

Search warrant leads to solving nine cases

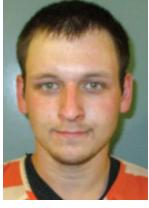
By PHIL WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

A Morrow County Sheriff's Office investigation into a theft of navigation equipment led to the arrest of a Hermiston man and solved a number of local cases.

The suspect, Chalen James Ottmar, 24, faces several charges. State court records show Ottmar has been on a downward spiral of crime since December 2018.

Hermiston-based Barton Laser Leveling Inc. on Aug. 6 reported the theft of equipment from a tractor near Pole Line Road and Homestead Lane outside Board-

man. Morrow County Sheriff's Office Deputy Taylor Wasserman responded to the scene, according to a news release from the sheriff's office, and took a report for the theft of a RTK radio with receiver and a John Deere 2630 display from a John Deere tractor.



Ottmar

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson said the theft occurred in July. He described the items as navigation equipment. The sheriff's office reported Barton Laser valued the equipment at approximately \$20,000.

The investigation led Wasserman to the auction website eBay, where Ottmar posted the missing goods.

Wasserman worked with the the Fulton County Sheriff's Office in Illinois and others there to get the property back to the owner.

After gathering additional evidence, Wasserman obtained a search warrant for Ottmar's residence, 19 Westview Drive, Hermiston. Members of the Morrow County Sheriff's Office and Hermiston Police Department served the search warrant Oct. 1, arrested Ottmar and recovered property from crimes in Morrow and Umatilla counties.

According to the news release, the goods solved nine cases in all for the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Hermiston Police Department, Oregon State

Police and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Morrow County Sheriff's Office hauled Ottmar to jail in Pendleton for two counts of unauthorized entry into a motor vehicle, two counts of trespassing and two counts of aggravated theft.

State court records show Ottmar in 2014 pleaded guilty to possessing less than 4 ounces of marijuana, in 2016 he pleaded no contest to violating the basic driving rule and in 2018 he pleaded no contest to speeding, all Umatilla County cases.

This year, Ottmar faced three separate criminal cases in Umatilla County.

He pleaded guilty in May to three counts of second-degree theft for stealing dog food, a cooler and and

spa pump from three people in January and received 12 months of court-supervised probation.

Later that month, he faced first-degree theft and second-degree burglary charges for breaking into Highland Hills Elementary School, Hermiston, on Dec. 6, 2018, and stealing Apple iPads.

And in July the district attorney's office charged Ottmar with criminal simulation and attempted third-degree theft for altering currency and trying to pass it off on June 23 at a McDonald's. He took deals in both cases, pleading guilty on Sept. 20 to the theft and criminal simulation charges in exchange for two years of probation.

The Morrow County District Attorney's Office last Wednesday arraigned Ottmar on preliminary charges in the latest case, including for aggravated theft, a felony. Nelson said Ottmar's next court appearance is Oct. 31.

The delay is due to the court granting a request to release Ottmar from jail. Nelson explained Ottmar's attorney, Steven Thomas of Pendleton, told the court Ottmar begins an addiction treatment program Monday in Eugene, and he asked the court to let him do that.

The hearing at the end of the month also means Nelson's office has more time to present evidence to a grand jury for formal charges against Ottmar.



Contributed photo by UCFD1

Umatilla County Fire District firefighters attack a shop fire on Brock Lane in Hermiston that happened Thursday morning.

Firefighters respond to multiple blazes in Hermiston last week

HERMISTON HERALD

A number of vehicles and a building were damaged in a series of separate fires Thursday in western Umatilla County.

Umatilla County Fire District 1 responded about 7:30 a.m. that day to a fire in a shop outside of a home. The blaze was contained to the shop.

Shortly after 4:30 p.m. that same day the department responded to a semitruck on fire at Milepost 2 on Highway 37. No one was injured in the blaze and the fire was

contained after 6 p.m., according to Battalion Chief Corey Gorham.

UCFD1 responded as mutual aid to a call of a metal shop on fire by the Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District.

The call went out just before 7 p.m. for the fire at 81830 North Highway 395.

The shop contained a cement truck and a full-sized pickup truck. Both were damaged and the building was extensively damaged, Gorham said.

No one was in the building at the time, and

no injuries were reported. The fire was contained within the hour.

Later in the evening, UCFD1 responded to another semi-truck on fire around 9 p.m. at Lamb Weston in Hermiston. No injuries were reported, but the truck and trailer had extensive damage.

On Saturday evening, UCFD1 responded to another shop fire about 9:15 p.m. at a home behind Harley Swain Subaru. The fire was contained to the detached garage.

All incidents are currently under investigation.

Sherwin-Williams set to open paint store on N First Street

By JADE MCDOWELL
NEWS EDITOR

The old Payless Shoe Store building in Hermiston won't stay empty for long after the shoe retailer went out of business this summer.

The building at 1390 N First St. is being remodeled into a Sherwin-Williams paint store.

Jeffrey Light, director of real estate for midwestern states and Canada for Sherwin-Williams, confirmed Tuesday that the new store is expected to open in late December 2019.

He said the Hermiston store will be focused on "residential repaint and DIY business," serving homeowners and painting contractors in the area.

