

Stabbing suspect attacks officer en route to jail

By PHIL WRIGHT
Staff Writer

A man arrested for stabbing a woman Thursday, March 17, also tried to choke an officer transporting him to the Umatilla County Jail.

Hermiston police Chief Jason Edmiston in a written statement said Richard D. Heathman, 32, of 1100 W. Sunland Ave., Hermiston, is in custody after the violent confrontation.

Edmiston reported Hermiston officers re-

sponded to Heathman's was "extremely aggressive and non-compliant with officers," so they handcuffed him and were taking him to the jail in Pendleton.



Heathman

Officers searched the neighborhood and within minutes caught Heathman, the statement said, but he

While en route, though, Heathman stepped through his arms, Edmiston said, caused significant damage to the patrol car and then tried to choke Edmiston police Cpl. Doug Gill with the seatbelt while on Interstate 84 starting near

milepost 193 near the Echo exit.

The officer told dispatchers to send help, according to police radio transmissions, and Edmiston said Oregon State Police found Gill and helped secure Heathman.

An emergency flight took the stabbing victim to a Portland hospital. Edmiston reported her injury did not appear to be life-threatening.

The Sunland home has generated several com-

plaints and was a focus of police activity.

"We had been in the middle of a three-prong approach to dealing with the residence and residents at the time of the call today," Edmiston stated. "Not only did we have a dedicated directed patrol taking place for that residence internally with our patrol division, but we also had code enforcement addressing violations, and our detective assigned to the drug task force was collecting information

about the persons frequenting the house."

Umatilla County Circuit Court records show Heathman had a court appearance Monday to change his plea to driving under the influence of intoxicants. He did not show for the hearing, leading Circuit Judge Dan Hill to issue a warrant for his arrest.

Edmiston also stated "exact charges for Heathman have not been filed yet, but he will likely be facing assault and vandalism charges."

Boardman to host spring cleanup event in April

Residents looking to do a little spring cleaning will have some help from the city during the month of April.

Garbage vouchers will be available up to \$50 during the

month-long, community-wide cleanup event. The garbage voucher program encourages people to clear out the clutter from their homes and lawns. Vouchers are valid at both the Finley Butte

Landfill and North Morrow Transfer Station.

To pick up a voucher, visit Boardman City Hall at 200 City Center Circle. For more information, call 541-481-9252.

Spring cleaning opportunities coming up

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

Spring is officially here, and with it are spring cleaning opportunities in Hermiston.

Sanitary Disposal's spring cleanup week will be April 1-7. Loads less than 2.5 cubic yards or 454.5 pounds can be dropped off at the Hermiston Transfer Station for free during that time, and cash customers can receive up to \$13.50 off per load. Tires will be billed at the regular rate.

The transfer station, at 81144 Highway 394 North, will be open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

At the end of Sanitary Disposal's cleanup week, the city of Hermiston will host a free recycling day on Saturday, April 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Last year was the city's first time hosting the recycling event, and Parks and Recreation director Larry Fetter said it brought an impressive turnout. About 200 citizens dropped off more than 60 tons of junk, including about 25 tons of old tires.

"We're hoping to expand as the years go by and turn it into a whole community cleanup event," he said.

City staff and volunteers will be collecting items in the Umatilla Electric Cooperative parking lot at 750 W. Elm Ave. They will accept aluminum, appliances, car batteries, computers, concrete, electronics, paper, cardboard, glass bottles, jars, plastics, tires (separated from rims), scrap metal, yard de-

bris and clean wood. Items should be separated ahead of time.

A paint recycling organization called PaintCare will also be on hand to collect paint. Oregonians pay a tax on paint they purchase in the state, and that tax goes to PaintCare for collecting leftover paint and recycling it. Fetter said the city has been using recycled paint from PaintCare for the lines on its soccer fields.

"It's a great product," he said.

Fetter said the city's code enforcement officer has been giving warnings and distributing fliers to residents with code violations in their yards, letting them know that the free event is a "good opportunity to get rid of this stuff."

He said the city hopes to someday add a hazardous chemical collection component to the recycling day, but that would cost about \$20,000 so it is too expensive to do this year without a grant. The city will also not be taking motor oil, but Fetter said Sanitary Disposal does collect oil if people are looking to get rid of it.

