

Power Pro to close up shop

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

It's a good time to be an electrician in Hermiston, but not a good time to need one.

As Amazon continues adding data centers to the area, the tech company worth more than \$1 trillion is poaching employees from local electrical shops faster than they can hire them. It's gotten so bad that Jon Patterson of Power Pro — one of Hermiston's three major electrical contractors — is closing his business.

"You can't hire an electrician," he said. "Everyone is losing three to four people a month to those guys."

Patterson started Power Pro in 2001 out of his shop, and built his building on Campbell Drive in 2006. Over the past 18 years he has employed 99 different people as full-time employees, he said, and many more for part-time work.

He said he has enjoyed his time building a business in Hermiston and had "a lot of fun" doing it. The community has been supportive, and employees have formed close-knit friendships.

"It's really been a pleasure working here," he said.

The past year has been much less enjoyable, however, as employees have walked off partially completed jobs, lured away by high pay and large signing bonuses for Amazon.

"I don't mind if they're ready to leave the nest, but everyone at once killed me," he said.

Hermiston projects, both municipal and commercial, have announced delays in recent years due to a struggle finding electrical contractors. Patterson said his two biggest competitors actually asked him to reconsider his decision to retire.

"That says something," he said.

He predicted local electrical contractors will have to raise wages —

and prices — significantly to keep employees from heading to Amazon.

"What's going to happen here is if you want something done to your house you're going to be paying \$200 an hour," he said.

That will be a problem for someone besides Patterson to figure out. He said he's taking about a year off to go build a cabin on some property he owns, and then he will start thinking about what will come next.

He is auctioning off Power Pro's equipment, trucks and other supplies through Mike's Auction LLC on May 31, which could provide an opportunity for someone else in the area looking to start or expand their business.

Power Pro has performed a wide range of commercial and municipal jobs in the Pacific Northwest over the years, from schools to stores. Patterson said one of his favorite jobs was doing lightning protection on Forest Service lookout towers in

remote locations all over the Pacific Northwest. As the Forest Service's "go-to" person for lightning protection, they used everything from mules and ATVs to helicopters to pack in supplies and equipment.

"We had a lot of fun on the towers," he said. "It was just like camping."

Patterson said despite closing the business he plans to remain chair of Blue Mountain Community College's electrical apprenticeship advisory committee. He said if the state wanted to help ease Eastern Oregon's electrician shortage it would revise its particularly restrictive rules for licensing and allow electricians to take on more than one apprenticeship at a time.

He also encouraged teachers to stop telling students that the only way to make money was with a college education, when they can also do very well in life after entering an apprenticeship program.

Library art display features local artist

There are still a few days left to view the artwork of Mariela Caldera, which is on display at the Hermiston Public Library.

Caldera, who went to school in Stanfield, enjoys traveling and some of her artwork is influenced by places she has visited. She is currently finishing up her final term at Eastern Oregon University where she is studying business with a minor in art.

The library is located at 235 E. Gladys Ave., Hermiston. For more information, call 541-567-2882.

COURTS

Sentences

PENDLETON — The following sentences have been imposed in Umatilla County courts:

FELONY

•Herbert William Hill Jr., 41, Irrigon, pleaded guilty to Driving While Suspended/Revoked: sentence to discharge.

•Christopher Scott Nelsen, 41, Hermiston, pleaded guilty to Possession of Methamphetamine: sentenced to 3 years probation, 180 sanction units, 90 maximum jail units, 160 hours community service, \$200 fine, \$2,300 fine-suspended and 6 months driver's license suspension; pleaded guilty to Attempt to Elude Police Officer: sentenced to \$200 fine and 3 years driver's license suspension; pleaded guilty to Giving False Information to Police: sentenced to 90 days jail and \$100 fine.

•Hector Elias Guerra, 36, Hermiston, pleaded guilty to Delivery of Heroin: sentenced to 12 months jail, 2 years post-prison supervision and \$200 fine.

Suits Filed

PENDLETON — The following suits have been filed in Umatilla County courts (interest, court costs and fees not listed):

•Portfolio Recovery Associates LLC vs. Cassandra R. Brooks of Hermiston: seeks \$1,821.17.

•Portfolio Recovery Associates LLC vs. Brian D. Stone of Umatilla: seeks \$3,926.77.

•OneMain Financial Group LLC vs. Robert C. White Jr.: seeks \$5,013.81.

•OneMain Financial Group LLC vs. Jeffrey R. Evens: seeks \$7,380.92.

•Credits Inc. vs. Arianna Amezcua of Hermiston: seeks \$707.46.

•Credits Inc. vs. Gabriela Nieto Balcazar of Boardman: seeks \$513.99.

•Credits Inc. vs. Tori E. Cate-Hinz of Hermiston: seeks \$1,267.66.

•Credits Inc. vs. Tania J. Estrada of Umatilla: seeks \$3,801.80.

•United Finance Co. vs. Juan Gomez Juarez of Hermiston: seeks \$5,645.36.

