

Tassie retires (sort of) after 37 years on call

By JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN
Staff Writer

For Kevin Tassie, fighting fires was a family thing.

"When I was three or four years old, my dad was a volunteer firefighter," said the Umatilla County native, who retired on Jan. 30 after 37 years as an on-call firefighter with Hermiston's fire district. "I remember going to the station with my dad — he was one of the first career firefighters for the city of Hermiston."

Tassie, now 55, followed in his footsteps: in 1979, he

joined the department as a volunteer, and has been at fire stations within Umatilla County ever since.

"I actually got to go into my first structure fire with my dad," Tassie said. "That was pretty fascinating."

Though he's retiring from fighting fires, Tassie plans to stay on part-time, driving the water tender and the ambulance when he can.

"Thirty-seven years is hard to leave," he said. "I'll miss the camaraderie the most. Getting up at 2 a.m. — I don't miss that."

Scott Stanton, Umatilla

County Fire District 1 chief, said Tassie's presence will be missed at the department.

Though Tassie spent the last few decades balancing a full-time job — he works at Two Rivers Correctional Institution, Umatilla — and working on-call for the fire department, he admits he's seen a drop in the number of volunteers for the department.

He thinks it comes down to time commitments.

"Before, when I started in 1979, it was just basic training you had to go through to fight fires and respond to emergency scenes," he said.

"As the years passed, they started to require just about the same (amount of training) for volunteers and paid staff."

The job can take an emotional toll, too, Tassie said, something he thinks may keep people away.

"It's not for everyone," he said. "Motor vehicle accidents, finding a body in a burning building — you have to handle all that."

But Tassie said he's found it to be rewarding.

"It's an adrenaline rush," he said. "You can't really explain it, you've got to experience it."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY SCOTT STANTON
Kevin Tassie, right, puts out a fire. Tassie retired Jan. 30 after 37 years as a volunteer and on-call member with Hermiston's fire district.

IN BRIEF

Library party features Valentine's fun

Cookie decorating, a craft table, games, refreshments and a story time are all included in a free Children's Valentine Party at the Hermiston Public Library.

The free event is Friday from 4:30-6 p.m. at 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. Parents are encouraged to bring their kids for a fun evening of free activities.

For more information, call 541-567-2882 or visit www.hermistonlibrary.us.

Tooth Wisdom provides oral health info

Whether people have dentures or their own teeth, a free class about oral health care is being offered by Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Tooth Wisdom is available Tuesday, Feb. 21 or Tuesday, Feb. 28 from 10-11 a.m. in the hospital's medical plaza, 620 N.W. 11th St., Hermiston.

Participants are invited to bring a lunch or make their own arrangements to purchase one at the hospital cafeteria prior to the meeting. The session will include a chance for people to ask questions and everyone will receive a free goody bag.

For more information, call Helena Wolfe at 541-561-5443.

Folklife network seeks traditional artists

To help ensure tribal, cultural, religions and occupational traditions are passed on, traditional artists are being sought to teach their art form to others.

The Oregon Folklife Network is looking for people accomplished in traditional folk arts, including American Indian basket weaving and storytelling, old-time fiddling, working cowboys, saddle makers, Norwegian cooking and baking, African-American gospel singing, southeast Asian dancing and more. The Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program offers a \$3,000 stipend to teach their art form to apprentices.

Oregonians engaged in living cultural traditions are encouraged to apply. The program does not fund historic re-enactments, do-it-yourself crafts or those who practice traditions that are not part of their own cultural heritage.

Applications are due Wednesday, March 1. For eligibility information, contact Brad McMullen at ofn@uoregon.edu, 541-346-3820 or visit <http://ofn.uoregon.edu>.

Recreation department teams up with Americans, Blazers

Hermiston Parks & Recreation is teaming up with a pair of regional sports teams to offer families an opportunity to attend games at discount prices.

Get ready for some fast action on pink ice as the Tri-City Americans take on the Seattle Thunderbirds during an ice hockey game that will include a benefit to help the Tri-Cities Cancer Center Foundation. During the game, the ice will be

tinted pink and special pink-themed jerseys will be auctioned off.

The Pink Ice Night match-up is Friday, Feb. 24 at 7:05 p.m. at the Toyota Center in Kennewick. Tickets are \$17 for adults, \$11 for teens and \$9 for youths ages 3-9. To order tickets, visit <https://secure.goemERCHANT.com/secure/custom-payment/tricityamerican-shockey/4340/default.aspx>.

Things will heat up as the Portland Trail Blazers take the hardwood against the Phoenix Suns during Hermiston Parks & Rec Night at the Moda Center. The special event is Saturday, April 1 at 7 p.m. in Portland.

Ticket prices are \$36, \$72 or \$85. In addition, there's a \$5 handling fee. To get the reduced-price, tickets must be ordered by Friday, March 3. Visit www.rosequarter.com/Hermiston and click on "find tickets" to select seats. Be sure to enter the promo code (HERMISTON) to access the group pricing.

Also, as part of the special Hermiston event, 20

kids will have a chance to take the floor for an hour in the afternoon to exchange high-fives with their favorite players.

For more information, call the parks department at 541-667-5018 or stop by the office at 180 N.E. Second St., Hermiston.

Ladies league gets ready to hit the links

The opening golf scramble for the Big River Ladies Golf Club is open to all women interested in joining the club.

