

Sheriff Matlack to discuss immigration in Washington

By **JAYATI RAMAKRISHNAN**
STAFF WRITER

Morrow County is almost 2,000 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. But its sheriff has taken a vocal stance against illegal immigration, and will be traveling to Washington, D.C., this month to discuss it with the President, and 40 other sheriffs nationwide.

Sheriff Ken Matlack sent out a letter Friday morning to several media outlets, stating that he will be traveling to the nation's capitol on Sept. 5 and 6 for a meeting called the "White House Nationwide Sheriffs Fly-In."

Matlack states in the letter that the White House has invited sheriffs from each state to talk about their experiences on issues of immigration and the impact it has had on their communities.

He said President Donald Trump is expected to host the group.

Matlack said he's not exactly sure what conclusions the group will reach at the meeting.

"I don't know what direction other people will be taking," he said. But he said

he hopes to discuss potential solutions to what he believes is a major problem.

"Perhaps (Trump) may hear a few new ideas on working to repair our broken immigration system," he said.

Matlack said they intend to tell Congress that their failure to deal with immigration for 20 years has compromised the safety of local communities.

"We will also take the opportunity to express and thank President Trump and his administration for re-establishing law enforcement's footing to enforce our laws."

Matlack has been open in his opposition to illegal immigration, and has made several trips to the border. He said despite Morrow County's distance, it has experienced many of the problems that he says start at the border.

"Mexican cartels make millions of dollars," he said. "When we got rid of ephedrine, Umatilla County was the largest producer of meth per capita. When they got rid of it, you couldn't fill your cart with ephedrine anymore. When that

changed, Mexicans came in and brought their own product from Mexico."

Matlack said he doesn't have a specific sense of crime committed by illegal immigrants in Morrow County, because they don't track them. Nor, he said, does he feel that illegal immigrants commit crime at a higher rate in the county than legal residents.

"I wouldn't say we have a rampant crime problem," he said. "The illegal aliens I personally know are some of the hardest working people I know. They contribute in their life's work and produce value."

He said he supports finding a path to citizenship for them.

"However, I'm a law-and-order kind of guy," he said. "It's against the law for (undocumented immigrants) to be here."

He said he's also against sanctuary states, and is one of 16 Oregon sheriffs that recently signed a letter asking voters to repeal Oregon's sanctuary law.

Matlack said he is opposed to the idea of an open border.

"I don't think open borders will ever work," he said. "There's too many bad

people coming in. I've been down to see what they do — rob, rape and murder."

He added that the concerns are not just people coming in from Mexico.

"There's literature from Middle Eastern countries, all kinds of people coming in," he said.

Matlack's trip is funded by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR). He said he was first approached by the group many years ago. He said there was a conference in Las Vegas for border sheriffs to discuss the problems they were having with illegal immigration.

Matlack said the group had trouble finding Oregon sheriffs willing to participate.

"It's a political thing," he said. "FAIR is a conservative group."

On its website, FAIR states that it hopes to bring the number of immigrants coming into the U.S. annually from one million to 300,000 a year. The group is listed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, a group that monitors hate and extremist groups in the U.S., as a hate group. Matlack said he disagrees with that designation.

Hermiston council gives city manager strong review, raise

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
STAFF WRITER

Hermiston city manager Byron Smith is meeting or exceeding all expectations of the city council, according to their annual evaluation, and he received raise of \$6,400 on Sept. 1.

During the Aug. 27 city council meeting the council met in executive session "for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to the review and evaluation of Smith employment-related performance of the City Manager." Afterward the council approved an adjustment to his contract, giving him a base salary increase of \$6,400.

Smith was originally hired in August 2014 at \$115,000 and has been given a raise after each annual performance review. His salary was listed as \$132,330 in a database of city salaries in the fall of 2017.

The city's pay structure includes six salary steps

for each position, which represent a four to five percent salary increase at each step.

The *Hermiston Herald* made a public records request for Smith's evaluation, which shows his composite score on seven categories. City councilors rated each category on a scale of one to five, and Smith scored a four (exceeds expectations) or three (meets expectations) on all categories. Smith's highest score was a 4.3 for "personal," which includes ethics and professionalism, and his lowest was a 3.4 for "elected body relations" with the city council and for communication.

