

Teen arraigned for Boardman shooting death

By PHIL WRIGHT
Staff Writer

David Alexander Alvarez, 17, faces charges of murder and two counts of unlawful use of a weapon for a Sunday, Sept. 11, shooting death in Boardman.

Alvarez turned himself into law enforcement Monday night, Sept. 12, in Washington state, according to Boardman Police Chief Rick Stokoe, and is in the juvenile jail at the Northern Oregon Regional Correctional Facilities, The Dalles. The

state arraigned him Wednesday afternoon, Sept. 14, for shooting and killing Evencio Salas Birrueta, 27, of Irrigon.

Alvarez was to appear via video from the jail, with Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson in court in Heppner and defense attorney Dean Gushwa in the Hermiston courtroom of Circuit Judge Eva Temple. However, the video feed to Hermiston malfunctioned.

Nelson said while the arraignment was official, Tem-

ple wanted another hearing Thursday morning when she would preside in court in Heppner to allow Alvarez to see his attorney.

Records show Gushwa entered not guilty pleas for his client on the two weapons charges and reserved entering any plea on the murder charge. Temple set bail for Alvarez at \$2 million.

His next hearing is scheduled for today and Temple set Oct. 6 for him to enter his plea on the murder charge as

well as for a bail hearing.

The shooting occurred Sept. 11 around 9 p.m. at the Wilson Road Mobile Home Park, 600 Wilson Road, Boardman. Police arrived and found Salas shot in the "shoulder area of the arm," according to Stokoe. Police tried to save Salas, but he died.

The case remains an active investigation. Boardman police asked anyone with information regarding the shooting to contact the department at 541-481-6071.

IN BRIEF

B2B lunch features drawing

Those attending the upcoming B2B Luncheon will have an opportunity to win a smoker.

The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce B2B Luncheon will include introduction of Emma Porricolo, the city's 2016-17 community placement participant through the RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) AmeriCorps program. She will work in developing and advancing downtown district events and programs.

The no-host luncheon is Tuesday, Sept. 27 at 11:45 a.m. at the Hermiston Conference Center, 415 S. Highway 395. The meal, provided by Ixtapa, is \$10 for members and \$13 for non-members. Be sure to bring a business card to enter in the drawing for the smoker.

For more information or to RSVP for the luncheon, contact 541-567-6151 or kelly@hermistonchamber.com.

Forum addresses Measure 97

The public is invited to a forum discussing Ballot Measure No. 97.

The measure increases the corporate minimum tax when sales exceed \$25 million, said Toni Lampkin of the League of Women Voters of West Umatilla County. Money raised through the measure is earmarked for education, health-care and senior services.

Representatives from A Better Oregon and No on 97: Defeat the Tax on Oregon Sales will provide a presentation Tuesday, Sept. 27 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in Room 134 at the Eastern Oregon Higher Education Center, 975 S.E. Columbia Drive, Hermiston. The event includes a question and answer session.

For more information, contact Lampkin at 541-449-1311 or tonilampkin@hotmail.com.

EOCI and TRCI to hold recruiting event

Information about working in the corrections system will be available at a joint recruiting event for Two Rivers Correctional Institution and Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution.

The event is Saturday, Oct. 8 from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the Blue Mountain Community College Science Building at 2411 NW Carden Ave. in Pendleton.

Attendees will be offered a tour of EOCI and receive assistance with the online application and schedule for the REACT test for correctional officers, which has a \$35 fee. To attend, a valid photo identification (driver's license, military ID or passport) is needed. Cell phones and smart watches cannot be taken inside the facility, and attendees may not wear clothing that is blue (including denim), camouflage or suggestive.

For more information call 503-930-2462 or visit odocjobs.com.

Hermiston police to carry specialized first aid kits

Hermiston police will now be more prepared to offer first aid in a crisis thanks to their new first aid kits.

The kits, which officers will carry in their patrol cars, include chest seals, tourniquets, pressure bandages and QuickClot gauze to be

used for life-threatening trauma such as gunshots, stab wounds and injuries from explosions.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said in a press release that in the event of a large-scale event, such as a mass shooting,

police often assist medical personnel. The kits will help them be prepared to administer aid.

The kits were paid for by a \$4,432 grant from the Wildhorse Foundation and officers received additional training on the items con-

tained in the kit.

"This grant greatly enhances our community's preparedness," Edmiston said. "The Wildhorse Foundation continues to be incredibly generous with numerous entities in the Umatilla County region."

Smith pitches bond to fund retirement plan

Proposal could cover shortfall in PERS system

By JADE McDOWELL
Staff Writer

As Oregonians talk budgets and the economy, the Public Employees Retirement System has become the \$22 billion elephant in the room with no easy answer in sight.

The system currently has about 71 cents in assets for every dollar it owes, creating a \$21.8 billion debt for the state. Schools, cities and other public employers are already struggling to pay their share, and the latest report from the system's actuary shows those employers will be asked to find an extra \$885

million in their budgets next biennium — a 44 percent increase from the \$2 billion they're currently paying.

There are a few solutions proposed that will help chip away at the numbers, but no magic get-out-of-debt-free card. As a result, Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner, is looking into what it would take for the state to refinance with a pension obligation bond that would not erase the debt, but would provide certainty for employers as they budget each year.

"The state of Oregon is going to pay this bill," Smith told the *East Oregonian's* editorial board Wednesday. "We're not going to declare bankruptcy and it's not going to go away."

He compared it to dealing with household debt when a family has gotten in over its

head. They should work to cut back their monthly expenses and look for ways to earn extra money, but while they do that it can also be helpful to refinance or get a debt consolidation loan the pays off all of their credit cards, medical bills, vehicle mortgages and other debts, replacing it with a single monthly payment that is easier to keep track of.

A pension obligation bond would be similar, giving school districts, fire departments, cities and other public employers a more predictable yearly payment for the bonds instead of the recent trend of unexpectedly large jumps in employer contributions as the unfunded liability grows.

Smith said after looking into the option it seems like the best course would be a 10-year bond, at which point

the state would re-assess the data and issue a second bond for the next 10 years. A third, shorter bond would likely be necessary after that.

The Legislative Fiscal Office released a report over the summer discussing the state's previous decision in 2003 to issue 25-year pension obligation bonds for \$2 billion of the unfunded PERS liability.

The report shows that for the first 12 years of the 25-year bond, the state has seen an estimated savings of \$471.2 million compared to the original projection of \$335.5 million, making it "financially beneficial" so far.

However, the report also cautions that most of the savings came from before the 2008 recession and could end up being outweighed by future poor market performance.

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