Hermiston man dies in ATV crash near Granite Sunday

Blue Mountain Eagle

A Hermiston man died after losing control of his ATV Sunday.

Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer said John Smith, 20, who was not wearing a helmet, failed to negotiate a corner and struck a tree at approximately 40 mph in the Pasture Creek area. Undersheriff Zach Mobley and Deputy Savannah Willey responded to the crash.

Palmer said, from the evidence at the scene, it appears alcohol did not play a role in the crash.

Contributed Image/Jim Hamsher

A plane doing a retardant drop over the now-contained Deardorff Fire.

Deardorff Fire contained with no injuries or structure losses

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Deardorff Fire that started July 12 was contained on July 13.

Oregon Department of Forestry Central Oregon District Public Information Officer Christie Shaw confirmed the fire was human-caused because there was no record of lighting in the area where the incident took place.

The fire, which started near Forest Road 13, burned a little over 55 acres, and the fire was fueled mostly by grass with some brush mixed in and a few spots of timber, according to Shaw.

ODF, the United States Forest Service and Prairie City Rural Fire Department worked together in fighting the fire.

Initially, the Forest Service was looking for the fire, but the fire was incorrectly reported and was located in land under ODF protection.

"We responded to that fire, and then their (Forest Service) crew came over and assisted on our fire, and then we made the request for structural protection, which came from the Prairie City Rural Fire Department," Shaw said. "Suppression and mop-up have been a coordinated effort" between the three agencies.

On July 13, there were 50 firefighters assigned to the scene.

There were no injuries reported and no damage to any of the structures that were threatened, according to Shaw. There was a resident and four associated outbuildings that were threatened.

There were Forest Service and local ODF resources on site Tuesday continuing to patrol and look for interior hotspots.

Oregon forecasts potential 'exponential growth' in coronavirus

By Gary A. Warner
For the Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon faces an "exponential growth" in COVID-19 cases if current trends continue, with ever rising numbers of infections, hospitalizations and deaths.

"We have troubling news," said Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen in presenting the state's updated forecast on the pandemic Friday.

The state issued three forecast scenarios.

Current trend: New daily COVID-19 cases would rise to 1,100 to 3,600 by the end of July. Hospitalizations would go from 17 to 49.

Pessimistic: A 10% increase in infection rates would trigger exponential growth that could lead to 7,300 new cases and 76 new hospitalizations each day by July 31.

Optimistic: A 10% drop in transmission rates would cap new infections at about 1,600, with hospitalizations rising to only 24 per day.

While optimistic forecasts have not been reached in earlier months, the forecasts were based on numbers through July 2, prior to Gov. Kate Brown's order requiring masks to be worn inside public places.

On Friday, the count of new cases dropped to 278, with two deaths, one each in Lincoln and Union counties. Umatilla County continued to be a hotspot, leading the state with 51 new cases. The state set a new one-day record for new infections on Thursday with 389 cases.

Dr. Dean Sidelinger, the state's chief medical officer, said the state has enough hospital capacity to handle case loads for the next 60 days, unless rates increase further.

Despite the forecast, state officials announced no new mandatory policies. The Oregon Health Authority did add one voluntary limit, asking people to keep indoor gatherings to no more than 10 people for the next three weeks. The request does not change current rules regarding businesses, restaurants and bars.

Pamplin Media Group file photo

Pat Allen, Oregon Health Authority director, at a press conference earlier in 2020.

Allen said the state was constantly weighing the public health issues of transmission and the data showing the health and economic impacts of closing down businesses or requiring people to stay at home.

"It is an ongoing balancing act," Allen said.

OHA said it has seen an increasing number of cases coming from clusters of small gatherings such as graduation parties, birthdays, weddings, holiday get-togethers, bachelor parties, fraternity parties and exercise classes.

"There is an inherent sense of safety," Allen said of gatherings with friends and family. "We tend to let our guard down."

The guidance goes beyond planning events, Allen said. If someone finds themselves in a gathering of more than 10 people indoors, they need to make a conscious decision about staying or leaving.

"Think hard of whether that is a good choice," Allen said.

Oregonians were reminded to redouble efforts to keep a distance of at least 6 feet from others, cover faces and wash hands frequently with soap and hot water.