The event is Saturday, March 11 at 9 a.m. at Big River Golf Course in Umatilla. A brief informational meeting will provide details about the club, dues and season. The shotgun start is at 10 a.m. The cost is \$15, plus green fees and cart rental, if desired.

The Big River Ladies golf club plays each Tuesday from April through September, with both morning and evening groups. Ladies of all skill levels are invited to play 9 or 18 holes.

Those interested in the opening scramble need to register by Thursday, March 9 by contacting the golf course at 541-922-3006, megan@golfbigriver.com or stop by the clubhouse at 709 Willamette Ave., Umatilla.

Shopping center announces youth scholarships

High school seniors who live in the service area of a Simon mall property are eligible to apply for the Simon Youth Community Scholarship Program.

Due to the proximity of the Columbia Center Mall in Kennewick, students in Umatilla County can submit an application for \$1,500. Students must be United States citizens, demonstrate academic promise, participate in extracurricular activities, community involvement and have financial needs. In addition, they must plan on enrolling in a college, vocational or technical school program in the fall of 2017.

Along with the application, students need to submit responses to essay questions. For more information, including an online form, visit syf.org/scholarships.

The deadline is Wednesday, March 1. For questions, contact Erin Brown, public relations for Columbia Center, at 206-971-0707 or erin.brown@curatorpr.com.

Hermiston Kiwanis offer scholarships

The Hermiston Noon Kiwanis Club is accepting applications for its Perry Johnson and Russell Doran post-secondary education scholarships.

Current seniors at Hermiston High School or graduates of Hermiston who are attending college in academic programs are eligible to apply for the scholarship awards.

Applications are available at the HHS counseling office or the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, 415 S. High-

way 395. Important factors in the evaluation of applicants includes academic record, community service, leadership qualities and financial need.

The scholarships are given in memory of a pair of past Kiwanis members. Johnson also was a Baptist minister, who championed youth services and supported education. Doran was a charter member of the club, as well as the Hermiston Elks Lodge, Hermiston Development Corporation and Blue Mountain Community College board, and served on many other area boards and committees. He was recognized at the chamber awards banquet in 1963 and again in 1990.

The applications must be submitted by Friday, March 31. Interviews with potential scholarship recipients will be scheduled.

For more information, contact George Clough at 541-567-6024 or Hermiston Noon Kiwanis Club, P.O. Box 375, Hermiston, OR 97838.

EASTERN OREGON FORUM *Presents*

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21ST, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M.

BLUE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE (BMCC), 2411 NW CARDEN, PENDLETON, OR,
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY BUILDING, ROOM ST-200

CASCADIA AFTERMATH FEATURING: PHILIP SCHMITZ, JOSEPH FRANELL, THOMAS ROBERTS

Philip Schmitz has been a full-time faculty member at BMCC since 2008. He has a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Notre Dame, and a Master's Degree from the University of Utah. He has done research on the Juneau Icefields in Alaska, the geochemistry of Carlin (Nevada) trend gold ores, and he has worked as a geo-technical consultant in the upper Midwest. Philip lives in Pendleton, volunteers with the youth hockey program and referees high school and middle school soccer.



Joseph Franell is the Chief Executive Officer of Eastern Oregon Telecom (EOT), a rural competitive telephone company and Internet service provider serving residents and businesses in Umatilla and Morrow Counties, in Northeastern Oregon. EOT is currently providing residential and commercial Gigabit services in four of the communities in its service area.

Prior to coming to work at EOT, Franell was the Director of Information Technology for the city of Ashland, Oregon, where he was responsible for the Ashland Fiber Network, a municipally-owned and operated broadband telecommunications company. During his tenure there, Ashland was selected as one of the Intelligent Communities Forum Smart 21 Communities for 2007 and 2008, because of its innovative and visionary use of broadband technologies.

In 2009, Franell was appointed by the Governor of Oregon to the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council (OBAC) on which he has served as the chairman for the past six years. The OBAC's mandate is to advise the legislature and Governor's office on matters pertaining to broadband in the State, and to specifically promote the adoption and utilization of broadband for economic development, e-government, tele-health/tele-medicine, education, public safety, and tribal lands. In this role, Franell assisted in developing the communications portion of the Cascadia Playbook, the document that details roles and responsibilities immediately following a major Cascadia Subduction Zone event (earthquake).

Franell is a ten-year veteran of the US Army, is happily married, and has one daughter.

Thomas Roberts has been the Emergency Manager for Umatilla County since June, 2016. He has an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Emergency Management from Clackamas Community College and is a graduate of Hermiston Senior High School. He is a FEMA Trained Master Exercise Practitioner and Advanced Public Information Officer.

His prior positions include: Emergency Management for US Army at three Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) Sites including the Umatilla Chemical Depot in Hermiston, Oregon, the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Pueblo, Colorado, and the Bluegrass Chemical Depot in Richmond, Kentucky.

He has also served as a Volunteer Firefighter/EMT for 20 combined years with the Hermiston Fire and Emergency Services, the Pendleton Fire Department and as a Lieutenant with the Irrigon Fire Protection District.



For more information about the EO Forum, please contact: Karen Parker at 541-966-3177.

The EO Forum is a collaborative effort among leaders from Blue Mountain Community College, InterMountain Education Service District; the East Oregonian; American Association of University Women; and Harriet Isom; a former United States ambassador who also serves on the committee. This EO Forum program is offered as part of Blue Mountain Community College's annual Arts and Culture Festival. For more information on the festival go to www.bluecc.edu.