



STAFF PHOTO BY GARY L. WEST

Officers from Hermiston and Umatilla police departments and Oregon State Police congregate near the corner of Madison Street and McFarland Avenue, Umatilla, where a man was taken into custody after a shooting Wednesday morning in Hermiston.

Man arrested after shooting friend 'over a girl'

Hermiston Herald

A Hermiston man shot a childhood friend Wednesday, Aug. 24, "over a girl," according to police, and he now faces a charge of second-degree assault.

Eduardo Rodriguez Barriga, 23, was arrested in Umatilla soon after the Hermiston shooting. His victim, Daniel Lemus Carranza, 25, was treated and released at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, with what police described as a superficial gunshot wound to the leg.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said officers around 8:15 a.m. responded to the area of the 11th Street Market, 425 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston, after a report of a man there with a gunshot wound. Edmiston said the man was shot in the area of Elm Avenue and N.W. Seventh Street, near Butte Park, after a dispute "over a girl."

After the shooting, Rodriguez Barriga drove off and the victim tried to keep up with him in his own vehicle through the back streets near the Butte while calling 9-1-1. Dispatch told him to stop following the vehicle and he parked at the convenience store where police and medical personnel met up with him.

Police around 9:25 a.m. found Rodriguez Barriga and a female outside a house at 1745 McFarland Ave., Umatilla. A July 9 citation Oregon State Police gave to Rodriguez Barriga for driving while suspended shows that as his home

address, according to state court records, though Edmiston said he now lives in Hermiston.

Edmiston stated Hermiston police, with the assistance of the Umatilla Police Department, took Rodriguez Barriga into custody, interviewed him, and later booked him into Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton.



Barriga

Officers served a search warrant at Rodriguez Barriga's

Hermiston home at 460 E. Pine Ave. later Wednesday and recovered a handgun, Edmiston said, and a stolen shotgun from a Umatilla County Sheriff's Office case. He said the state police crime lab would test the handgun to see if it was from the shooting.

Edmiston said this was not Rodriguez Barriga's first arrest.

"Life is about choices, and the decisions made today by those involved are frustrating," Edmiston said in a written statement. "At some point, people need to take responsibility for what they value. Clearly the values of Mr. Rodriguez differ from the overwhelming majority of people in this community and we are going to ask that he be held accountable for his reckless actions."

The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police are assisting with the investigation. Umatilla County Fire District 1 responded to the market to transport the victim, and the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office is involved.

Community remembers victims at vigil

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

Sniffles and quiet sobs broke the stillness Wednesday night at McKenzie Park as hundreds of people stood in a moment of silence for the victims of a Hermiston shooting that claimed three lives and left a fourth injured.

Community members gathered in memory of the victims and in support of their grieving families, casting a glow with candles, glowsticks and flashlights. They were there to honor James "JJ" Hurtado, 14, and Kenneth "Kenny" Valdez, who were killed Thursday, Aug. 18, and to support Andria Bye, Hurtado's mother who was injured in the shooting, and the family of Jason Huston, who shot the other three before turning the gun on himself.

"May we as a city be known as a city that loves," Pastor Terry Haight of Hermiston Assembly of God declared, before praying for all

those affected by the tragedy.

Haight spoke of the Biblical story of Job, who lost everything he owned, his family and health. His friends responded first with support but later with accusations of blame.

"We as a community don't want to make the same mistake," Haight said. "We do not want to cast shame on anyone. We need to reach out and unconditionally love anyone who was closely affected."

Many of those who were closely affected were present at the park, including the Valdez family and Bye. Teenagers who went to school with Hurtado or were coached by Valdez and Huston were present in force, wearing Hermiston wrestling gear or T-shirts honoring Hurtado.

Three of his classmates — Janelle Almaguer, Samantha Atilano and Aidan Villarreal — were selling the shirts as a way to raise money for Hurtado's family.

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The shirts showed pictures of Hurtado with what they said was his favorite saying: "Start unknown, finish unforgettable."