The Faith-based Advisory Committee is looking for volunteers to help collect items during the event and make sure they are put in the correct bins.

Umatilla County donated \$5,000 to the event, so Fetter said the recycling day will be open to all county residents and not just those in Hermiston.

Contact the Parks and Recreation department at 541-667-5018 with questions.

DEQ permit delays wastewater recycling plan

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

The city of Hermiston plans to start sending its recycled water to the West Extension Irrigation District instead of the Umatilla River during growing season, but it can't until the Department of Environmental Quality issues a permit.

City Manager Byron Smith said part of the reason Hermiston built its upgraded wastewater treatment plant was because it was beginning fall out of compliance with DEQ regulations for the temperature of discharge into the river during the summer months. The regulations are in place to help protect fish from being killed by warm water when they swim upstream to spawn.

The city signed a memorandum of agreement and order with the DEQ in 2010, creating an acknowledgment on both sides that the city was in the process of addressing the issue. The upgraded recycled water treatment plant came into full usage in Oct. 2014, discharging water that Smith described as not just adequate but "amazingly clean" compared to the old discharge.

"It's probably cleaner than the water a lot of people pull out of wells," he said. But the water is still warm, and until the DEQ issues the city a new permit it can't divert the water into the West Extension Irrigation District's main canal, even though concerns about water temperatures for fish are irrelevant there because fish are blocked from swimming up into the canal.

"We've contacted the DEQ and said, 'We're waiting on you for a permit,'" Smith said.

He said the city has a first draft in hand but the permit still has to finish going through the public comment period. Environmental groups often push successfully for comment periods to be extended, although in this case it would be detrimental to their cause because it would keep the warm water flowing into the Umatilla.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Wastewater churns in the aeration basin before being sent through a filter to remove organic matter on Thursday at the Hermiston Wastewater Treatment facility in Hermiston.

Bev Bridgewater, the irrigation district's manager, said if they don't hit any roadblocks it is possible they could start using the recycled water in June, although at this point they're just hoping to have it sometime this summer. She said it's "crazy" that the DEQ has taken so long — longer than the federal Environmental Protection Agency — to issue the needed permits.

"We're very disappointed," she said.

The water coming from the city will amount to about 3.5 to 4 cubic feet per second out of the 120 cfs in the canal, so it's not a big proportion of the district's water. But Bridgewater said it is water that the district would normally have to pay to pump out of the Columbia River or not have at all.

"We are a water-short district, which means we don't have enough water at some times of year for all of our patrons," she said.

The district has also been pursuing grants to build a regional storage pond. Bridge-

water said if that happened, they could take all of Hermiston's recycled water year-round and also collect water from nearby cities, further reducing the amount of recycled water being put back into the river.

Bridgewater said the city has been "the best partner" on the project, which could provide a model for future cooperation between cities and irrigation districts.

Plant supervisor Bill Schmittle said irrigation customers don't need to worry about how clean the water coming from the plant is. The biological oxygen demand, one way of measuring the water's cleanliness, used to be close to the 20 parts per million limit and has been reduced to just one part per million.

As for the water temperature problem, he said adding a chilling mechanism in the new plant was cost-prohibitive, and piping the water all the way to the Columbia River or directly onto private property was expensive, too.



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

This new irrigation pump station will be used to pump recycled water to the West End Irrigation District from the Hermiston Waste Water Treatment facility in Hermiston.

"We were just exploring options, and we figured out it could go to the irrigation district, and that solved a lot of problems," he said.

Until the irrigation district can build a regional storage pond sometime in the future, water will still enter the Umatilla River in cold months, when temperatures for fish aren't an issue, using the same pipeline the city has always used to discharge all of its recycled water. But between March and October the DEQ permit would allow the water to be pumped to the irrigation district's canal near Three Mile Dam.

According to a 2011 report from the DEQ itself, the solution is one that could help the health of the Umatilla River.

"Decreased temperature is a high priority for Umatilla Basin watershed restoration efforts," according to the report. "Discharging the City's warm wastewater to the canal rather than the river during the warm season would support progress towards this priority."

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The Transfer Station is located 2 miles north of Hermiston on Hwy 395 and is open weekdays from 8am to 5pm and weekends from 9am to 5pm.

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