

Police to respond to fire alarms

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

If you see police showing up to a Hermiston school in tactical gear, it may be nothing more than a false alarm.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston announced Friday that from now on, available on-duty and patrol officers will respond to any local school, public or private, that has an unexpected fire alarm go off.

He said he's aware that people driving by may be alarmed to see multiple officers arriving at a school and donning protective helmets, vests and rifles. But past school shooters — including the recent high school shooting in Parkland, Florida — have pulled fire alarms as a way to draw more people into the hallways, and the new policy could cause the move to backfire on someone intending to harm students by bringing law enforcement to the school before the first 9-1-1 call.

"Our focus is the safety of the students," Edmiston said.

The downside is from time to time local schools do have false alarms, either accidentally or as a result of a student purposely pulling an alarm when there is no fire. Hermiston schools are well-equipped with cameras, Edmiston said, and if a student pulls an alarm



HH FILE PHOTO

Hermiston High School students and teachers enter the Hermiston High School building in August 2014 on the first day of school.

because they think it is funny they could be charged with disorderly conduct.

"It's like yelling fire in a movie theater or yelling bomb on a plane," he said. "There's some things you just don't do."

Whether it's a false alarm or not, the public can help by treating the appearance of police seriously and not interfering with officers. If it turns out the fire alarm was from an actual fire, police can then help with traffic and crowd control as the fire department does its job.

Edmiston said when law enforcement arrives at a school, likely ahead of the fire trucks, they will not prevent fire personnel from entering the building before

police have made contact with a school administrator to find out what is going on. He said he notified Umatilla County Fire District 1 of the plan and will have a sit-down to discuss it in-depth next week.

"I told them, we're not going to call a false alarm, that's your job," he said. "And we'll try and park out of the way, let them do their job."

Edmiston has also worked with Hermiston School District Superintendent Tricia Mooney and director of operations Brad Wayland on plans for future fire alarms. Maria Duron, communications officer for the school district, said in an email the district supports

the police department's decision to respond to fire alarm activations. They also plan to make the department aware of scheduled drills ahead of time.

"Should the fire alarms go off in our schools unplanned, we will be investigating the cause, staff and students will follow safety procedures and we will notify the public," she said.

Edmiston said there has been some concern in recent years about the "militarization" of police but the vests, helmets and rifles that police will put on over their regular uniforms would help protect them and give them a better chance against an active shooter.

Suspect eludes arrest after chase

HERMISTON HERALD

A wanted man eluded police for the second time in less than two weeks, and authorities are warning he could be armed and dangerous.

Police spent much of March 7 searching for Nayan Olney, 36, near Umatilla.

Shortly before 9 a.m. that day a caller reported seeing Olney at 78626 Agnew Road, Hermiston. He is wanted from a Feb. 24 incident in which he fled a traffic stop in Hermiston in a stolen vehicle, injuring officer Doug Gill in the

process.

Umatilla County sheriff's deputy Chris Daugherty responded to the call March 7, according to a new release from the sheriff's office, and set up near the house while he waited for backup.



Olney

As Daugherty waited, Olney sped away from the house in a stolen white 2017 Chevy Silverado, the release said.

Daugherty gave chase down Agnew and Westland roads with his lights flashing, and Olney drove the Silverado through a field onto Bridge Road headed

west, where Daugherty was unable to follow.

A Umatilla police officer found the vehicle soon after and picked up the pursuit, which again went off road through crop circles off Powerline Road and toward Interstate 82.

Olney abandoned the truck near Milepost 2 and went on foot toward the Umatilla River. The Silverado, reported stolen from a farm in Morrow County, sustained some damage but was recovered and processed.

Multiple agencies set up a perimeter and began a foot search, and shortly after the sheriff's office drone was deployed to scour the area.

Both Umatilla High

School and Clara Brownell Middle School were locked out during the early parts of the search as a precaution, according to superintendent Heidi Sipe.

Olney has been known to carry a handgun, according to the press release, and anyone who spots him should not approach him but call 9-1-1 immediately.

He has a criminal history for theft in Clackamas County dating back to 1998, according to state records, and a pending case for auto theft in Umatilla County from November 2017. He was also an honor roll student at Blue Mountain Community College for three terms in 2014 and 2015.

POLICE LOG

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7

8:33 a.m. — A motor vehicle crash was reported on Hermiston Avenue.
10:43 a.m. — Someone reported that their mother was a victim of a scam and lost \$3,199.
1:58 p.m. — An assault was reported on Southwest Ninth Street in Hermiston.
4:11 p.m. — A break-in was reported on West Donna Avenue.
7:22 p.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on East Jennie Avenue.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8

9:29 a.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on East Jennie Avenue.
1:41 p.m. — A woman requested an officer come with her to repossess a car that is in her name but her ex has been driving.
2:38 p.m. — A drunk driver was reported on West Sunland Avenue.
3:18 p.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on Southwest Debra Court.
3:58 p.m. — A visitor to the police station reported that someone was sending them texts threatening to kill them and their family.
4:44 p.m. — A drunk driver was reported on Northwest 11th Street and Elm Avenue.

FRIDAY, MARCH 9

12:47 a.m. — A drunk driver was reported on East Main Street.

1:08 a.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on Northwest 12th Street, Hermiston.

2:55 a.m. — A caller reported two juveniles pushed him off his skateboard and stole it on Northwest Sixth Street.

11:02 a.m. — A caller reported her white Nissan pick-up was stolen from her parents' residence on West Theater Lane.

6:09 p.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on West Orchard Avenue.

SATURDAY, MARCH 10

6:30 a.m. — A car was stolen from East Hurlburt Avenue.

10:36 a.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on Kennedy Avenue.

1:50 p.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on Northwest 10th Street.

5:23 p.m. — A rollover motor vehicle crash was reported on Theater Lane and Northeast 10th Street.

SUNDAY, MARCH 11

1:25 a.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on Northeast 10th Street.

7:25 p.m. — A driver reportedly hit a bicyclist while backing out of their driveway and the bicyclist was very upset.

9:28 p.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on Southwest Oak Drive.

9:33 p.m. — A domestic disturbance was reported on Northeast 10th Street.



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