



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY HERMISTON FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES
A fire crew extricates two people from a vehicle that rolled Thursday morning on Umatilla River Road near Bensel Road north of Hermiston.

Firefighters extricate 2 from rollover crash

Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services cut two people from a car after it crashed on Umatilla River Road Thursday morning.

Chief Scott Stanton said the single-vehicle rollover crash happened about 5 a.m. near where the road intersects with Bensel Road. One person was able to crawl out of the overturned car and two more had to be extricated by the

fire department. The two passengers, who had been trapped, were then taken to Good Shepherd Medical Center.

He said initial reports indicate the vehicle strayed off the road and then over corrected, causing the vehicle to drive off the other side of the road and roll over into the brush.

He said ambulances and a rescue crew were on scene within seven minutes of the 9-1-1 call and had the entire scene cleared in 40 minutes.



SUBMITTED PHOTO
Echo Superintendent Raymon Smith and School Board member Jessica Campbell accept a \$2,000 donation for student college credits from Echo Kiwanis Club members Carol Reese and Rebecca Ferge.

Echo Kiwanis Club provides funding for scholars

By SEAN HART
Staff Writer

The Echo Kiwanis Club expanded its scholarship program this year to provide funding for 200 college credits for Echo students enrolled in dual-credit classes through Eastern Promise.

Rebecca Ferge, chair of the club's scholarship committee, said the club is proud to be able to help students further their education.

"Education is a very important piece to what our club believes in," she said. "Being able to fund that any way we can and help facilitate some of our students to go on to bigger and better things is an exciting piece of what we do as Kiwanians."

Ferge said the club raises funds throughout the year, and the scholarships are its "big donation into the community." The club awarded seven \$1,000 scholarships to seniors from Echo and Stanfield this year, while also providing \$2,000 for college credits for Echo students.

Through the Eastern Promise program, the students had the opportunity to fulfill high school requirements, while also earning college credits from Blue Mountain Community College for \$10 per credit.

"I personally am an Echo graduate and participated in several of those dual-credit programs, so I completely understand the benefit of offering those classes to the students," Ferge said. "It's a great way to give them a step ahead of where you would be just normally graduating with

your high school diploma. You're looking at 200 college credits (with the \$2,000 donation), which is almost a four-year degree, if you equate it that way."

Echo School District Superintendent Raymon Smith said the program has only been offered fully for two years but is growing in popularity. He said the district offers more than 15 dual-credit classes with two more being offered in the upcoming school year.

"We probably awarded somewhere around 700 or 800 college credits last year," he said. "They were all paid for by a combination of school district and Kiwanis Club funding. We don't charge kids any money to take college classes."

Smith said each of the 30 freshmen last school year earned six credits, and if they continue on the accelerated path, they could graduate from high school with an associate degree. He said many people did not expect a small district like Echo to be able to offer college credits, but the staff "really jumped on board." He said the program helps students learn to set higher expectations to be more successful.

"It's a huge benefit and everybody realizes it," he said. "To show them early on that (college is) possible and it's attainable goes a long way. And having a community partner that has the same philosophy and supports the kids is just invaluable."

Recreation department stages drama camp

For youth interested in expressing their creativity, Hermiston Parks & Recreation has just the activity for you.

Developing your acting skills, as well as working on designing a mini-play for a community performance, are featured in an upcoming drama camp.

Open to students who just completed third grade up to age 17, the drama camp runs

July 20-24 from 3-5 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The cost is \$40 for residents and \$50 for non-residents.

Participants need to register by Thursday, July 16.

For more information, visit www.hermistonrecreation.com. To register, call 541-667-5018 or stop by the recreation office, 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

Taxi licensing rule pulls some drivers off the road

Council considers exemptions in driver background check

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

The city of Hermiston implemented background checks for taxi drivers this month to improve public safety, but the ordinance is keeping some longtime taxi drivers from work.

Chantel Robinson of Hermiston Transit Services told the City Council Monday night that under the city's new ordinance a theft conviction from eight years ago means she can't be approved for a taxi license, even though she hasn't been convicted of any crimes since.

"Everyone makes mis-

takes," she said.

Robinson said other Hermiston Transit drivers are in the same boat, watching new drivers hired to take their shifts at work because the new ordinance rules out a taxi license for anyone with prior convictions for crimes of "moral turpitude," no matter how minor or how long ago they were.

On Monday the council considered an amendment that would allow the police chief the discretion to grant a license to someone whose last conviction was more than 10 years prior. But the amendment was tabled after unanswered legal questions arose during debate.

Councilors Doug Smith and Doug Primmer were against the idea of amending the ordinance.

"You want the public to feel safe, not like there is going to be a felon behind the wheel," Smith said.

Gary Luisi, city attorney, said the amendment

didn't mean that a rapist who was convicted 10 years and one day ago would be granted a license. The police chief would still look at the nature of the crime and other factors, at which point he "may" grant the license.

"The operative word is may, not shall," Luisi said.

Councilor Jackie Myers said she thought the city should be able to trust the police chief and city manager to make the right decision about whether a person was a danger to public safety.

The council tabled adoption of the amendment until its July 27 meeting, however, after Luisi said he would need to do more research before being able to answer whether a conviction that was expunged from an applicant's record would count against them when applying for a taxi license.

On Monday the coun-

cil also approved a noise ordinance waiver for July 23 and 24. The waiver will allow contractors to work on a slurry seal down Highland Avenue from approximately 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.

The road re-surfacing project will stretch from West 11th Street to East 8th Street.

Ron Sivey, street superintendent, said the noise generated by the project would be "probably a little louder than a (street) sweeper." However, he said individual residences wouldn't be affected all night long because the crew would be moving down the road as the night progressed.

He said the slurry needs four hours to dry before cars can drive on it, so doing the work in the middle of the night would be much less disruptive to traffic. The lower nighttime temperatures would also increase the quality of the seal.

Girls' night in.

we are family

Everything takes on a whole new meaning when you become a parent.

With locations throughout Washington and Oregon, Mirasol Family Health Center serves hundreds of young families each year. We are now accepting new patients.

Mirasol Family Health Center
enjoyparenthood.org