

# Hermiston police chief provides details on big ag theft case

**By PHIL WRIGHT**  
Staff Writer

Hermiston police Chief Jason Edmiston said old-fashioned police work and modern technology led to the arrest of a man for stealing an expensive generator from a local agriculture business.

Nolan Douglas McClatchy, 48, of Hermiston was arrested Friday. He is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, for violating parole and on a charge of first-degree aggravated theft by receiving.

M & M Potato, 30572 Feedville Road, Hermiston, reported last Tuesday, Sept. 29, the theft of a \$50,000 generator and trailer, according to a written statement from the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office.

Edmiston said a Hermiston police officer on Friday received a call from a relative who works for M & M Potato and stated the generator was on the move. The generator — like cars and other expensive machines — has

a GPS unit that allows tracking. The officer took that information to day shift Sgt. Billy Osborne, Edmiston said, who headed out to find the equipment. Osborne also was working with a basic description of a white pickup hauling a trailer with a tarp covering something.

"Lo and behold," Edmiston said, Osborne spied the rig at 80153 River Lane, Hermiston, off Baxter Road, and also saw McClatchy get out of the pickup. Edmiston said Osborne pulled up as McClatchy was trying to unhook the trailer and told the suspect they needed to have a chat.

Osborne found McClatchy was wanted for violating parole and arrested him, Edmiston said, and the sergeant also saw the tarp did not entirely cover the item underneath, which allowed a "plain view" of the generator.

Edmiston also said one of M & M Potato's owners tracked the genera-



McClatchy

tor, arrived and determined the trailer McClatchy was using was not his company's trailer.

Hermiston police notified the sheriff's office about Osborne's find, and sheriff's detective Darrin Parsons responded from Pendleton. He and Osborne found the pickup McClatchy was driving was stolen out of the Walla Walla area, according to the sheriff's statement, and a search warrant led to the recovery of M & M Potato's trailer at McClatchy's residence, 79602 Brown Lane, Hermiston.

"The case is under further investigation," the sheriff's office reported, "and more charges are anticipated."

Edmiston said Hermiston police also processed McClatchy and transported him to the jail. Undersheriff Jim Littlefield was the point of contact on the case, according to the statement, but did not return a phone call nor emails Tuesday morning to provide details.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

It's early October, but city of Hermiston employees began decorating Main Street for the holidays. The usual decorations will be enhanced this year by lights from the former Eastern Oregon Festival of Lights.

## Festival lights to get second life

**By JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

Decorations from the defunct Festival of Lights are getting a new life as a musical show planned for downtown Hermiston.

Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter said he has obtained permission to drape the old Roemarks building on the corner of Northeast Second and Main streets in lights and choreograph them to music, creating a "high-energy" show that he hopes will draw Christmas shoppers downtown.

"I hope people say, 'We have 25 minutes to kill before the next show, let's look around,'" he said.

Fetter said he wants to block off the section of Second Street next to the currently empty Roemarks building during December to add bleachers for viewing and a tent where Santa can visit. The idea would be a trial run of sorts for the city's plans to eventually turn that block into a "festival street" with landscaping, brickwork and decorative gates to close the street to traffic during community events.

He said if time allows he would like to choreograph

three separate shows to run on a rotating basis.

The project will be in partnership with the Hermiston Downtown Business Association, which will help out with visits from Santa and other enhancements to the holiday light show. Fetter said he also recruited local musician Dallen Puzey to help create the musical display.

Last year the city was given several flatbed truckloads' worth of lights after the Eastern Oregon Festival of Lights disbanded. The nonprofit group ran a light festival on the Umatilla County Fairgrounds for 14 years before folding in 2014 due to a lack of volunteers.

Fetter said he plans to use "as many of the festival lights as possible" on the holiday show and use others to enhance the city's usual holiday lights downtown. He said he hopes that the musical light show will become a staple downtown and that other business owners will be inspired to increase their holiday displays to match.

"That's our plan for this year and then we can expand on it. ... I think it's contagious," he said.

### IN BRIEF

### Sen. Hansell files for re-election

State Sen. Bill Hansell, a Republican from Athena, has filed for re-election for Oregon's District 29.

