



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

An in-ground sprinkler system waters the lawn at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Hermiston Tuesday afternoon.

Water conservation tips can help lower bills

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

Since water and sewer rates increased in March to pay for repairs and upgrades to the system, high water bills have been a hot topic on social media in Hermiston.

A petition on change.org by Jacob Neighbors, which gained 922 signatures, drew comments from residents who said they were having to take shorter showers or let their lawns go brown to be able to afford their bill.

“Many residents have experienced hard to swallow increases without any changes in water quality, volume, or accessibility,” Neighbors wrote.

While discussion online hasn’t sparked any discussions at city council about lowering rates again, there are some conservation steps that people can take to lower their bill on their own.

During warm weather, the biggest cost for most homeowners comes from watering their lawns, gardens and other landscaping. Many people water their lawn every day, but experts say about four times a week is sufficient for most of the year.

Homeowners have the option of removing plants for “xeriscaping” options like bark chips or rocks, but if they are set on keeping their green, grassy lawn, they can take steps to reduce the amount of water they waste in the process.

Watering in the evening minimizes the amount of

water lost to evaporation, and avoiding windy days keeps the breeze from carrying away droplets. Watering in two shorter sessions with a break in between helps prevent losing water to runoff as well.

Raising your lawnmower blades to a higher level and keeping fertilizer to a minimum can also help the lawn retain more water.

Make sure sprinklers are watering the lawn, not the sidewalk or driveway, and repair even small leaks immediately. According to WaterSense, the Environmental Protection Agency’s water conservation program, a leak the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen can waste over 6,000 gallons of water per month.

“Household leaks can waste approximately nearly 900 billion gallons of water annually nationwide,” the WaterSense fact sheet states. “That’s equal to the annual household water use of nearly 11 million homes.”

Water users in Hermiston pay a base charge of \$30 per month, plus 50 cents per 1,000 gallons up to 15,000 gallons and \$3.50 per 1,000 gallons thereafter. That means even a small 6,000 gallon leak can add an extra \$21 per month.

The city offers the EyeOnWater app for free to all customers, which can help detect leaks. The app allows users to track their water usage by the month, day or time of day and can be set up to send alerts to their phone when usage patterns indicate a leak.

Beyond leaks and lawns, dishwashers and washing machines can also be heavy water users. According to the city of Portland, about 22 percent of the water used in a typical residential home is from washing clothes.

Purchasing appliances, faucets, shower heads, toilets and more with the government’s WaterSense seal of approval can greatly reduce the amount of water a home uses. But if new appliances are not in the budget, people can also help reduce wasted water by waiting to run a load of clothes or dishes until the machine is full.

They can also not let water run any longer than necessary while hand washing items in the sink or rinsing vegetables and fruit.

In the bathroom, letting the sink run while brushing your teeth or shaving and letting the shower or bath run while shaving your legs is sending money straight down the drain. WaterSense suggests running a timer to help keep showers shorter as well.

You can check for toilet leaks by dropping food coloring in the tank of the toilet and waiting several minutes to see if any shows up in the bowl without flushing. According to the EPA, replacing old toilets with new water-conserving models can save families an average of 13,000 gallons of water a year.

For more information on ways to lower your water bill, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

Umatilla County among the six under disaster declaration

HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla County is among the six Oregon counties to qualify for federal disaster aid in recovering from the April flooding. Federal officials also determined Curry, Douglas, Grant, Linn and Wheeler counties qualified as major disasters.

The Office of the Governor reported local, state and federal agencies documented more than \$8 million in damages from the

severe storms, flooding, landslides and mudslides April 6-21. A contingent of Oregon’s federal lawmakers reported the public damage in Wheeler County alone comes to more than \$700 per person.

A major piece of damage in Umatilla County was the partial collapse of a pedestrian bridge across the Umatilla River in Umatilla. Engineers in April estimated it would cost more than \$3 million to replace it. The county also saw

damage to Pendleton from McKay Creek floods and in Hermiston’s Riverfront Park.

According to the governor’s office, the disaster declaration makes federal funding available to the state and eligible local and tribal governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities that sustained damage during the storms and floods.

Stanfield open house to discuss Highway 395 changes

HERMISTON HERALD

The city of Stanfield and Oregon Department of Transportation will hold a community meeting Thursday to discuss planned changes to Highway 395.