The highest rate of growth in infections is among those 20-39 years old. While less than 1% of those under 50 will die if infected, the younger groups inevitably increase the exposure of the virus to older, sick and immune-compromised people.

Events that mix households — or even generations within households — can cause transmission.

"Find alternative ways for those who are vulnerable to participate," Allen said.

The state doubled the number of health and liquor control officials checking up on businesses over the July 4 holiday. Sidelinger said that while Portland and Salem area businesses were largely following the rules, there was "widespread non-compliance" in a variety of locales, including Eugene and areas east of the Cascades.

Oregon's rate of positive tests is 6%, above the 5% mark needed to indicate the virus infection rate is under control. Oregon ranks 42nd in testing, with 105 tests per 100,000 people per day.

The United States has more than 3.1 million coronavirus cases, with over 133,000 deaths. More than 60,000 new cases were confirmed on Thursday, another record-setting day. Worldwide, there have been an estimated 12.4 million infections and more than 550,000 deaths.

Oregon has reported 232 deaths since the pandemic arrived in the state in late February. Sidelinger said the relatively low death rate was a positive, but cautioned that scientists are finding more long-term impacts from infections, ranging from inflammatory complications in children to long-term physical and mental damage in adults.

The Friday press conference came against a backdrop of pandemic-related news in Oregon, the nation and around the world.

Statistics from Johns Hopkins University show that the sharpest rise in new infections in the nation is occurring in Idaho, where there has been a 153% increase in cases over the past two weeks. The state has far fewer COVID-19 related restrictions in place than Oregon.

Sidelinger said Oregon was monitoring the situation, but did not know what, if any, relation there might be to the spike in Idaho and the rise in cases in bordering areas in Eastern Oregon.

"We collaborate on investigations to control the spread of diseases," Sidelinger said. "I do not have data specifically on the number of cases with a tie to Idaho or other states."

Ohio State University said it would not send students and coaches to Eugene for a scheduled Sept. 12 football game against the University of Oregon. Ohio State is part of the Big Ten Conference, which announced its teams would not play regular season games outside of its conference this fall.

Sidelinger said the state currently would not allow large crowds to attend an event like a Ducks football game at Autzen Stadium.

The future of in-classroom teaching this fall is increasingly under debate as the start of the school year approaches. President Donald Trump has demanded that children be sent to school. The Los Angeles teachers union called on local districts to keep campuses closed in the fall. Final guidance on Oregon schools, community colleges and universities is pending.

COPS AND COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Circuit Court

A count of harassment constituting domestic violence against Angeline I. Smith, allegedly committed March 31, was dismissed on July 9 based on a motion by Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter because of a lack of state resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jared J. Baker, 25, pleaded guilty July 9 to a count of menacing constituting domestic violence and a count of harassment constituting domestic violence committed on June 2. He was sentenced to serve 50 days in jail, 36 months of bench probation, 60 hours of community service and pay $200 in fines and bench probation fees.

Darron L. Huskey, 52, pleaded guilty on June 11 for a count of forgery in the first degree committed on March 23. He was sentenced to serve 10 days in jail, 18 months of bench probation, serve 30 hours of community service and pay a $100 fine in bench probation fees.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of July 8:

Concealed handgun licenses: 7
Average inmates: 9
Bookings: 7
Releases: 10
Arrests: 0
Citations: 2
Fingerprints: 1
Civil papers: 20
Warrants processed: 2
Assistance/Welfare check: 1
Search and Rescue: 0

George Brown, 45, of Mt. Vernon was cited for second-degree criminal mischief.

Carl Kalteich, 75, of Dayville was cited for violation of the basic rule, 74/55 zone.

Grant County Justice Court

Violation of the basic rule: Jose Drramona-Borrachan, 29, Shelton, Washington, May 30, 76/55 zone, fined $165; Christopher R. Spaniel, 27, Portland, May 8, 74/55 zone, fined $165; Matthew G. Hubeny, 35, Prineville, June 4, 75/55 zone, fined $100.

Failure to drive within lane: David G. Durfey, 51, Ukiah, May 6, fined $225.

