

HEPPNER



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Three men arrested on rape and kidnapping charges

Two men and one "purported" juvenile have been charged with rape and kidnapping of a 12 year-old girl and kidnapping of a 17 year-old girl and a 14 year-old boy Oct. 26 between Hermiston and Boardman, according to Morrow County District Attorney Earl R. Woods, Jr.

Woods said that Comasena Jesus Martinez, aka Leo Lopez, 27 and Jose Manuel Santiago, who according to Woods, initially said he was 15 and then said he was 17, were charged with rape I (forcible rape), rape II (rape of a child under age 14), criminal conspiracy to commit rape, kidnap I, criminal conspiracy to commit kidnap, all in connection with the rape of the 12 year-old, two counts of kidnap (of the 17 year-old girl and a 14 year-old boy) and giving false information to a police officer.

Benito Gil-Santiago, 19, was charged with rape I and II, criminal conspiracy to commit rape, kidnap I, all in connection with the abduction and rape of the 12 year-old, criminal conspiracy to commit kidnap, attempted rape of the 17 year-old girl and two counts of kidnap I in connection with the abduction of the 17 year-old and the 14 year-old.

According to Woods, the 17 year-old, her 14 year-old brother, and his 12 year-old girlfriend all of Hermiston, were walking

together near the outskirts of Hermiston around 10 p.m. Oct. 26, when they saw a brown van with three men inside coming out of a dirt road. The van passed them then came back and then a green four-door sedan, carrying the same three men approached the three youths.

The youths initially turned down an offer for a ride from the men, but when the men offered them a ride to Boardman, they finally accepted.

Once the youths were in the car, the driver began making advances toward the 12 year-old, who had been told to sit in the front seat. The girl then crawled into the back seat of the vehicle and asked to be let out of the car which was traveling west bound on the freeway.

The vehicle then turned on to Patterson Ferry Road and traveled about a mile and a half past a gate leading to a large irrigation circle.

The boy then tried to jump out of the car. He and the 17 year-old managed to get out of the car and tried to pull the 12 year-old out of the car.

The three youths then took off running, but the three attackers got back into their car, drove around, got out of the car and ran across the field to cut them off.

Gil-Santiago then allegedly attempted to disrobe the 17 year-

old girl. The 14 year-old attempted to free her by hitting him with a stick. In the meantime, the other two attackers allegedly took turns raping the 12 year-old.

The 17 year-old and the 14 year-old managed to break away but then the third attacker allegedly raped the 12 year-old. The men then released her and she ran to the freeway where she was able to call 911. After the dispatcher was able to calm the hysterical girl, Morrow County Sheriff's deputies were dispatched to Eastern Oregon Farms near Irigton. A short time later, the other two were able to reach a phone to call police.

Police were able to find the area where the attacks occurred and locate the brown van and green sedan.

Five Hispanic men were then found and three of the men were identified as the alleged attackers by two of the victims. With the assistance of the Oregon State Police, the three were arrested at 3:30 a.m. Oct. 27.

Martinez had previously been convicted of sexual intercourse with a minor and was deported from the United States as a result of that conviction. Martinez and Gil-Santiago are being held on \$250,000 bail at the Benton County Jail; Jose Manuel Santiago is being held at the Umatilla County Juvenile Detention Center in Pendleton.

All three are believed to be illegal immigrants.

Grand jury for Martinez and Gil-Santiago has been set for Nov. 10.

Conferences set at local schools

Parent teacher conferences will be held at Heppner High School on Thursday Nov. 4 from 5 to 8 p.m. and on Friday, Nov. 5 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will be no school on Friday at the high

Court to investigate home rule charter

The Morrow County court agreed to initiate the process for investigating "Home Rule" in Morrow County at its regular meeting Oct. 13. Home Rule is the term generally used to indicate that the makeup of the county government is established by charter, rather than the statutory format now in place. Some interest in investigating home rule had been expressed to the court and, said Judge Louis Carlson, "We, too, are interested in pursuing any options which have the potential of improving government services."

The process may be initiated either by petition from the people or by resolution of the court to appoint a committee. The court planned to sign a resolution at its meeting Nov. 3.

Within 60 days of filing the resolution, the committee must be appointed. The committee is made up of nine people. Four are appointed by the county court, four by state representatives and senators representing the district and one by the other eight appointees. The qualifications to serve on the committee are that the person must: be an elector of

the county; not be engaged in any business with the county inconsistent with the purpose of the committee; and not be a member of an appointing committee.

The process of investigation into home rule by the committee is expected to be a lengthy one, potentially taking two or more years. There are many variables to consider and decisions to be made before the committee would be able to present a charter to the voters, said Carlson. The public will be encouraged to participate in every step of the proceeds, he said.

City of Heppner awards sewer contract

At a special meeting held on October 28, the Heppner City Council made a tentative award of a \$1.37 million construction contract for the city's long-awaited Sewer System Improvement Project, without a hike in sewer rates. The tentative award was made to Michael Becker, general contractor of LaGrande, and is subject to approval by

DEQ and the Corps of Engineers.

