

# Casino:

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The district did not identify the staff member. CTUIR Board of Trustees Chair Kat Brigham in a statement the morning of Aug. 19 reported the bystander is expected to make a full recovery.

## Witnesses recount events

Matt Waggoner was one of the people standing by the entrance to the casino on a video call with his son when he saw a police car roar up to the entrance of the food court hundreds of feet away. He said an officer stepped out of the vehicle and began yelling for everyone to get down and put their hands up.

"It was all so sudden," Waggoner said.

The Athena resident said he saw the robber emerge from the doors, firing away at the officer. After exchanging gunfire, Waggoner said the gunman appeared to be hit on his right side before crumpling to the ground.

He also captured about 20 minutes of footage of the shooting and subsequent



Several local police work Wednesday afternoon, Aug. 17, 2022, near the entrance to the food court at Wildhorse Resort & Casino, Mission, following a robbery attempt that ended with the suspect and a bystander suffering gunshot wounds.

Antonio Arredondo/East Oregonian

action on his phone.

Danielle McClelland said she was on her way to an afternoon work retreat when she witnessed the shooting. At the time, she was waiting for her father to pick her up.

"The shooting happened so fast. I couldn't see much. I heard so many shots," she said.

There were 13 bullet casings in the area behind

the officer's car and at least three bullet casings on the gunman's side.

Along with Waggoner, other bystanders filmed the shooting. Police asked one to stay back to provide evidence. The man, who wanted to remain anonymous, said he was waiting for a transfer bus to Hermiston for an appointment when

the shooting happened. His statement corroborated at least part of Waggoner's recount.

"(The gunman) came towards the officer shooting," the man said. "It was surreal to see that and being able to film it. Luckily I had my phone in my hand because I was shaking."

The man also said he

posted the video to Facebook.

All three witnesses commented on how quick the violent encounter was and how fast police arrived. Waggoner said three police cars were at the scene in short order and Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police also arrived.

## CTUIR officials react

The confederated Umatilla tribes reported approximately 20 police were on site after the shooting, including tribal police and FBI.

Wildhorse in a statement reported ambulances took both the suspect and the bystander to St. Anthony Hospital, Pendleton.

"We are grateful no one else was physically injured with all that took place," according to Wildhorse CEO Gary George. "Security personnel and Tribal Police were quick to act and the situation was controlled in a swift manner."

He also credited Wildhorse staff, saying, "The way the cashiers and everyone handled the situation was exemplary."

Members board of trust-

ees were at the casino attending a lunch with a guest when the robbery attempt and shootout occurred. Brigham in her statement said the "scary event has been far ranging for everyone involved," and the tribes' policy and procedures are there to protect people.

"Our staff, the tribal police, our casino security and our gaming commission did a great job in making sure everyone was safe," she said.

Brigham also stated Yellowhawk Tribal Health Center is providing mental health counseling and resources to those who may need it.

"We understand how trauma affects each individual differently and we want to make sure our employees have the resources they need," according to Brigham. "The Tribe will continue efforts to improve our security, emergency response and communications to protect our tribal members, community, employees and guests."

CTUIR also reported Umatilla Tribal Police is leading the investigation with the assistance of the FBI and local and state law enforcement agencies.

—East Oregonian news editor Phil Wright contributed to this report.

# Fire:

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Ninburg also noted Hemphill is listed as inactive with the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training.

"It is not only irresponsible, but it's gross negligence on your part to overlook these violations and egregious acts and allow him to continue to work for the (Pilot Rock Rural Fire Protection District)," she asserted, and keeping him on violates the district's policies and procedures.

Brooke Bell-Urube is the fire certification coordinator for DPSST. She confirmed Hemphill's certification status is "revoked." She also said she was familiar with the case and knew Hemphill works at the Pilot Rock district but he is not listed as employed.

Critchley said Pendleton Fire has had an agreement with Pilot Rock Fire to provide administrative support since July 1, while Rostov went on administrative leave.

"The agreement is open-ended," Critchley said. "We're good neighbors. We've been part of the investigation and want to help them until their personnel issues have settled down."

Ninburg provided no information to back up the sexual harassment claim.

Critchley said he could not provide information about Hemphill's service and



East Oregonian, File

Pilot Rock Fire Chief Herschel Rostov discusses the station's air tank refill procedure Nov. 18, 2021, during a training at the fire station in Pilot Rock. Rostov has been on administrative leave since at least July 1, 2022.

record because the matter is under investigation.

Weinke did not reply to a phone message and an email requesting his comments on the situation. Pilot Rock Fire Capt. Craig Beers also did not respond to a message left on the station phone.

Ninburg charged that members of the community have been denied the opportunity to work as a volunteer for Pilot Rock Fire for lesser charges than those on Hemphill's legal record.

"You've both stated that there is no one else in the fire department that has the training and or experience to command a fire," she wrote to Critchley and Weinke. "This is entirely untrue. The lieutenants and captains currently serving all have the certifications and are qualified to take

command of structure or wildland fires."

She also urged Critchley and Weinke to immediately take Hemphill off duty and list him as inactive.