"We were able to get a lot accomplished during my first term as Senator and I am anxious to continue fighting for rural Oregonians, small businesses, and the farmers and ranchers that make our region of the state great," he said in a press release.

The release states Hansell's accomplishments during his first term include a water funding package for the Umatilla Basin, protection of Milton-Freewater from a forced annexation, a land transfer to the city of Pendleton, new incentives to bring medical personnel to rural Oregon, the right to rodeo and a wolf plan.

Senate District 29 includes Wallowa, Union, Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam and Sherman counties and part of Wasco County. Hansell was first elected as a senator in 2012 and served as a Umatilla County commissioner for 30 years.

### Bill Elfering aims for second term as Umatilla County commissioner

Umatilla County Commissioner Bill Elfering of Hermiston announced this week he will seek a second term on the board of commissioners in 2016.

Elfering in a written statement said he was pleased with accomplishments in his three years in office, citing the streamlining and refocusing of county government resulting in nearly \$400,000 of savings to taxpayers while building a more responsive government with emphasis on service to Umatilla County residents.

County elections manager Kathy Allen also said Elfering turned in his candidate

filing Oct. 2 and is the first to declare. Candidates have until March 8 to file for the 2016 primary election.

Elfering credited his "decades of background in the private business sector" as very useful in public service. He stated he took over managing the county's economic development department in January, and quickly refocused the department on the "investing" of effort and resources in business expansion and jobs.

"More taxpayers, not higher taxes," Elfering stated, "that's what will benefit everyone in Umatilla County residents, cities and county government."

Elfering said in the statement during the next term he wants to continue his close affiliation with irrigators through the Northeast Oregon Water Association to bring more land under cultivation with high value agriculture.

"We're on schedule to bring a \$2 billion increase to the economy of the region," according to Elfering. "I want to continue to share in that effort."

He also said he is eager to continue as chairman of the Columbia Development Authority working to complete the transfer of land from the Umatilla Army Depot and its industrial development.

### Class series assists family caregivers

A short-term educational program designed to help

family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend is being offered in Hermiston.

The free series, Powerful Tools for Caregivers, includes "The Caregiver Helpbook," a book developed specifically for the class.

The six-weekly sessions begin Wednesday, Oct. 14 from 6-7:30 p.m. in Conference Room 3-4 at Good Shepherd Medical Center, 610 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston. Pre-registration is required.

For more information or to register, contact Helena Wolfe at 541-561-5443 or hwolfe@capeco-works.org.

### Leadership Hermiston sets Alumni Reception

Leadership Hermiston alumni are invited to meet the newest class during an Alumni Reception.

The event is Tuesday, Oct. 20, from 5:30-7 p.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395.

To RSVP, contact barb@hermistonchamber.com or 541-567-6151.

### Guard aviation unit deploys to Kuwait

Family, friends and dignitaries gathered Saturday to bid farewell to a group of citizen soldiers who will soon take time away from their loved ones and careers in service of their country.

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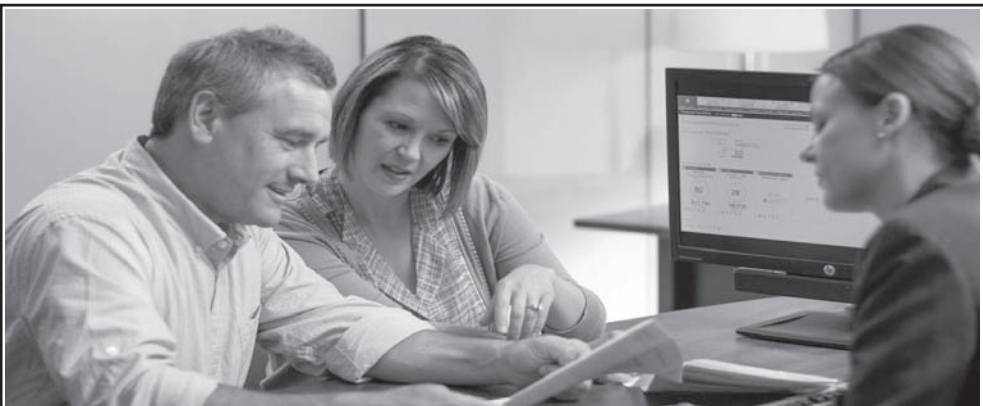
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