

Fire:

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County Fire District No. 1 reported it sent firefighters and equipment at 8:17 p.m. to a call about a recreational vehicle fire on Northeast Eighth Place.

Matt Fisher, UCFD No. 1 battalion chief, added some insight to the situation.

The fire department did not find an RV ablaze, he said, but a flaming warehouse. The warehouse, which firefighters referred to as a “commercial structure” and a “truck shop” in a residential neighborhood.

Amanda Dunham said she lives on Northeast Fourth Street behind Walmart a few blocks from the fire and came out of her place around 8:30 p.m. when she smelled smoke. Then she saw the fire.

“You could see it pretty well from my house,” she said.

The location was Wilde Electric Motor Supply, 610 N.E. Eighth Place, she said, and so she and others hopped in a pickup and headed over.

By then first responders blocked off most routes, but Dunham said they found a way to get closer to the fire.

“They were tall flames, they were really going,” she said.

And while watching the blaze, she said there were



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

A semi remains outside the burned warehouse Wednesday, July 13, 2022, at the intersection of Northeast Eighth Place and East Catherine Avenue, Hermiston, where a fire erupted the evening before.

explosions coming from inside the warehouse.

Firefighters work into the night to put out pockets of fire

Fisher stated the building contained fuel, including motor oil and propane. This fuel, he said, caught fire, leading to “multiple large explosions.”

Shortly after 10 p.m., firefighters still were on the scene, spraying a burning warehouse with water.

Neighbors sitting just outside the property said mechanics had operated there in the past.

Fisher said the building was evacuated, though people returned after being

directed away from the fire. One person, according to Fisher, received minor burns from the fire after returning to the building while it still burned. The person refused medical attention, Fisher said.

Fisher added a second person on location suffered injuries that were unrelated to

the fire itself and was rushed to Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston.

He credited local emergency agencies for coming together and helping with this fire.

Fire district crews from Echo, Boardman, Umatilla joined in the effort, as did the ambulance from the Morrow

County Health District. A total of 29 firefighters were on the scene, including 17 from Umatilla County Fire District No. 1.

“A lot of people are here helping with this,” Fisher said. “It’s been a very busy night.”

Cause of fire under investigation, mother-to-be is OK

Umatilla County Fire District No. 1 on July 13 reported the cause of the fire is under investigation and the structure is closed to the public. The district also reported it notified the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality due to contaminated runoff from the fire. And aside from the one man who suffered burns, there were no other injuries.

Aughinbaugh said she saw the man who had been injured by the fire. She said he initially refused medical help but was terribly blistered and eventually decided to visit Good Shepherd for treatment.

She said she returned home from the hospital, herself, after doctors determined she was not going into labor and her pregnancy was not endangered.

Saying she was in good spirits, she joked that this incident might somehow influence her unborn child’s career path.

“He might become a firefighter,” Aughinbaugh said.

Other neighbors joked about nicknaming the child “Sparky.”



Erick Peterson/Hermiston Herald

Cases of water sit June 23, 2022, in front of the Morrow County Government Center, 215 N.E. Main Ave., Irrigon.

Water:

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Echo company takes over water delivery

Morrow County contracted with Desert Springs Bottled Water Co. of Echo to deliver water to people with tainted wells. Each home in need could receive 4 or 5 gallons of water every two weeks, he said. How much that will cost remains a question.

Doherty said the county is discovering greater and greater nitrate contamination in an increasing number of homes. He said he has recently seen test results with nitrate levels in the 50 to 60 parts per million range outside both Boardman and Irrigon.

“Sixty-eight is now, I think, our high,” Doherty said. “It was 59.”

He said Desert Springs scheduled water bottle delivery to around 60 Morrow County homes starting July 9, but the number of customers could jump up to 200 within the next week and even more soon after that.

Given the potential for change, the commissioner stated he couldn’t estimate the county’s cost.

And while Desert Springs is providing a valuable service, Doherty said, the water deliveries remain a “stopgap.” Both deliveries and the pickup sites, he said, will eventually terminate. It could be three months, he said, as the county makes other plans.

A longer-term solution, he said, is installing the filters onto kitchen taps in people’s homes.