In open session Mayor David Drotzmann noted that Smith met or exceeded all of the council's expectations and had also been given some feedback and goals to work on.

"You have led us down a very positive pathway and I think you will continue to do so," Drotzmann said.



Matlack



Smith

Two die in Umatilla County crashes during holiday weekend

Highway 11 wreck injures five, crash into Camas Creek kills Salem man

HERMISTON HERALD

Two people died from crashes on state highways in Umatilla County during the Labor Day weekend. Oregon State Police on Tuesday identified the victims.

James Edward Tincher, 41, of Walla Walla, died in a head-on crash Sunday night north of Milton-Freewater. The multi-vehicle wreck also injured five, including two children.

Tincher was driving a 1998 Ford Mustang south on Highway 11 at a high speed, according to state police, and slammed into the back of a 1991 Ford Escort. The Mustang crossed into the northbound lanes and smashed into a 2002 Chevy Suburban.

Tincher died in the crash before emergency responders arrived, according to



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY OREGON STATE POLICE

A three-vehicle crash on Highway 11 near Milton-Freewater killed James Tincher of Walla Walla and injured five others on Sunday, Sept. 2.

state police. The crash shut down the highway for about six hours.

State police reported Horacio J. Mendoza Castillo, 25, of Milton-Freewater, drove the Escort and had one passenger, a 24-year-old man also from Milton-Freewater.

Jason Lee Morgan, 40, of Baker City, drove the Suburban. His wife, Kara Morgan, 36, and their two children, a 6-year-old boy

and 9-year-old girl, were passengers.

Local ambulances took five victims from the crash to Providence St. Mary Medical Center, Walla Walla. The Morgan family via social media reported the hospital released them the night of the crash.

The second deadly crash occurred in the south end of Umatilla County.

A caller at about 2 p.m. Monday reported a pickup



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY OREGON STATE POLICE

Alexander Ionita, 62, of Salem, died in a rollover wreck on Highway 395 in southern Umatilla County when his vehicle crashed into Camas Creek.

in a ditch off the northbound side of Highway 395 near milepost 53. State police reported troopers and emergency personnel responded and found a black 2016 Dodge Ram was heading north on a left turn and headed off the road, rolled down an embankment and landed in Camas Creek.

Alexander Ionita, 62, of Salem was the driver and lone occupant, state police

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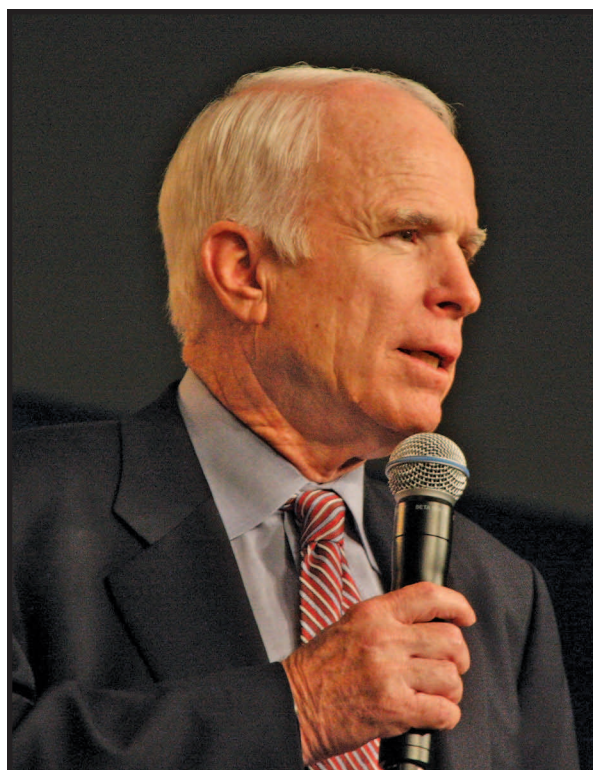
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