

# Police, public deserve credit for making city safe

Hermiston is a safe small city.

Most objective observers would likely come to the same conclusion by looking at the Hermiston Police Department's crime report for 2015. And it was certainly safer in 2015 than it has been over the last decade.

For instance, there were only 21 violent crimes reported in 2015, the lowest number in any year since 2006, except for 2013. That year, only 16 violent crimes were reported. The normal range of violent crime incidents over the decade was 26 to 59, with an average of 42 violent crimes a year.

But of course, not all crimes or violent incidents get reported. Victims of do-

mestic abuse or rape don't always call police.

The most common crime in the largest city in Eastern Oregon last year was larceny; i.e., theft of property. There were 413 larceny crimes reported last year. That's a rate of one larceny crime for every 2.4 percent of the population.

If all crimes in the city reported to Hermiston Police (524) were spread out evenly, it would mean 3 percent of the population was a victim of crime.

But safety is about more than numbers. If you agree that Hermiston is a safe city it is because you feel safe here. If you were recently a victim of crime, you probably don't see Hermiston as safe.

When I moved back to Oregon in 2005, I moved into a neighborhood in northeast Salem that didn't have the greatest reputation. But I didn't find that out until I had signed my lease. There were things I liked a lot about the neighborhood. I could walk to several restaurants, a grocery store, drug store and several mini-markets and other businesses within a few blocks of the apartment complex. And I walked to those places quite a bit. But there were times I didn't always feel safe on those walks, particularly at night. I was never a victim of crime in my neighborhood, but police were regular visi-



**Gary L. West**  
SHADES  
OF GRAY

tors to my complex and the surrounding neighborhood.

In March of 2010 there was a gun battle between a burglary suspect and police officers that left one officer wounded and the suspect dead that started about a block from my apartment complex and ended near the entrance to my complex.

Not the definition of a safe neighborhood.

The Hermiston area's low rate of crime is an attractive quality. That doesn't mean we should make it easy for opportunistic thieves to take advantage.

One of Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston's goals going forward is to

take steps to educate the public on ways to avoid becoming a victim of crime.

That's an important goal and a reminder that our community's safety is not just the responsibility of law enforcement. We, as citizens play a huge role in our own safety and security.

Lock your doors and windows. Don't leave your car running and unlocked when you are warming it up in the morning or just running into the store to pick something up quickly. Don't believe everything you read in email messages and online posts promising you money for a favor. And don't believe every phone call you get (particular from out of the area numbers) saying you owe the IRS or someone else money.

Be careful. Be skeptical. Be smart. Act safe and be safe.

Thank your neighbors for contributing to your safety.

When you see local law enforcement officers at work in our community, thank them for helping to keep us as safe as we can ever expect to be in an unpredictable world.

But don't forget to smile, because you will also be on a very candid police body camera.

Gary L. West is editor of the Hermiston Herald and Hermiston editor for the East Oregonian. Reach him at [gwest@hermistonherald.com](mailto:gwest@hermistonherald.com) or follow him on Twitter @GaryLWest or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/journalist.gwest](http://www.facebook.com/journalist.gwest).

## GUEST COMMENT

### New fire district just makes sense

Several years ago the Hermiston Fire and Emergency Services District and the Stanfield Rural Fire Protection District began working and training together to provide more effective emergency and non-emergency service to our citizens, increased safety to our responders and a reasonable cost of service. As the cost of personnel, training, apparatus, equipment and supplies escalated faster than revenues, the two departments were finding it difficult to stay abreast of rapidly increasing call volume.

The districts commissioned an independent study, released in June 2012, to determine the best course of action to keep the services viable in the future. The study concluded that by 2017 both districts would be substantially in the red if reve-

nues and expenses continued at the then-current pace stating, "Changes in spending practices will be necessary, potentially including making difficult service-delivery decisions." The study also pointed out that additional financial resources could make those difficult decisions unnecessary. While HFES had higher costs with career as well as volunteer personnel, SFD was finding it more and more difficult to maintain an adequate number of trained and available volunteers. The full study is available from the HFES website at [www.hermistonfire.com](http://www.hermistonfire.com).

