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Heat causes one death in Umatilla County, six in Oregon

Hermiston and Pendleton set new record highs Friday

Oregon Public Broadcasting and East Oregonian

PENDLETON — State officials reported at least six people in Oregon have died from heat-related issues, including one person in Umatilla County.

Of the other potential heat-related deaths last week, three were in Multnomah County and another in Marion County. The Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office also is investigating the death of an elderly man who died Saturday, July 30, in his home in Clackamas County. He didn't have a working air conditioner, according to

a county press release. No other details were released.

The Oregon Medical Examiner's Office did not share additional details, though it noted the heat-related death designations are preliminary and a final cause-of-death determination may not be available for several months.

In addition to the deaths, dozens of people have sought medical attention, as the region continues

to struggle with prolonged triple-digit temperatures.

Multnomah County announced July 28 that Portland's Bureau of Emergency Communications had received 71 heat-related calls since July 24, and emergency medical services responded to 51 of them. Officials also said 22 people had been taken to emergency rooms for heat-related illnesses. Many of them were

exposed to the heat while on the job.

The National Weather Service reported the extreme heat now will last longer than forecasters initially expected. An excessive heat warning covering most of Umatilla and Morrow counties and other areas is in effect through until 11 p.m. July 31.

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ATHENA

Local law sidelines charging station project

Grant Richie contends community would benefit; Athena mayor doesn't see it that way

By JOHN TILLMAN
East Oregonian

ATHENA — Grant Richie of Minam proposed building a high-speed electric vehicle charging station at his One Stop supermarket and gas station at Main and Fifth streets, Athena. But the project ran afoul of Athena's law banning new overhead power cables.

"There is only one universal fast-charging station in Pendleton," Richie said, "and one in Dayton. Walla Walla doesn't have one. Wildhorse Resort has Tesla chargers, but there is no universal high-speed charger between Pendleton and Dayton or the Tri-Cities."

He also owns stores in Minam and Walla Walla, and Home Hardware Floors, while working as a river guide. The project ran afoul of an Athena ordinance banning new overhead power cables.

The Athena ordinance requires connections to existing overhead lines and any new local electricity or telephone lines to go underground, and lines to replace outdated existing overhead lines also have to go underground.

Project two years on process

Richie said he worked with Pacific Power to draw up a proposal, based on the less expensive option of stringing power cables overhead. The power pole across the alley from the One Stop is maxed out with transformers. Pacific Power would have to put up a new pole and run two lines about 20 feet to bring 480 volts for the charger.

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GOING OLD SCHOOL



Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Hermiston police officer Trevor Limburg trains Saturday, July 30, 2022, at the former Rocky Heights Elementary School, Hermiston.

Former Hermiston elementary school provides real-world place for police training

By PHIL WRIGHT
East Oregonian

HERMISTON — Oregon State Police led local officers on training that mimicked real-world situations, including working in blazing heat.

The training took place Friday and Saturday, July 29 and 30, in Hermiston at the former Rocky Heights Elementary School. Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said the plan was to allow the OSP SWAT team to what training it could do, then state police would oversee training for local patrol officers that would serve as a reminder to how to respond to certain situations, such as a building alarm or even an active shooter.

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Members of local police agencies and Oregon State Police train Saturday, July 30, 2022, at the old Rocky Heights Elementary School, Hermiston. Yasser Marte/East Oregonian

Candidates for governor take stage in first debate

Drazan, Kotek, Johnson highlight differences during 90-minute exchange

By COREY BUCHANAN
Oregon Capital Bureau

WELCHES — During the first general election debate in a race for who will become the next governor of Oregon, the three candidates empathized with many Oregonians dissatisfied with where the state is headed.

Each of the three women, however, offered differing solutions to the state's myriad issues in a 90-minute forum that underscored the chasms among their political philosophies and leadership styles.

Republican nominee Christine Drazan, Democratic nominee Tina Kotek and unaffiliated Betsy Johnson — who are running neck-and-neck in recent polls — shared the stage in an event Friday, July 29, hosted by Pamplin Media Group and sponsored by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association at the Mount Hood Oregon Resort in Welches. The debate was moderated by PMG President Mark Garber and included questions from local journalists, as well as the opportunity for the candidates to confront each other with their own inquiries.

Drazan, a Canby resident and former Oregon House of Representatives minority leader who won

the Republican nomination, made clear that she views her opponents as leaders of an establishment that has brought Oregon to where it is today, and that the state needs new solutions to chronic problems such as homelessness, a lack of housing and mental health services, and economic insecurity.

"It's a little bit ironic to me to constantly hear my opponents on the stage be (aghast) on how horrible Oregon is on this and that and the other — 'We're 50th (in the country) on this and we have to work on that,'" Drazan said. "They've been in charge. We got here because of their voices. There are not two other people in the state with more power than them besides

the governor herself and maybe the senate president."

Johnson, a Scappoose resident who was a Democratic state senator before resigning to run as an unaffiliated candidate, emphasized that she represents a middle ground between what she described as extremes on her political right and left, noting Drazan's pro-life stance on abortion and positing that Kotek is a part of a progressive left that is responsible for mounting problems.

"Oregonians are distrustful of the radical right and they are terrified of the progressive left... What could be more different and impactful than a governor with an allegiance only to Oregonians and not to a party agenda or special interests?" she said.

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