Shelby M. Long was convicted of second-degree disorderly conduct after a plea of no contest. The defendant was ordered to pay a fine of $440.

Oregon State Police

July 8: OSP received a complaint from the supervisor of the Oregon Department of Transportation at the Austin Section. Several incidents were reported of a subject in a black Mercedes car, traveling at high speeds and routinely passing, in marked no passing zones. Several ODOT employees reported several different incidents that occurred on June 7. The vehicle was observed northbound in the early morning hours and later in the day when the vehicle traveled back through the Austin section traveling back towards the John Day Valley. Two citizen citations were filled out for Matthew E. Sagaser, 36, of John Day, who was the driver that was identified. The citations are being forwarded to the Grant County Justice Court.

July 10: OSP stopped a vehicle that swerved into their lane near milepost 165 on Highway 26. The driver exhibited signs of impairment and consented to standardized field sobriety tests. The driver performed poorly on the test and was arrested for driving under the influence of intoxicants. The driver submitted a breath test with a result of 0% blood alcohol concentration level. A drug recognition expert exam was administered, and Ricky D. Weickum, 22, of John Day was booked for driving under the influence of cannabis.

July 11: OSP stopped a vehicle on Highway 395C near milepost 7 for driving northbound in the southbound lane of travel. On contact, the driver, Jamey A. Mackebon, 41, Seattle, Washington, displayed signs of impairment consistent with a controlled substance. Mackebon consented to field sobriety tests where he displayed further indicators of impairment. At the conclusion of field sobriety tests, the driver handed OSP a plastic baggie that contained suspected methamphetamine. OSP arrested the driver for DUII and possession of methamphetamine. Frontier Towing responded and towed the vehicle. OSP transported the driver to the Grant County Jail where he provided a BAC sample of 0%. The driver refused to participate in a DRE evaluation. The driver refused to provide a urine sample under implied consent. OSP obtained a search warrant for a urine sample, which the driver then provided. The driver is a convicted felon. OSP issued the driver citations for unlawful possession of methamphetamine, DUI of controlled substance and violation citations for failure to drive within lane and refuse to take a test for intoxicants. OSP lodged the driver at the jail for unlawful possession of methamphetamine and DUI of controlled substance.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 165 calls during the week of July 6-12, including:

• **John Day Police Department**

July 6: Cited Steven M. Warrington, 30, of John Day for driving while suspended and driving uninsured.

July 7: Received a report of juveniles throwing rocks at another juvenile on West Main Street.

July 8: Travis Freniere, 33, of John Day was cited for driving while suspended and no insurance.

July 8: Received a report of a noninjury crash near a business on West Main Street. Britt Wilcox, 25, of John Day was cited for no insurance.

July 11: Responded to a report of possible shots fired on West Main Street.

July 11: Received a report of theft on Southwest Bridge Street.

July 12: Two citations were given to Steven M. Warrington, 30, of John Day.

• **Oregon State Police**

July 4: Advised of cattle on the roadway on Highway 26 near milepost 137.

July 9: Dispatch was advised of horses on the roadway on Highway 26 near milepost 159. A landowner was contacted and said they would catch them.

• **Grant County Sheriff's Office**

July 6: A livestock owner was advised of cattle creating a hazard on the roadway on Highway 26 near Dayville.

July 6: Received a report of animal abuse on North Johnson Avenue.

July 7: Received a report of fraud in Canyon City.

July 7: Received a report of criminal mischief on Highway 26.

July 8: Received a report of burglary on Ford Road.

July 8: Received a report of criminal mischief in Granite.

July 9: Received a report of an injury crash near Marysville.

July 11: Received a report of theft on 11th Street.

July 12: Received a report of a fatal motor vehicle accident on Milton Street.

• **John Day ambulance**

July 8: Responded for a 19-year-old woman who was having an allergic reaction on South Washington Street.

July 8: Dispatched for a 91-year-old woman with difficulty breathing on Harper Creek Road.

• **Prairie City ambulance**

July 11: Along with John Day ambulance, dispatched for an ATV injury crash at Dixie Creek.

• **Prairie City fire**

July 12: Along with GCSO, responded for a United States Forest Service fire in Prairie City that was threatening structures on Forest Road 13.

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