Sherwin-Williams is a national chain with stores around the United States including Pendleton, Ken-



Staff photo by Jade McDowell

Sherwin-Williams is turning the former Payless Shoe Store in Hermiston into a paint store, set to open in December.

newick, Pasco and Richland. In addition to its stores selling paints and stains, the company also provides specialized coatings for industries such as aerospace, railroads, marine, gas and oil, bridges, health care, food service and fire protection.

Sherwin-Williams isn't

the only company sprucing up that section of North First Street.

Panda Express is building a new restaurant two buildings down, at the former Stockman's Steakhouse at 1530 N First St., which is also set to open in December.

Missing man found, then arrested

By JESSICA POLLARD
STAFF WRITER

A man who was reported missing in July by the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office was transferred to the Umatilla County Jail on Oct. 2.

Jason Edward Moore, 45, of Hermiston, was located and lodged in the Marion County Jail on Sept. 28 after law enforcement there discovered he had outstanding warrants in Umatilla County.

On July 28, Moore's wallet, along with some clothing, a cellphone and a suicide note, was found along the Columbia River in Umatilla by a passerby picking blackberries. Associates of Moore said they hadn't seen him since July 9.

Deputies from the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office searched the water, as well as his last listed Hermiston address on Autumn Avenue but found nothing. They publicized his disappearance, calling him missing and possibly in danger.

Now that he has been found alive he is facing a charge for failing to appear at an August trial on a first-degree criminal mischief charge, and another for disseminating intimate images of the victim from that case.

He was also charged with contempt of court, and first-degree invasion of personal privacy.

Moore was originally indicted for first-degree criminal mischief in January, and was released from jail in February with the

expectation he would not contact the victim of his crime or leave the state. When he failed to appear at a pre-trial conference in March, a warrant was issued for his arrest.

According to court documents, Moore was issued an emergency release from the jail in April due to overcrowding.

On two separate occasions in June and July, before Moore was reported missing, he allegedly distributed intimate images of his victim on the internet, according to court documents released Thursday.

On July 17, Moore's attorney requested a rescheduling of the trial because he couldn't locate the defense witness.

Moore is currently lodged at the Umatilla County Jail, and his bail is set at \$45,000.

BRIEFS

SAGE Saturday craft features Halloween theme

Kids and their families can create a creepy witch's cauldron or festive sugar skull magnet this weekend at the SAGE Center.

The free activity takes place during SAGE Saturday, while supplies last.

Port View Apartments is "taking" over the event this weekend. The event is Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The SAGE Center is located at 101 Olson Road, Boardman. In addition, admission is free to the visitor's center all day long until 5 p.m.

For more information, contact 541-481-7243, sagecenter@portofmorrow.com or visit www.visitsage.com.

Higher Power Fitness hosts women's expo on Saturday

A variety of vendors offering home-based business products are featured during the Fall Women's Expo.

The event is Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Higher Power Fitness, 2120 N. First St., Hermiston. Admission is a donation of cash or supplies for the Hermiston Warming Station.

Suggested items for the winter include gloves, wool socks, lip balm, sunglasses and ice-melt. In addition, household cleaning supplies and hot drinks (coffee, hot chocolate, apple cider, etc).

For questions about current needs, call 541-289-2150, 541-303-3256 or visit www.facebook.com/hermistonwarmingstation.

During the women's expo, food and drinks will be served. For more information, call 541-571-5691.

First Christian Church hosts Hymnsing on Sunday

An evening of fellowship features the singing of old hymns with new and old

friends.

Everyone is invited to Hymnsing Sunday from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the First Christian Church, 775 W. Highland Ave., Hermiston.

There is no admission charge for the informal service.

For more information, contact Chris Finley at johnchris_1@msn.com or 541-571-2516.

Tourism industry launches leadership academy

A new learning program is being launched for public and private sector tourism professionals.

The program is designed to assist leaders in polishing their skills and assist in making positive and lasting contributions to the state's tourism industry. Interested participants should have supervisory, managerial, or executive responsibilities in either the private or public sector.

The Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association announced that the launch of the Oregon Tourism Leadership Academy was developed in partnership with the Oregon Destination Association and Travel Oregon.

The program will be led by the industry's top experts.

The program is accepting applications for participants, who will begin meeting in the spring of 2020.

The experiential learning sessions will include visits to Eastern Oregon, the Columbia Gorge, the greater Portland area and the Oregon coast. Participants will qualify for four credits of the Hospitality Management Program through Chemeketa Community College.

The application deadline is Friday, Nov. 1. For more information, visit www.oregonrta.org/otla.html. For questions, contact Marla McColly at 503-428-8694 or mmccolly@oregonrta.org.



Hello, neighbor.

We're Silver Falls Dermatology and we're pleased to announce our new, full-time office in Pendleton. **Dermatology-trained nurse practitioner Lorie Weldon, FNP** has been specifically trained to diagnose and treat conditions of the skin, hair and nails in adults and children. Her schedule is now open for new patients and our office can usually accommodate same-week appointments. **We can't wait to meet you.**



Appointments, 541.210.5771
Pendleton Medical Center, 1100 Southgate, Suite 6

Lorie Weldon, FNP
Dermatology-trained Nurse Practitioner