The study identified 21 interim strategies that would yield economic or operational efficiencies and the districts continue to implement those strategies. Ultimately, however, the study recommended the two districts dissolve

and form one new district at a new tax rate that would provide solubility for the foreseeable future. Whether the new district will be formed is what the voters must decide in May.

As our communities grow, the demand for fire and emergency medical services is going to continue to increase. Even now, there are occasional delays in response because of multiple calls during the same time period. So far, there have been no detrimental outcomes because of the delays; but, as we empty the station more often for fire and ambulance calls, it is inevitable that a delay in response will cause loss of life or property.

Combining the districts at a new rate of \$1.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value will allow us to add staffing and have people on duty at the Cable station (Diagonal Road

all the time. Those additional positions will allow quicker response to emergencies in the east and south ends of the district and provide critical backup for the city and west side of the district. No one will pay more than an additional 55 cents per \$1,000 for the added protection, and the east end of the district will see quicker responses. On a \$200,000 home, the added tax would be \$110.00 per year or less than \$9.17 per month. This is the first time voters have been asked for additional funds in the fire districts 65 year history.

Besides additional personnel, the new rate will allow adequate funding of our equipment reserve account so that when it is time to purchase replacement ambulances, cardiac monitors and fire apparatus the money will be available and we will not have to borrow funds or place a bond measure before the voters. A fire engine can cost

upwards of \$500,000 and a new ambulance \$170,000 or more. Our most pressing need is replacing our cardiac monitors with a price tag of over \$220,000. A reserve account allows us to save money to make these purchases in the future, and with current revenues that account is underfunded.

Combining the two districts just makes sense when you have the facts. The new district will have increased funding to maintain solvency into the future and additional personnel to reduce delays in service and provide quicker service to our rural residents in the east end of the district. Get the facts. Go to the HFES website at [www.hermistonfire.com](http://www.hermistonfire.com) or talk to a firefighter or board member. You can also call the main station at 541-567-8822 and speak with someone.

Scott Stanton is the chief for Hermiston Fire and Emergency Services.



**Scott Stanton**  
Hermiston  
Fire and  
Emergency  
Services

## COURT:

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ed and \$370.15 restitution, plus court costs and fees.

•Pedro Antonio Covarrubias Spain, 21, Hermiston, pleaded guilty to Driving While Suspended; sentenced to 3 days jail, 180 days jail-suspended, 3 years probation, and \$1,940 fine, plus court costs and fees.

•Phillip Andrew Williams, 51, Stanfield, pleaded guilty to Driving While Suspended; sentenced to 20 days jail and \$1,940 fine, plus court costs and fees.

•Jose Luis Arevalo, 53, Umatilla, pleaded guilty to Driving While Suspended; sentenced to 180 days jail-suspended, 2 years probation, 80 hours community service and \$1,940 fine, plus court costs and fees.

•Fernando Martinez Cenicerros, 29,

Irrigon, pleaded no contest to Failure to Appear II; sentenced to 14 days jail and \$40 fine, plus court assessment.

•Glenn Eric Knudsen, 54, Hermiston, pleaded guilty to Theft II; sentenced to 180 days jail-suspended, 2 years probation, 40 hours community service, \$190 fine and \$1,500 fine-suspended, plus court costs and fees.

•Pedro Antonio Munoz Sanguino, 36, Hermiston, pleaded guilty to Driving While Suspended and Felon in Possession of Restricted Weapon; sentenced to 180 days jail-suspended, 2 years probation, 80 hours community service, \$940 fine and \$750 fine-suspended for each count, plus court costs and fees.

•Alexander Christian Ringe, 26, Hermiston, pleaded guilty to Theft II; sentenced to 40 days jail, 180 days jail-suspended, 3 years probation, 40 hours community service, \$140 fine and \$800 fine-suspended, plus court costs and fees; pleaded guilty to Failure to Appear

II; sentenced to 180 days jail-suspended, 3 years probation, 40 hours community service and \$40 fine, plus court costs and fees.