"JJ was a really good friend of ours, and we wanted to do it for his family," Atilano said. "He was always smiling, and always there for us."

Other friends of the victims shared their memories with the group after the moment of silence, eliciting smiles and tears in turn.

One girl remembered how Hurtado would always show up to support his little sister at her dance competitions, and drew chuckles when she described how he flirted with the other girls on the team and told them they were pretty.

A teacher in the school district described Valdez's

work with a program to help students stay out of gangs and other trouble, calling him the "MVP volunteer."

"Ken is a teddy bear," he said. "His heart is so, so gentle and the kids gravitated toward him."

Another woman, a nursing student of Bye's at Blue Mountain Community College, told the group how Bye would always start class with a funny story about her children, including Hurtado.

"You made it so that he was our kid, too," she told Bye.

After the remembrances, a long line of people came up and hugged Bye. When the night was over, organizer Bonnie Griffith said she was surprised and grateful to see such a large turnout to honor her former classmate Valdez and the others.

"He was a nice guy. The sweetest guy," she said through tears. "I never heard anyone say anything bad about him."

Transit committee will help plan free city bus system

By **JADE McDOWELL**
Staff Writer

The first meeting of Hermiston's new Transit Planning Committee is Sept. 13.

The temporary committee has been created to help plan for a free fixed-route public bus system through the city.

Kayak Public Transit, operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, already runs between 17 cities, stopping in two Hermiston locations. The tribes have agreed to expand that service to include a bus that runs a fixed loop around Hermiston during the day in exchange for funding from the city.

Assistant city manager Mark Morgan said the cost to the city will greatly depend on how many stops

the bus makes and the hours it runs.

"It's a system that is relatively scalable," he said.

Creating a recommendation for the city council about that scale will be city councilors Rod Hardin and Doug Primmer, Dean Fialka of the city planning commission, Juli Gregory of Good Shepherd Health Care System, Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston representing the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce board, Kristi Avery of Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage and Barb Martin and Jennifer Roberts representing the general public. Morgan, J.D. Tovey of the CTUIR and Laura Slater of the Oregon Department of Transportation will participate in the meetings in a staff capacity.

Morgan said the committee's first meeting will be mostly discussing background information on the city's current public transportation, the current Kayak Public Transit program, the costs and funding available. Committee members will also be asked to mark on a map where they think the most important places will be for the bus to stop.

He said the city has had "pretty good luck" with on-line surveys and will likely put out a public survey about potential bus stops as well.

During the committee's second meeting sometime in October members can give feedback on a route put together by the tribes based on the results of the survey and committee members' input. They will then take a tour of the proposed route

and look for potential problems with buses pulling out or with pedestrian safety.

Morgan said a third meeting to study an updated proposal and finalize costs will likely take place in time for the committee to give a recommendation to the city council during its November 14 meeting. If the council approves the proposal at that meeting it will give Kayak Public Transit the time it needs to hire bus drivers and make other arrangements to begin the bus route on Jan. 2, 2017.

Morgan said it will not replace the city's \$2 taxi ticket program for senior and disabled residents, which will continue to be available.

The committee will meet Sept. 13 at 5 p.m. at City Hall, 180 N.E. Second St.



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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. \$35, includes lunch & all class materials.
9:00am - 3:00pm
Sept. 10, Oct. 8 or Nov. 5
Must pre-register and pre-pay, call 541-667-3509

LIVING WELL WITH CHRONIC CONDITIONS
Find positive and practical ways to deal with chronic health issues and make a step-by-step plan to improve your health. Six weekly classes. FREE but pre-register.
Starts Oct. 11
3:00 - 5:00pm
Call 541-667-3509 to pre-register

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to schedule an appointment.

HEALTHY FRIDAYS
FREE health screenings & health coaching: Blood pressure checks, weigh-ins, body mass index, cholesterol and glucose. For best results, fast for 8-10 hours prior to blood draw.
First & Third Friday of each month
9:30 - 11:30am
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Information or to register call (541) 667-3509 or email healthinfo@gshealth.org www.gshealth.org

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