Although the Becker bid, which was the lowest bid submitted, was initially higher than anticipated, Marks indicated that with a combination of a few limited project cuts, a cutback in engineering fees, and the tentative award of an additional \$100,000 grant secured by Gary Marks, the city would be able to avoid any

sewer rate hikes.

"We've been working hard to avoid a rate increase, and so far we've been successful," Marks said.

Marks reported to the council that construction would start in December. He said early work would be concentrated on the installation of the new effluent pipeline between the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the golf course. Additionally, an agreement with the golf course requires installation of a new irrigation system be completed by March 1. The entire project is scheduled for completion by July 31, 1994, and is aimed at bringing the city into compliance with state and federal wastewater disposal requirements.

The Michael Becker construction firm has recently completed work on a similar sewer project for the city of Stanfield and has additional experience with water and sewer projects for the cities of Athena and Joseph, said Marks.

Council approves street bond

The Heppner City Council gave unanimous approval Oct. 28 to a street repair and resurfacing bond issue that would provide funds for an ambitious street rehabilitation program next year.

The bond issue will provide \$350,000 for repairs and resurfacing work on approximately 2.25 miles of city streets. Because the city will utilize future gasoline tax proceeds received from the state to finance the bond issue, no

new taxes will be required.

By performing needed repairs next year, the city anticipates saving an estimated \$279,000 over the next 15 years from lower street maintenance and reconstruction costs.

"Many of our streets are in such poor condition, it's great to have a project in place that will address the problem," city manager Gary Marks said.

County hires new public works director



New Public Works Director Paul Christensen and his daughter Kimmy and wife Karen

Paul Christensen, Seaside, has been hired as the new Morrow County Public Works Director.

Christensen, 40, has been the city engineer for the city of Seaside for the past five 1/2 years. He has a bachelor of science degree in engineering from Walla Walla College. Christensen said he plans to begin work within the week.

He and his wife, Karen, have three children, Jennifer, 12 who is in the seventh grade; Andy 10, who is in the fifth grade, and Kimmy, 7, who is in the first grade.

The Christensen family is looking for a place in the Heppner area.

County medical fund to purchase dental offices

The Morrow County Medical Fund is finalizing the purchase of the Heppner Dental Office and the vacant dental office at Boardman, according to Pioneer Memorial Hospital administrator Kevin Erich, to fulfill a need in both communities.

Erich said that negotiations are also near finalization for the hir-

ing of a dentist, who will work in both offices. He said that employees at the Heppner Dental Office will continue working under the new management if they desire.

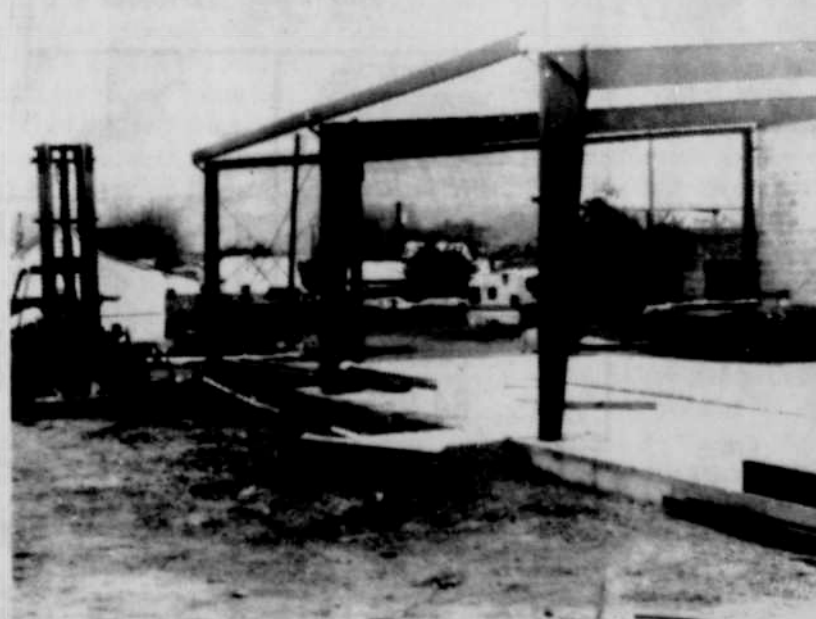
Erich said that owners of the Heppner Dental Office, Dr. Jim and Dr. Frank Allen have moved their families to Idaho.

Vote November 9

Voters will decide the fate of Ballot Measure I, the sales tax measure, in a special election to be held Tuesday, Nov. 9.

Registered voters of Morrow County will vote in the following polling places: combined Boardman 1 and 2-Greenfield Grange; lone 4-lone city hall; combined Irrigon 5 and 6-North Morrow Annex; Lexington 7-Mormon Church; and combined Hardman/Heppner 3, 8, 9, 10 and 11-St. Patrick Senior Center. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Construction begins on new fire hall



Steel beams for Heppner's new firehall began going up this week. Concrete floor has already been poured



Photo by Joyce Hughes

The big one got caught finally—by Diana Hoeft of Ruggs during the first hunt of elk season. Hoeft says this six-point bull elk is the biggest she has shot. It dressed out over 400 lbs.