

# Hermiston man killed in shooting at beginning of holiday weekend

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A Hermiston man was shot to death early Saturday morning at an apartment complex on Southwest 13th Place in Hermiston, and police continue the search for a man they believe is connected to the death.

Police were dispatched at 2:31 a.m. after receiving a report of gunshots in the area of 525 S.W. 13th Place, the Viewcrest Apartment complex, a block north of Highland Avenue. While en route, police received an update that a man had been shot.

When an officer arrived at 2:35 a.m., he began administering CPR to James John Cragun, 38, a resident of the apartment complex. A medic, who arrived a short time later, began working on him but Cragun was pronounced dead at the scene.

The area major crime team was activated, including officers from Boardman, Umatilla, Umatilla County, Morrow County, Oregon State Police and the Umatilla Tribal Police.

As of Monday afternoon, Hermiston Police Capt. Travis Eynon said there were no updates to the case and wouldn't confirm if a weapon had been found. Police initially taped off a large portion of the apartment complex, the street and a nearby field on High-



STAFF PHOTOS BY TAMMY MALGESINI

Police from multiple agencies investigate the scene of a fatal shooting Saturday at Viewcrest Apartments in Hermiston. The major crime team was activated after the man was shot to death early Saturday morning.



Police from multiple agencies investigate a vacant lot in the vicinity of Southwest 13th Place and West Highland Avenue, Hermiston. The major crime team was activated after a man was shot to death in the area early Saturday morning.

land, which they combed for evidence on Saturday morning.

Police have identified Tyree Houfmuse, 34, as a person of interest in the death and have asked to speak with him. Houfmuse is African-American, 6-foot-1, 200-240 pounds and has several tattoos including a large rose on the left side of his neck. Anyone with information about Houfmuse's whereabouts is encouraged to call 541-567-5519. Police Chief Jason Edmiston said Tuesday he sees no distinction between a person of interest and a suspect.

Houfmuse has been arrested for several other

violent disputes in Hermiston and Tri-Cities, most recently for a shooting in November 2014 outside a Kennewick bar that left another man paralyzed. He was arrested by federal agents in Hermiston shortly after, but a jury in 2015 ruled that Houfmuse acted in self-defense.

In 2005, Houfmuse pleaded not guilty to an attempted murder charge, in which he had allegedly fired shots into a moving vehicle with three people inside. No one was injured in the incident. The charge of attempted murder was dismissed, but Houfmuse was charged in that incident with menacing, assault in

the third degree, unlawful use of a weapon against another, criminal mischief and unlawful possession of a firearm.

Friends have set up a GoFundMe account to assist Cragun's family with a funeral and other expenses, at [www.gofundme.com/helpthecraguns](http://www.gofundme.com/helpthecraguns). Cragun was a father to young children, according to the page, but attempts to reach his family and the facilitator of the fundraiser were unsuccessful.

Cragun had been charged several times in the past few years for assault, including in November 2016 for assault in the fourth degree, strangulation and ha-

rassment. In March he was sentenced to 180 days of probation for that crime.

Two women who live in units just across the parking lot from the Viewcrest building said they were jolted awake by the sound of yelling and gunfire early Saturday. Both women, who asked not to be identified, said it was frightening.

Fearing that bullets could come through the walls, the woman in the ground-level apartment sprung to action to ensure the safety of her family.

"I grabbed the baby and we went to the back of our apartment," she said.

Her upstairs neighbor said the gravity of the situa-

tion didn't initially register. Other than an occasional late night drinking party, she said the neighborhood is typically calm and quiet. At first, she thought the popping sounds from the gun was someone banging metal pans together. Curious, she looked outside from her second story apartment.

"I saw everything from my bedroom window," the woman said. "I didn't even want to step outside."

She said she also saw a couple of cars speed off from the area.

"They were going so fast," she said. "I couldn't even tell what kind of car it was."

## Take a walk for life, get free ice cream

All participants in the Pregnancy Care Services' fundraising walk will receive a token for free Dairy Queen ice cream.

The annual Walk for Life is Friday with registration at 6 p.m. and the walk starting at 6:30 p.m. at McKenzie Park, 320 S. First St., Hermiston. Participants are asked to collect pledges and bring them to the walk.

Pledge sheets are available at [www.pregnancycareservices.com](http://www.pregnancycareservices.com) or at Pregnancy Care Services,

105 S.W. Second St., Hermiston. Anyone collecting or contributing \$50 or more will receive a free T-shirt. Teagan Birt, youth group member at Solid Rock, is coordinating a contest for youth group — with the one collecting the most money receiving a prize.

"This is one of our favorite fundraisers," said Debbie Cissna, director. "It is an event every member of the family can enjoy."

Money raised from the event helps the nonprofit organization

in serving clients from the local community. Pregnancy Care Services offers free pregnancy tests, life affirming options counseling, adoption referrals, information about abortion procedures and risks, post abortion counseling and community referrals. The center also offers classes to teach parenting, relationship, and general life skills. All of the services are free and confidential.

For more information, call 541-567-2393.

## Umatilla residents invited to hear downtown plan

UMATILLA — The public is invited to the unveiling of Umatilla's downtown revitalization plan on June 6.

Graduate students from Portland State University, working under the name Confluentis Planning, have been working for the past six months on the plan as their capstone project for graduation.

They held several public input sessions and focus groups and worked with city officials to get feedback on Umatilla's strengths and needs.

The final plan will be presented at a Umatilla Together event on Tuesday, June 6 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at city hall, 700 Sixth Street. Spanish translation and refreshments will be provided.

## Hermiston and county to hold joint EOTEC meeting

HERMISTON — The Hermiston City Council and Umatilla County Commissioners will meet together Thursday to discuss the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The meeting will be June 1 at 6 p.m. at EO-TEC, 1705 E. Airport

Road.

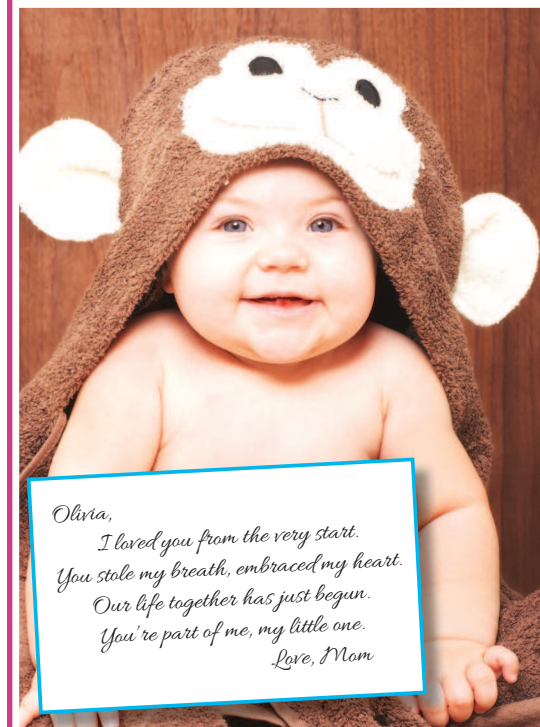
The EOTEC board had previously asked the council and commission for approval of a management plan comprised of a general manager supervising an administrative assistant and contract for maintenance and janitori-

al. The two entities asked the board to come back to another joint meeting with budget and salary comparison information before they made a final decision.

The meeting will include a chance for public comment.

**Little Darlings!**

This special section will be filled with photos of and messages for adorable little darlings from Umatilla County. Families will want to keep this special keepsake for their child and family for years to come.



**PUBLISHES:**  
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Send in, or drop by, a full color high resolution photo, your child's name and a message to your child today!

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