•Marisela Lopez Chavez, 21, Hermiston, pleaded guilty to Criminal Mischief II; sentenced to 60 days jail-suspended, 2 years probation, 60 hours community service, \$440 fine, \$500 fine-suspended and \$225 restitution, plus court costs

and fees; pleaded guilty to Disorderly Conduct II; sentenced to 60 days jail-suspended, 2 years probation, \$40 fine and \$400 fine-suspended, plus court assessment.

### Divorces

Divorce decrees were signed in Umatilla County Courts for:  
Sonja Pullen and Robert Pullen; Ricar-

do Martinez Dominguez and Maria Guadalupe Martinez Lozano; Rebecca Ann Rash and Clarence Richard Rash; Kevin Wayne Benham and Cristy Capitan Benham; Robert M. Harris and Melinda J. Harris; Holly May Britt and Jaylee Patrick Britt.

### MARRIAGES

Marriage licenses have been registered in Umatilla County for:

Ethan Lee Parks, 25, and Taylor Anne Godier, 24, both of Hermiston.

Mario Alberto Ramirez Navarrete, 25, and Adriana Rosales Sanchez, 21, both of Hermiston.

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## Umatilla Electric Scholarship Program



Got Scholarships?

### Umatilla Electric is offering the following scholarships for the 2016-17 school year:

**Academic Scholarships** -12 \$2,500 scholarships are available for members of UEC and/or their dependent children who receive electric service from UEC at their primary residence, and are enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program at a two- or four -year college. Apply online at [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov) by **March 1, 2016**.

**Electrical Engineering Scholarship** - a \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems. Apply by **March 1, 2016** at [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov)

**Lineman Scholarship** - a \$2,000 scholarship is available to members and/or applicants whose parent or guardian is an active member who receive electric service from UEC at their primary residence, and are interested in the Line Construction trade and will be attending an accredited Line College. Apply by **March 1, 2016**. Go to [www.umatillaelectric.com](http://www.umatillaelectric.com) to download the application.

UEC wants to help make college accessible to our young members. We hope you apply.

For more information about UEC's scholarship program, visit our offices in Hermiston or Boardman or online at [www.umatillaelectric.com](http://www.umatillaelectric.com). You can also call us for more information at 541-564-6414 or the Oregon Student Access and Completion (OSAC) at 1-800-452-8807.

SELF DEFENSE

Learn a full range of self-defense techniques, including: Awareness, home security, verbal de-escalation, evading and escaping maneuvers. This is a contact class. Age 12 and up. Class size is limited to 20 students. Must pre-register. Call 541-667-3509.

January 28 • 6:00 - 8:00pm  
GSMC Conference Center 2

HEALTHY FRIDAYS

Free health screenings: Blood pressure checks, weigh-ins, body mass index, cholesterol and glucose.

First Friday of each month  
9:30 - 11:30am  
Third Friday of each month  
2:00-4:00pm  
GSMC Conference Center 7  
(by Education Dept)

TAI CHI - MOVING FOR BETTER BALANCE

FREE class to work on balance, strengthen muscles, improve posture and core strength and reduce stress. Great for all ages!

Mondays • 10:30-11:15am  
GSMC Wellness Center (behind the hospital)

THERA-BANDS BASIC MOVES

Help tone and strengthen muscles, improve posture, and reduce stress. We use resistance bands for a flexibility workout that increases overall health. Class is free. Thera-bands are \$5 each.

Tuesdays & Thursdays • 9:00 - 9:30am  
GSMC Wellness Center (behind the hospital)

BANDS AND BEYOND

Learn strength training exercises and improve balance using free-weights, stability balls, Thera-bands and more. Wear comfortable shoes and clothes. Class is free. Thera-bands are \$5 each.

Tuesdays & Thursdays • 9:30 - 10:00am  
GSMC Wellness Center (behind the hospital)

QUIT TOBACCO

Have you tried to quit tobacco, but found you needed support? Contact our tobacco cessation specialist to schedule your free consultation. Group sessions can also be scheduled by employers. Call 541-667-3509 for more info or to schedule an appointment.

Working every day to promote a healthy community

GOOD SHEPHERD

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM  
Education and Wellness Services 667-3509

For information or to register for a class, call (541) 667-3509 or email [healthinfo@gshealth.org](mailto:healthinfo@gshealth.org)