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Dallas officers cleared by grand jury

Unanimous decision made Friday after hearing testimony, watching body, dash camera footage

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Two Dallas officers involved in the Dec. 16, 2016, shooting in Dallas that killed Jeremiah N. Anderson will not face charges.

Friday, a Polk County grand jury cleared Sgt. Rob Hatchell and Officer Michael Fleming in the incident, said a press release from the Polk County District Attorney's Office. The finding was unanimous.

According to the DA's report, the grand jury found that Hatchell and Fleming's use of deadly force was lawful and justified because:

- The use of physical force

was necessary to defend the police officer or another person from the use or threatened imminent use of deadly physical force; and

- The officer's life or personal safety was endangered in the particular circumstance involved.

On Dec. 16 at 5:18 p.m., a 911 caller reported a suspicious vehicle in the Dallas Walmart parking lot, 321 NE Kings Valley Highway.

The caller described the vehicle as a green F-150 pickup truck and said the driver of the truck, appeared to be intoxicated and was flailing around in the driver's seat.

Dallas officers Aaron Mol-

lahan, Fleming and Hatchell were dispatched to investigate the call.

They contacted the driver of the pickup, identified as Jeremiah Nels Anderson, 36. According to the DA's office, Anderson confirmed to the officers that he had driven himself to the Walmart in the pickup truck.

Mollahan developed probable cause to believe Anderson was impaired by a controlled substance, based on "poor performance on several field sobriety tests as well as his confused demeanor and speech," the DA's office said.

Anderson refused the officers' requests for consent to

pat him down for weapons.

The officers determined they had probable cause to arrest Anderson on driving under the influence of intoxicants and asked him to place his hands behind his back to be cuffed.

At that point, Anderson actively began resisting arrest and trying to break free from physical restraint. Anderson was told repeatedly to stop resisting, but he continued to struggle with the officers, the release said.

The officers restrained Anderson face down, but were unable to get his arms out from under him. At this point, Anderson told officers

he would shoot, and produced a .45-caliber pistol from a shoulder holster. He fired at least two bullets, hitting Hatchell in the leg, according to reports from the DA's office.

Hatchell returned fire at close range, striking Anderson in the lower extremities, the report stated. Anderson continued to struggle.

Fleming fired one shot, striking Anderson in the head, according to the DA's office.

Anderson died at the scene. Hatchell suffered extensive injuries to his leg and back, the DA's report stated.

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IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS
City Council holds off on replacing recreation director.
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FALLS CITY
Owners of Green Haven park quarrel with council over new water rates.
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INDEPENDENCE
City Council appoints Mike Hicks to fill sixth spot.
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MONMOUTH
Monmouth Public Library garners attention from NASA.
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SPORTS
Andrew Barry gets defensive for Central's boys basketball team.
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Clow Corner, Hwy 99 to get rounder

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

POLK COUNTY — Roundabout.

That's the solution for the intersection at Clow Corner and Highway 99W that Polk County and Oregon Department of Transportation officials agreed to pursue Tuesday morning.

County officials say it's not a perfect solution and more expensive than the traffic signal they have been wanting for a decade, but it's at least doing something at an intersection that has a history of serious crashes.

As of September, the intersection of has been the spot for 32 crashes in the last 10 years, according to ODOT. Of those, five were very serious crashes, with two fatalities. County officials said other serious crashes have occurred since a fatality in September.

ODOT has \$3.39 million in an account waiting to be spent on a safety improvement at the intersection, about \$1.6 million short of what would be needed to build a roundabout. Tim Potter, ODOT's Area 3 manager, said he can get started with engineering and right-of-way acquisition now if the commitment is for building a roundabout.

"I've been through my seven stages of grief on this traffic signal," said Craig Pope, the Polk County Commissioners board chairman. "We have money, we can start doing something."

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Erin Osgood, inset, begins work to reach out to Polk County veterans as the county's first veterans service officer.

Polk gets own VSO to help local veterans

Erin Osgood starts work to reach out, help wade through veterans affairs

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Erin Osgood, Polk County's new veterans service officer, is more than ready to begin helping those who have served.

Since starting the job on Jan. 3, Osgood and her assistant Marie McCandless have had their hands full getting their new office running.