Weinke is active in his community, serving on the Pilot Rock School Board as well as on the fire district's. He oversees all central farm operations for Oregon State University's Hermiston Agricultural Research and Extension Center and is a beef cattle rancher.

Besides her service on the Los Angeles fire commission, Ninburg co-founded the LA Derby Dolls, a volunteer-run Roller Derby league team, and the Good Deed Corps, a nonpartisan, nonprofit "committed to building a strong, engaged civil society that embodies a diversity of voice and perspective."

# Drazan:

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To get to Mahonia Hall, Drazan has to defeat Democrat Tina Kotek, who served as the speaker of the Oregon House 2013-22, and Betsy Johnson, a longtime Democratic Oregon legislator now running an unaffiliated campaign.

As part of her campaign's "Roadmap for Oregon's Future," a six-page list of issues and proposed solutions she would implement as governor, Drazan described a series of "political agendas and bureaucratic hurdles" that interfere with Oregon's agricultural community.

"Sometimes we're talking about banning the equipment that they use in the fields, like diesel bans," she said.

Drazan has also been vocal about her support for changing Oregon's education system, citing a low overall high school graduation rate (80.6%) as a mandate for change. According to Drazan's "Roadmap," this includes focusing on academic accountability and "keeping politics out of the classroom." She said graduation requirements that

were rolled back during the pandemic should be reinstated.

"I believe that those were positive, not negative for our kiddos, and that our expectations should be higher, not lower," she said.

And students who are members of minorities already face numerous

**"FRANKLY, IF WE HAVE A CHALLENGE AROUND OUR LAND USE SYSTEM, LET'S TACKLE IT."**

— Christine Drazan, Republican gubernatorial nominee

cultural and social challenges, she said, and while there have been leaders focused on addressing some of the social and emotional dynamics within schools, they failed to actually help those students obtain an education.

"The thing that we cannot possibly do is then also put

them into a position where they don't even have a strong education on the other side of this," Drazan said. "We need kids to be able to have a level playing field and raise up all kids."

Pivoting to Oregon's homelessness problem, Drazan has stated publicly she would declare a state of emergency on homelessness. She said she would prioritize repealing Measure 110, which rescheduled and legalized small amounts of narcotics. She said the measure is one of the many factors that contribute to Oregon's homelessness problem.

And merely amending the "regulatory environment specifically around housing," she said, does not address the holistic problem of homelessness.

"Frankly, if we have a challenge around our land use system, let's tackle it," Drazan said. "If it's affecting our ability to be responsive to homelessness, it's probably affecting our ability to be responsive in other issues."

Drazan campaigned all week in Eastern Oregon, including stops at Burns, Ontario, Baker City, John Day and Fossil. Heppner was the last place on this swing.

# Supplies:

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Six donation bins are spread out around the community waiting to receive more backpacks. The spots are at Blue Mountain Small Engine Repair, Prism Botanicals, Courtesy Home Furnishing, the Pendleton Chamber of Commerce, Kind Leaf and the Heritage Station Museum, and are available during business hours at each.

For those who can't drive out to donate physical items, monetary donations are accepted through the Let'er Uber and Zom-B13 Facebook pages. Reynon said those donations go toward purchasing bulk backpack orders.

And it's not just backpacks the group is looking for — it's all school supplies. Reynon said they accept pens, pencils, protractors and other supplies. There also will be hygiene bags complete with toothbrushes, floss and sanitizer.

"The more, the merrier," she said. "We'll accept anything that comes in."

The program's success has led to the group making an event out of the giveaway. When the giveaway begins on Aug. 24 at Roy Raley, there will be a raffle for prizes for those who donated and perhaps even a Pepsi vendor.

The prizes range from a \$150 gift certificate to Blue Mountain Small Engine Repair to a custom Let'er Zombie poster from Leachman. With all of these new elements, the event has grown into much more of a spectacle than the humble backpack donation Leachman made the year prior. The Zom-B13 creator said



Antonio Arredondo/East Oregonian

Heritage Station Museum is one of six locations throughout Pendleton accepting donations during its business hours for the Pendleton Community School Supply Drive and Backpack Giveaway, which occurs Wednesday, Aug. 24, 2022, at Roy Raley Park. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Antonio Arredondo/East Oregonian

A drop-off bin sits Wednesday, Aug. 17, 2022, at the Pendleton Convention Center, waiting for backpacks or other school supplies for the Community School Supply Drive and Backpack Giveaway on Aug. 24 at Roy Raley Park.

he never thought the event could get bigger than its size in 2021.

"It's all been overwhelming," Leachman said. "After last year, I thought, 'this is the best I'm going to do.'"

Now, the more than 200 backpacks as well as countless other school items will be free to Pendleton school children. With a less than a week remaining until giveaway day, those numbers

only can increase. Even with all the success on the operations side, Leachman said at its core, what matters most is making sure children have what they need for school.

"I know some people struggle with the pricing of school supplies," Leachman said, "It can be difficult for them to make decisions on what to get. We're hoping to alleviate that."



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