

ABOUT TOWN

No charges in Hermiston shooting
Case forwarded to DA's office

By **JENNIFER COLTON**
Staff Writer

A Hermiston man was shot just after midnight on Wednesday, but no charges have been filed.

At 12:24 a.m. on Wednesday, April 13, Hermiston police received a report on an intoxicated man "causing a scene" on Sater Court in Hermiston. The intoxicated man, Juan Fernando Ponce, 24, of Hermiston, did not live in the neighborhood and was involved in an altercation with a couple who were visiting a relative.

The intoxicated man made threats against the couple, and 31-year-old Jason Patrick, of Hermiston, fired a warning shot from a small caliber handgun, according to Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston. Ponce kept moving forward and threatening the couple, and Patrick fired multiple shots, one of which struck Ponce in the torso.

Ponce was treated at Good Shepherd Medical Center for non-life threatening wounds.

Monday, Hermiston police sent the report on the shooting to the Umatilla County District Attorney's office. Hermiston police have not filed any charges.

"Based on statements from everyone involved, we believe we have a clear understanding of what transpired, and, as a result, we are not issuing any charges at this time," Edmiston said Monday.

The case was forwarded to the District Attorney's office for further review.

District Attorney Dan Primus said Monday the office has not reviewed the case but will make a determination on any charges once all information is reviewed.

The Sater Court shooting was the second shooting last week to yield no criminal charges. A 46-year-old Hermiston man was hospitalized Monday for an accidental, self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Hermiston police responded to Good Shepherd Medical Center at 12:37 p.m. April 11 for a report of a patient with a self-inflicted wound to his leg.

"We're confident that this was an accidental discharge of a weapon he had in his pocket," Edmiston said. No charges have been filed.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

Kim Bales, left, and her daughter Berlyn Bales stand behind the counter at Echo Ridge Cellars' new tasting room in a former grain elevator outside Echo.

ELEVATING WINE

GRAIN ELEVATOR REBORN AS WINE TASTING ROOM FOR ECHO VINEYARD

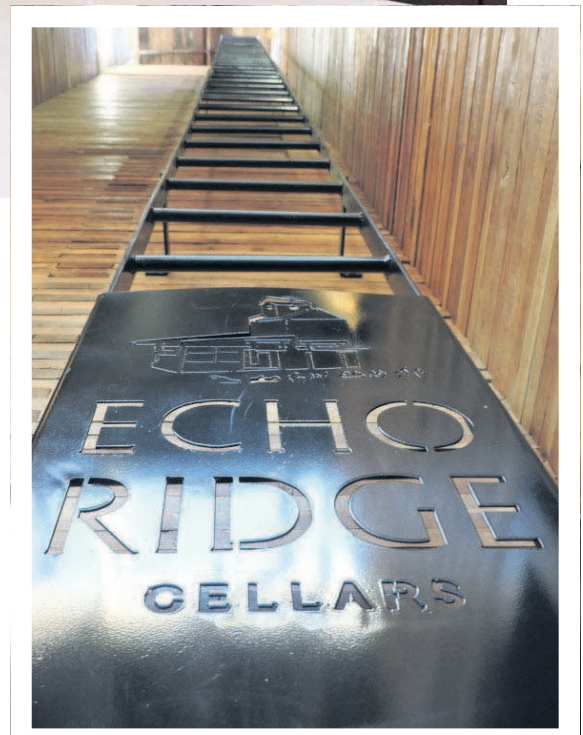
By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The old grain elevator north of Echo has been given new life as a wine tasting room for Echo Ridge Cellars.

Since the Bales family remodeled the structure and opened the tasting room last week, it looks a little different from the silhouette many Echo residents remember from their childhood. But much has been preserved inside the building.

The original wooden walls, still marked by initials carved by longtime residents in their younger days, are standing, as is the wooden floor where trucks used to park before the building's footprint was expanded. The furniture is made from original wood salvaged from the site, and the hole where trucks used to dump grain now holds wine barrels beneath a clear glass floor.

Berlyn Bales, Echo Ridge Cellars wine and event ambassador, said she has been studying the history of the



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

A ladder ascends past the original wooden walls of the old Echo grain elevator that has been repurposed as a tasting room for Echo Ridge Cellars.



STAFF PHOTO BY JADE MCDOWELL

Kim Bales, right, of Echo Ridge Cellars poses with a painting of the grain elevator by Joseph Garcia, second to right. Garcia brought in the painting with his daughter Debbie Thornton and son-in-law Dave Thornton, pictured at left.

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Assaults drive violent crime rate higher

Hermiston Police reports quarterly crime numbers

By **JENNIFER COLTON**
Staff Writer

Total calls are down, but violent crime is up in the

city of Hermiston.

The Hermiston Police Department releases quarterly statistics on crime rates, and the report for the first quarter of 2016 — Jan. 1 through March 31 — shows the department responded to less total incidents but made more arrests than the same time period in 2015.

The total number of incidents — including 9-1-1 calls, traffic stops and officer-initiated activity — is down 5 percent from the first quarter of 2015. The department had 5,832 documented incidents in 2016, compared to 6,114 in 2015. Arrests,

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HERALD PHOTO



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