•Credits Inc. vs. Candy Spain Garcia of Hermiston: seeks \$2,134.66.

•Credits Inc. vs. John T. and Erin Lovett of Echo: seeks \$1,459.99.

•Credits Inc. vs. Elisa Reyes of Hermiston: seeks \$2,252.45.

•Swift Transportation Co. of Arizona vs. Leslie Marsh: Seeks \$5,592.60.

•Elizabeth Melendrez vs. Colleen Louise Holmstrom: seeks \$125,000.

•Cavalry SPV I LLC vs. Jessica Christina of Umatilla: seeks \$2,108.20.

•Portfolio Recovery Associates LLC vs. Tina K. Wells: seeks

\$3,943.93.

Judgments

PENDLETON — The following judgments have been rendered in Umatilla County courts (interest, court costs and fees not listed):

•Midland Funding LLC vs. Christy McMillen (Jenner-Bruton) of Hermiston: judgment for \$2,105.65.

•Midland Funding LLC vs. Tara Machado of Hermiston: judgment for \$5,953.74 and \$2,421.26 in separate suits.

•Midland Funding LLC vs. Jessica Christina of Umatilla: judgment for \$5,052.75.

•Midland Funding LLC vs. James Belew of Hermiston: judgment for \$821.92.

•Midland Funding LLC vs. Amber Westfall of Hermiston: judgment for \$822.59.

•Midland Funding LLC vs. Janet Doty of Hermiston: judgment for \$2,671.90.

•Midland Funding LLC vs. Berenice Rodriguez of Hermiston: judgment for \$1,424.12.

•Credits Inc. vs. Vincent Harrison and Ivette Arellano Harrison of Irrigon: judgment for \$1,023.04.

•Credits Inc. vs. Alicia Ponce of Boardman: judgment for \$713.19.

•Credits Inc. vs. Wendy and Anthony Raymond of Umatilla: judgment for \$6,254.44.

•Credits Inc. vs. Lazaro F. Rodriguez of Umatilla/Irrigon:

judgment for \$972.06.

•Credits Inc. vs. Stacy Skerjanec of Hermiston: judgment for \$539.64.

•Nationwide Recovery Service vs. William Lewis Mesteth of Hermiston: judgment for \$4,971.17.

•Ray Klein Inc. vs. Heather Lancaster of Hermiston: judgment for \$389.

•Credits Inc. vs. Pedro and Rachel Muniz of Hermiston: judgment for \$815.49.

•Capital One Bank vs. Bruce A. Doty of Hermiston: judgment for \$5,532.58 and \$2,137.93 in separate suits.

•Credits Inc. vs. Nadine E. and Ward Borden of Hermiston: judgment for \$9,502.35.

•Bonneville Billing & Collections Inc. vs. Nadia Canche of Umatilla: judgment for \$177.71.

•Bonneville Billing & Collections Inc. vs. Terry D. and Kristen Iverson of Hermiston: judgment for \$185.94.

•Credits Inc. vs. Paul Bailey of Stanfield: judgment for

\$1,616.15.

•Credits Inc. vs. Joseph A. and Nicole Tovar of Hermiston: judgment for \$825.23.

•Credits Inc. vs. William L. and Karina Venoy of Hermiston: judgment for \$1,552.95.

Divorces

PENDLETON — Divorce decrees were signed in Umatilla County Courts for:

Joshua L. Reddick and Serena R. Reddick of Hermiston.

Marriages

PENDLETON — Marriage licenses have been registered in Umatilla County for:

Hugo Elizandro Guzman Rosales, 34, and Alba Luz Alvarenga Hernandez, 40, both of Umatilla.

Benjamin Edward Allen Green, 32, and Rachele Renae Aragon, 28, both of Hermiston.

Carlos Jesus Carter, 37, of Umatilla, and Sara Naomi Knox, 36, of Astoria.

Santos Martin Lopez, 34, and Odilia Sales Godinez, 34, both of Hermiston.

Alonso Gonzalez, 24, and Sarah Kate Tabor, 22, both of Hermiston.

Adolfo Mendoza Barboza, 46, and Ma Cristina Mejia Velasco, 45, both of Hermiston.

Kevin Wayne Benham, 58, and Racel Bajado Inoferio, 36, both of Hermiston.

George Ross Westfall, 21, and Claire Edean Wilson, 21, both of Hermiston.

Rigoberto Claudio Garcia, 31, and Maria Domingo Domingo, 25, both of Hermiston.

Charles Cody Case, 51, and Brenda Yvonne Porter, 48, both of Umatilla.

Manuel Escalante Cardenas, 38, and Maria Teresa De Jesus Hernandez, 29, both of Umatilla.

Raul Garcia Torres, 36, and Maria Frania Covarrubias Spain, 33, both of Umatilla.

Ernest William Erickson Jr., 26, of Irrigon, and Shavon Lee-Onne Newton, 20, of Hermiston.

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