The meeting is at 6 p.m. in the Stanfield Secondary School cafeteria, 1120 N. Main St.

ODOT is funding an improvement project for the highway between Harding Street and Ball Avenue. Improvements will include paving repairs, new wheelchair ramps, bulb-outs and other features to improve pedestrian safety and slow traffic through town.

In June ODOT employees pitched the idea of including a “road diet” that would take the highway down from five lanes to three (one northbound, one southbound and a center turn lane). The change would be designed to encourage vehicles to obey the speed limit and to help pedestrians cross more quickly. City councilors voted to postpone the decision until they had held a public meeting to gather feedback.

On Thursday, ODOT will give a presentation about the proposed safety improvements and take questions and comments. For questions about the meeting contact city hall at 541-449-3831.

Two taken into custody after burglary, car prowls

HERMISTON HERALD

The Hermiston Police Department took two people into custody Monday morning, following a residential burglary and a slew of car prowls which were reported this week.

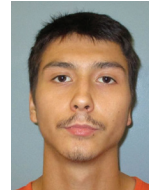
with people not to leave valuables in their vehicles but inevitably it still happens.”

Hermiston resident Brenden Dion Erickson, 18, was lodged at the Umatilla County Jail with the probable cause charges of Burglary I, Theft I, Criminal Conspiracy and Unauthorized Motor Vehicle Entry. His alleged accom-

plish, a 17-year-old male who is also a Hermiston resident, was placed into the custody of the Umatilla County Youth Authority for the same probable cause charges and Carrying a Concealed Weapon.

The burglary occurred around 10:30 a.m. on Monday.

Edmiston said that the department is still investigating, and the pair may be charged with additional crimes.



Erickson

The Umatilla/ Morrow County Relay For Life Committee would like to thank the following for their generous contributions to this year’s event. We could not have done it without you!

- USC UMATILLA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
- Walmart - Pendleton
- CHI St. Anthony Hospital
- EOCI
- Wildhorse Resort & Casino Bingo
- knowbe4
- inayte
- ELKHORN MEDIA GROUP
- 21 PARTY
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- Eastern Oregon IPA
- Washington Wildcats
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- U.S. Linen and Uniform
- Blue Mountain Foot Specialist
- Masterprinters NW
- HARRISON FAMILY MEDICINE

CUJ | Wheatland Insurance | Smith Frozen Foods | Pendleton Sanitary Service
Wtechlink | Pendleton Bottling Company | Main Street Cowboys | Aarons Inc

- Rogers Toyota of Hermiston
- Chimu’s Tacoa
- Pendleton Art center
- Sips n Snacks
- The Sign Man
- Pratt Dental
- Pendleton Record
- Morrison Shaved ice
- Pendleton Fire Department
- Burke Family-petting area
- Colton Morrison – music

Silent Auction:

- EOCI prison wood shop
- Courtesy rent to own
- Joe’s Fiesta
- Mazatlan
- Deidre Byrd
- OMG Burgers
- Denny’s
- Gianni’s fine foods
- Shari’s
- Tula Xii - Wendy Cannin
- D&B supply
- Inspirations gift shop
- Portland trailblazers
- Man cave barbershop
- Pendleton Round up and Happy Canyon
- Wildhorse resort and casino
- Tri city Americans
- Elvis’s bar and grill
- Rosemarie Athfield
- Gert Hawthorne
- Tupperware - Tondaley Johnson
- Walmart Pendleton
- Pampered chef - Eva Richerson
- Wellness Wave
- Kind Leaf
- Doterra - Lisa Foust
- Les Schwab
- Pendleton Ground Up
- It Works - Jessica Preston
- Boutique Air
- Premium Tire and Lube
- Rodan and fields - Lisa Foust
- Great Pacific
- Buckin Bean
- Barhyte mustard
- Hamley’s steakhouse & saloon
- Dr. Jason Walker and Dr. Todd Oyama
- Shay Nulf
- Madeleine Winn
- Scentsy - Danielle Rowley
- Jordan Uhlman photography
- Club 24
- Blue Mtn Creations
- Temple massage
- Mac’s bar and grill
- Cup Corset
- MoePho noodles and cafe
- Elaine Entermille
- Sorbenot’s
- Pendleton Record
- Round up athletic club
- Pendleton athletic
- Smart Foodservice

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