



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Sheriff Terry Rowan talks with Larry Stormont and Sonny Liebe July 20 at Eastside Market in Hermiston. Rowan was kicking off a series of Coffee with the Sheriff session at various locations throughout the county.

Sheriff talks shop over coffee

By ALEXA LOUGEE
Staff Writer

Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan doesn't mind drinking a cold cup of coffee.

"It's not the coffee, it's what's in the coffee," he said Wednesday morning, July 20, as his once-hot cup of joe cooled over the hour he sat and visited with locals at Hermiston's Eastside Market. "It's the caffeine," he said with a smile.

The gathering was the first in what Rowan plans will be a series of informal meet-and-greets in different communities around Umatilla County. He wants to give people the opportunity to ask questions, voice complaints and make suggestions. The plan is to do this twice a month, depending on how the public responds.

Rowan is running for his second term as county sheriff against Ryan Lehnert, a corporal with the Pendleton Police Department, in the November election.

One goal of the new program is to create more effective partnerships with local citizens.

Rowan pointed to his gold badge, which is currently adorned with a black band.

"I don't like wearing this banded badge, because it signifies that we lost another brother or sister," Rowan said. He said over the last couple of weeks local law enforcement has received an overwhelming amount of support. He said he does not see the tension here between officers and the public that is clear in other parts of the country, but the local words of support really resonate with officers.

Rowan talked about the challenges of serving in Umatilla County.

"For too long we didn't have enough presence around the county," he

said. He said it is still an issue that he and his department are taking steps to improve.

He started working for the sheriff's office in 1989, at that time there were seven patrol deputies, a number that held consistent through 2012. But, according to Rowan, back in 1989 Oregon State Police had 24 troopers covering the area that includes Umatilla County, and that helped ease the pressure. Now he believes there are only four or five state troopers assigned to the area.

The sheriff's department has doubled its deputy force since 2012 and is in the process of adding a 15th deputy. He said the national average is to have between one and two deputies per 1,000 people in a county. Currently, Umatilla County has less than one deputy per 1,000 people.

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office has also started addressing loose dogs in the county. Rowan said they are doing research and looking into adding a full-time animal control deputy.

Rowan invites the public to come out and give him an earful. He tries to think outside the box, look at resources and see what can be done to address concerns. During the coffee hour one man asked whether the sheriff's office patrols Forest Service roads, which they do, but Rowan said deputies are not able to patrol them as often as they probably should.

Rowan came into law enforcement out of necessity, needing a job.

"It's become so much more than that," Rowan said. He has developed a passion for serving and making a difference.

The next coffee with the sheriff event will be in Pendleton, with a date and place to be determined.

Herald selected as one of the top weeklies in Oregon for 2015

By the Hermiston Herald

The *Hermiston Herald* staff placed second for General Excellence in the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association's Better Newspaper Contest in an award announced Friday at a convention in Silverton.

General Excellence winning entries are based on three complete editions from the calendar year of 2015. The *Herald's* entries in the contest featured coverage of 2015's Cinco de Mayo events in May; a front page feature from October of a Hermiston High School student who gained Internet fame by posting senior photos taken at the local 7-Eleven store on Twitter and included our fall Home Improvement and

Car Care section; and our Veterans Day edition from November.

The *Hermiston Herald* placed second in the category behind Pamplin Media Group's *Outlook* newspaper in Gresham and ahead of *News-Times* in Newport, which placed third.

Community Editor Tammy Malgesini also won a first place award in the Best Local Column category for a selection of her "Inside My Shoes" columns.

Former Herald sports reporter Sam Barbee also won an individual third place award in the Best Sport Story category for his story "More than a game" about the annual co-ed "Jeremy Howard —



Tammy Malgesini



For the Love of the Game" softball tournament.

The tournament raises money for athletic scholarships and promotes efforts

to prevent melanoma and awareness of skin cancer prevention through the use of sunscreen for all participants in the tournament.

New Umatilla rural fire chief drives new fire engine cross-country

By ALEXA LOUGEE
Staff Writer

A good road trip lends itself to plenty of Facebook posts.

Steve Potts, the newly minted Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District fire chief, drove across the country in the district's new fire engine and posting the road trip on Facebook.

His posts read like a captain's log with updates from places like Florida, Georgia and Tennessee. On Tuesday, July 19, Potts wrote from Ocala, Fla., "The scenery here is quite green and when it rains as they call it here, it's serious. Not like the drizzles we get at home."

In November 2015, Umatilla voters narrowly passed a general obligation bond of \$1.8 million to assist in purchasing updated fire safety equipment for the district's volunteer firefighters and buying new fire engines. The newest addition to the fire district's arsenal is a pumper fire engine built by Pierce Manufacturing in Bradenton, Fla. A pumper truck carries hoses, water and tools to a fire and is equipped with a pump that pushes the water out. By flying to Florida and driving the new engine back to Oregon, Potts said the district is saving about \$4,000 in delivery fees.

Along for the ride was Potts' adult son, Tyler. Tyler graduated from Umatilla High School in 2007 and entered the Air Force.

The elder Potts said he was looking forward to spending time with his son on the eight-day journey home to Umatilla. That journey took them through Missouri, South Dakota and into Montana, where the Potts men will visit with family and pay their own expenses.

Potts believes the new fire truck, along with other planned purchases, will improve the protection of residents living within the Umatilla Rural Fire District and its corps of volunteer firefighters.

Train T-bones truck outside of Echo

By ALEXA LOUGEE
Staff Writer

A train collided with a semi-truck Wednesday near Rieth Road, about nine miles east of Echo.

The train was heading east toward Pendleton pulling roughly 15 railroad cars at about 30 mph, according to Umatilla County Under-sheriff Jim Littlefield.

The semi-truck, belonging to Platinum Transportation in Hermiston, was carrying two trailers of wheat and headed north when it failed to yield at the railroad crossing. The driver, Budd Richards, 54, from Hermiston, was conscious at the scene, but complaining of head, neck and leg pain when rescue crews arrived.

BABYSITTING BASICS

For babysitters ages 10-15. Learn childcare techniques, children's developmental stages and what to expect, basic first aid and infant and child CPR. \$30, includes lunch & all class materials.

9:00am - 3:00pm
July 16 or August 6

Must pre-register and pre-pay, call 541-667-3509

HEALTHY FRIDAYS

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

First & Third Friday of each month
9:30 - 11:30am

GSMC Conference Center 7 (by Education Dept)

UNDERSTANDING & RESPONDING TO DEMENTIA RELATED BEHAVIORS

Learn behavior triggers and strategies to help intervene with some of the most common behavioral challenges of Alzheimer's Disease and dementias.

July 26 • 6:00 - 7:30pm
GSMC Conference Room 1

Information or to register call (541) 667-3509 or email healthinfo@gshealth.org www.gshealth.org

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HHS Project Graduation Committee & HHS Class of 2016

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