"It's a brand-new building, so we've been hitting a few roadblocks just making sure everything works properly," Osgood said. "We haven't been up and fully functioning yet. We are hoping for a soft opening by the end of (this week) when we can see veterans."

The position is new for Polk County, and the cost is being split between the state and county.

Before this year, veterans had to go to the Veterans Affairs office in Salem for help with their claims.

Osgood, who grew up in the Corvallis and Albany

Serving those who served

What: Polk County Veterans Service Office.
Where: 240 SW Washington St., Dallas.
Hours: Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Contact: 503-623-9188; website, <http://www.co.polk.or.us/vso>.

area, previously served as the VSO in Grant County for 18 months.

She and McCandless are U.S. Army veterans, and they both are eager to bring better service to the veteran community in Polk County.

"I like working with veterans. It's a nice way to give back," Osgood said. "Since I can no longer serve, it's nice to serve those who served."

Osgood said what she's seen of the support system in Polk County for those in need, including veterans, is impressive.

She's already a member of the county's service integration teams, a program that pools resources in each

community to help those needing assistance.

"I'm just really excited to start work here in Polk County," Osgood said. "I've been really surprised at all the amazing services that are already in place here. There's already such a strong sense of community in this county and I'm really excited to be part of it."

Osgood's main responsibility is to help veterans navigate the complicated claim process with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

She can walk veterans through applying for medical, disability, home loan and education benefits.

"We spend time with vet-

erans making sure that their ... claims are correct so they are getting the benefits they deserve and they are getting the money that they are entitled to," Osgood said. "It is very complicated. The VA is very particular in how they want claims filled out. The paperwork can be very confusing, so we spend a lot of time with veterans filling out the forms with them. We make sure everything is correct so that they get the correct benefits as quickly as possible."

With an estimated 8,000 veterans living in Polk County, Osgood is betting her office will be busy.

"We are excited to take on the challenge, and we will meet whatever need is here in the county," she said.

Osgood said she plans to begin outreach efforts to the Falls City and Grand Ronde areas soon in hopes of reaching veterans who may not otherwise come into the office.

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Ask Dr. before going to ER with flu

Itemizer-Observer staff report

POLK COUNTY — With the onset of flu season, winter weather conditions, and usual admissions for heart disease, stroke and other health conditions are keeping many hospitals busy, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Influenza can cause achiness, fever, cough and sore throat. People with mild symptoms who want to be seen can protect others and avoid long waits in the emergency room by calling their primary care provider before heading to the hospital, the OHA stated.

Many people with flu symptoms recover with rest and drinking plenty of fluids. People should call 911 if someone they know with the flu has severe shortness of breath or is difficult to wake. For those 65 and older, pregnant women, children and those with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems who get fever with cough or sore throat, talk to a health care provider.

Flu cases in Oregon have spiked in recent weeks. Laboratories in the state reported 1,641 specimens that were positive for influenza during the week of Dec. 25-31 — up from 609 positive flu specimens the week before.

For more information: flu.oregon.gov.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

wed
Donate to Dallas First Christian Church's sock drive, benefiting those in need through Polk Community Connect.
8:30 a.m.-noon.

Rain
Hi: 49
Lo: 40

thu
Join the community at the open house of the recently remodeled Monmouth Senior Center.
11 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.

Showers
Hi: 45
Lo: 36

fri
What better way to spend the evening than with friends and a free movie at Dallas Public Library?
5:30 p.m. Free.

Showers
Hi: 40
Lo: 32

sat
The Polk County Livestock Association will have its annual meeting at the fairgrounds. Scott Wagner will speak.
5:30 p.m. \$15-\$20.

Rain
Hi: 39
Lo: 31

sun
Has it been a while since you've cracked the cover of your Bible? Today is National Bible Sunday, a great reason to start.

Showers
Hi: 40
Lo: 30

mon
Join the Willamette Valley Orchestra at Monmouth Senior Center to learn an instrument.
6:30 p.m. \$25/month.

Showers
Hi: 40
Lo: 30

tue
James2 Community Kitchen feeds all who are hungry each week at St. Philip Catholic Church.
4:30 p.m. Free.

A.M. Rain/Ice
Hi: 39
Lo: 30