County balks at Irrigon’s offer

Morrow County Emergency Management on June 16 sent a letter to the city of Irrigon.

“Morrow County would like to officially request to use city water in its efforts to distribute clean cooking and drinking water to the rural residents of Irrigon

who have a domestic well within the 97844 ZIP code and whose water has been tested and shown to be above the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) recommended levels of nitrate,” states the letter from Morrow County Emergency Manager Paul Gray to Irrigon City Manager Aaron Palmquist.

The Irrigon City Council discussed the request at its June 21 meeting and voted to authorize the sale of city water to Morrow County.

Palmquist in a letter June 22 to Gray outlined an agreement for city staff to fill water containers and distribute water.

Water fees would be \$0.025 per gallon. The county also would need to pay a deposit of \$900, with \$750 being refundable, according to a request form with Palmquist’s letter.

Irrigon’s city manager on July 7 said he had not heard back from the county about the matter. Irrigon had not opened a hydrant, and the county’s water distribution site in Irrigon was handing out bottled water.

Doherty stated he didn’t hold anything against the city. Irrigon has economic concerns of its own, he said, and it’s completely within its rights to offer to sell water rather than gift it to the county. Doherty added the county was pursuing alternative efforts to bring fresh water to local people.

Educating the public remains a priority

While the county makes further efforts to test samples, distribute fresh water and schedule filter installations, the commissioner said there is work to do in making more people aware of the problem.

Doherty said that, a month into the emergency, he is still encountering local people who are unfamiliar with the problem.

“They’re wondering what this well-sampling is all about,” he said.

He added the county is planning to mail information to homes in the county.

Fred:

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“It’s sad whenever you lose a friend,” said Johnny Blagg, Cowboy’s president. “He was our Tenderfoot, Pendleton’s second oldest community service award.”

“Fred was very important to VFW activities,” said Post 922 Commander Clifford Smith of Athena. “He was instrumental in reinstating our Fourth of July parade, and was post quartermaster for several years.”

Smith noted Bradbury was chairman of the VFW

Cowboy Breakfast during Pendleton Round-Up.

“The sad news was a shock,” he added. “I had just worked with him on the parade.”

“Fred’s loss leaves a large hole in Pendleton’s volunteer community,” said Pendleton Mayor John Turner, Bradbury’s fellow U.S. Marine Corps veteran. “He was a vital volunteer in so many different areas. In the Downtown Association, he worked steadily and quietly.”

Turner noted Bradbury also had served as the treasurer of a local political action committee a few years ago.



East Oregonian, File

Pendleton City Councilor Dale Primmer, center, cuts the ribbon for a new hangar at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport in Pendleton on May 19, 2021, with Pendleton Chamber Ambassadors Tom Kligel, left, and Fred Bradbury. Bradbury, longtime community volunteer, died Friday, July 8, 2022, at the age of 80.

76th ANNUAL

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Four nights of PRCA rodeo plus six days of western entertainment in scenic Joseph, Oregon!

TUE	1:30pm	Bucking Horse Stampede — Main Street
WED	9:30am	Little Buckaroo Special Needs Rodeo
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	6:00pm	Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	Family Fun at the Thunder Room — DJ
THUR	9:00am	Tough Enough to Wear Pink Walk
	9:00am	Steer Tripping, Three Rounds
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	6:00pm	Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	Tough Enough to Wear Pink — Wear Pink Fun at the Thunder Room after Rodeo — Stay Tuned!
FRI	10:00am	Chief Joseph Junior Parade — Main Street
	2:00pm	Slack — Arena
	6:00pm	Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
	9:30pm	Live Music and Dancing at Thunder Room — Whiskey Creek
SAT	10:00am	Grand Parade — Main Street
	2:30pm	Slack — Arena
	6:00pm	Rodeo Gates Open — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	7:00pm	PRCA RODEO — Harley Tucker Memorial Arena
	9:00pm	All Teen Dance — Joseph Community Center
	9:30pm	Live Music and Dancing at Thunder Room — Whiskey Creek
		After Rodeo — Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — til 3:00am
SUN	6:00am	Cowboy Breakfast — Rodeo Grounds — til 10:00am
	9:00am	Cowboy Church Service

To purchase tickets and for more information visit www.chiefjosephdays.com