is going on and what people want to hear about in our community.”

Pendleton looking to soften blow of utility hikes

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Utility rate hikes likely are coming to Pendleton residents, but it’s still not expected to be enough to cover the increased costs of maintaining the municipal water and sewer system.

The city council typically avoids voting on issues at workshops, such as the one it met for on Tuesday, March 8, but Public Works Director Bob Patterson said he wanted to start talks around the subject so the council could vote on it at its April 5 meeting.

Patterson said the consumer price index the city uses to determine the cost of maintaining Pendleton’s drinking water and sewer systems is rising more than 6.5%.

“The supply chain is killing us,” he said in an interview before the meeting, pointing out the costs of materials for water and sewer lines and other utility infrastructure has risen rapidly in recent months.

Patterson said city staff are aware other utilities, including electricity and trash disposal, also are likely to rise in the coming months. In light of the economic situation, Patterson said staff was recommending a 3.34% rate increase, about half of the 6.67% cost growth reflected in the price index.

But even if the council adopted the entire 6.67%, Patterson and staff said it



Treated water flows along a channel Dec. 19, 2019, at Pendleton’s wastewater treatment plant before being piped to the Umatilla River. The Pendleton City Council at its upcoming meeting on April 5, 2022, could vote on increasing city utility rates.

Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian, File

wouldn’t cover the increased expense of running the city’s utility systems. While staff recommended softening the blow of utility increases this year, Patterson said he would like to return to the council in a year to look at the rate of inflation and consider whether the city can maintain the status quo or raise utility rates again.

While the council didn’t take any action on Patterson’s recommendation, members seemed to like the plan.

Noting how much the costs of other utilities and goods were rising, Councilor Dale Primmer said he was concerned about how residents with fixed incomes might be affected by the city’s utility increases.

“It’s death by a thousand paper cuts with people on fixed incomes,” he said.

Several councilors noted the city would need to be proactive about telling residents the city was eating

some of the rate increases. Councilor McKennon McDonald said she wanted city staff to create a mock water bill so councilors clearly could show how the rate increases would affect everyday customers.

“We better communicate that well, if that’s what we decide,” Innes said.

While the council is set to meet once more in March, Patterson said he intended to officially request the rate increases at the council’s April 5 meeting.

From 2015-20, the city increased water and sewer rates 10.5% per year to secure a pair of massive state loans that helped the city replace its aging underground utility infrastructure. From then on, the city tied rate increases to the price index, which had been averaging about 3% per year until recently.

Even with all the rate increases, a 2019 study the city conducted showed Pendleton was in the middle of the pack when it came to utility rates compared to other cities in the Northwest. The city of Hermiston’s utility rates were in the same ballpark as Pendleton’s. Hermiston Assistant City Manager Mark Morgan said at the time he wasn’t sure how much these studies helped with public perception.

“If something’s too expensive, it’s too expensive,” he said. “It doesn’t matter what the other person is paying.”

Shooting in Hermiston sends teen to hospital

East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Hermiston police are investigating a shooting Monday, March 7, that put three rounds into an unmarked police vehicle and sent a teen to the hospital.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston in a press release also reported his department asked the middle schools and high school go into a secure room protocol during the incident.

Hermiston police at about 1:30 p.m. responded to the area of West Madrona Avenue and Northwest 13th Street on a report of gunshots. According to the press release, an on-duty detective in an unmarked police vehicle was in the area on an unrelated matter and called in the gunfire.

“As the detective followed one of the involved vehicles to call out the description and direction of travel for patrol officers, he began receiving fire from an unknown location,” Edmiston reported.

The detective observed a second vehicle and reported its description. According to the press release, the detective’s vehicle sustained damage from three rounds but the detective was unharmed.

After receiving the vehicle descriptions, officers located a red Nissan Altima on the 1000 block of West Orchard Avenue. Police stopped the car, detained the driver, who was 17, and took the person to the Hermiston Police Department for questioning.

Police seized the car pursuant to the execution of a search warrant, according to the press release, which did not reveal any more information about the identity of the driver.

Officers learned a person with a gunshot wound to the leg was shot off at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston. According to the press release, police questioned the “uncooperative 18-year old from Umatilla” who did not suffer life-threatening injuries.

Death of defendant ends prosecution of sex crimes case

PENDLETON — The death of a Pendleton man also brought an end to the sex crimes case against him.

Richard James Sheldon, 75, died Monday, March 7, according to the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office.

Sheriff’s Capt. Sterrin Ward said the sheriff’s office

received request to check on Sheldon, whose jury trial was to begin March 9 at the Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton. A sheriff’s sergeant found Sheldon in the area of Barnhart and Airport roads, Pendleton, and he had died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Pendleton police in February 2020 began investigating Sheldon on sexual

abuse allegations and arrested him April 1, 2021. Police in a press release at the time described the investigation as “protracted and complex.” Detectives obtained several search warrants that ultimately “revealed that the alleged sexual abuse occurred over a several year period between 2017 to 2020,” according to the press release.

The Umatilla County

District Attorney’s Office subsequently charged Sheldon with 19 counts of sex crimes, including two counts of first-degree sexual abuse. State court records also show the court on April 2 set Sheldon’s bail at \$500,000. He paid 10% — \$50,000 — to bail out on May 7.

Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer dismissed the case the day Sheldon died.

—EO Media Group

LOCAL BRIEFING

WILDHORSE
RESORT & CASINO

3/11/3/17

Cineplex Show Times

Theater seating will adhere to social distancing protocols
Every showing \$7.50 per person (ages 0-3 still free)

Licorice Pizza (R)	6:30p
Extra 1:00p show 3/11-3/17	
.....	
Studio 666 (R)	4:00p 9:30p
.....	
The Batman (PG13)	3:00p 4:40p 7:00p 8:30p
extra 12:50p show 3/11-3/17	
.....	
Uncharted (PG13)	3:50p 6:40p 9:20p
extra 1:10p show 3/11-3/17	
.....	
Dog (PG13)	3:40p 6:20p 9:00p
extra 1:20p show 3/11-3/17	

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