

Umatilla County Search and Rescue team receives drone

Umatilla Electric Cooperative covers cost of the new equipment

By NADA SEWIDAN
STAFF WRITER

A new state-of-the-art drone joins the Umatilla County Search and Rescue team to assist with rescue missions.

Umatilla Electric Cooperative gave a check for \$5,000 to the team on July 9 to cover the cost of the drone, a DJI Mavic 2 Enterprise Dual.

"This drone has added functionality of spotlight, speakers and infrared camera," Umatilla County Sgt. Dwight Johnson said. "It seems like a tailored aircraft for search and rescue missions. One of the things we can do, we can fly the drone and see if there's an imminent threat to public safety."

Compared to other drones in the fleet, this new model allows for longer flight times and can withstand colder temperatures. The drone also has two cameras, a 4k video-capable visible camera and a lower-resolution infrared camera to help with visibility in search efforts. The infrared camera on the drone is also used to detect temperatures, which will help locate warm bodies of people who are injured or lost.

Johnson said pilots of the drone also can communicate through a speaker system, either in real time or through recorded messages, such as "Stay put, we will come to you." The drone has already been used to search for a missing person in Baker County.

Johnson explained that all the above capabilities are helpful when looking for missing persons, especially



Photo contributed by Umatilla County Sheriff's Office
The Umatilla County Search and Rescue team's new drone, a DJI Mavic 2 Enterprise Dual, takes flight.

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Steve Meyers, member service administrator at Umatilla Electric Cooperative

in challenging areas. The drone can potentially help find people faster or give rescuers a higher chance of finding them.

"If we're doing searches

for those in difficult terrains, the drone becomes particularly useful," he said. "The more tools we have, the more effective we can be and the safer everybody is."

There's a lot of constraints regarding drone use. Drone pilots need to be licensed through the Federal Aviation Administration. Johnson said they can't fly above 400 feet, within a certain distance of clouds, beyond line of sight or faster than 100 mph. The new drone maximum speed is 45 mph.

The drone pilot also needs to know the airspace they're flying in, and they cannot fly at night without a waiver. Additional restrictions, depending on the mission type, disallow drones from flying without airspace clearance.

One of the key reasons for purchasing the drone, according to Johnson, is to help SAR members as well.

"What I always like to emphasize is the volunteers and their dedication to the service," he said. "Anything we can do to help them be more effective, like this drone, is great."

SAR is volunteer-based, and all members go through considerable training to be part of the team. They are not trained as law enforcement officers, but they assist in crime scene searches, and once a scene is made safe, they can assist in containing crime scenes. They have also assisted with floods and fire evacuations.

Upon hearing about the SAR effort, the UEC Board of Directors voted unanimously to provide the drone, according to Johnson.

Steve Meyers, member service administrator at Umatilla Electric Cooperative, said the company seeks ways to help within the community.

"Our Board of Directors is always looking for new ways to help in the community, and this is one example of that," Meyers said.

Good Shepherd Health Care System announces new CEO

By JADE MCDOWELL
STAFF WRITER

Good Shepherd Health Care System has chosen Brian Sims as its next president and CEO.

Sims will replace Dennis Burke, who is retiring after 32 years as Good Shepherd's CEO. Sims begins Oct. 1, 2020.

"We are pleased to welcome Brian and his family to the Hermiston community," GSHCS board chair Steve Eldridge said in a statement. "After a rigorous recruitment process including three excellent finalists, the Board is confident Brian is the right fit for our organization."

According to a news release, Sims has 10 years of executive leadership experience, most recently as CEO of Lucas County Health Center in Chariton, Iowa, a fully accredited 25-bed Critical Access Hospital similar to Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Sims grew up in Arkansas, according to the news release, and as a child sometimes slept in the hospital where his mother worked as a nurse. His aunt and several cousins also work in health care, and he said eventually he made his way into the health care field as well.

He has Master of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in organizational development from Upper Iowa University, according to the news release, and is currently a Fellow with the American College of



Contributed photo

Brian Sims will be the new president and CEO at Good Shepherd Health Care System. Sims will replace Dennis Burke, who is retiring after 32 years.

Health Care Executives.

"When a person learns what fuels their passion, they will never work again," he said in a statement. "What I do now fuels my passion and I am very thankful to have an opportunity to serve GSHCS, Hermiston and our little portion of the world."

Burke pointed to the awards and other successes of the hospital Sims most recently led as an example of why Good Shepherd chose him.

"Brian has a strong track record of proven experience leading a Critical Access Hospital, with an emphasis on continual improvement in operations," Burke said. "He is an excellent choice as CEO and will build upon our success here."

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Welcome Family Medicine
Physician,
David Shanley, MD

Dr. Shanley is welcoming new patients, 6 months and older, for all their primary care needs at Good Shepherd's Primary Care Clinic. Dr. Shanley brings over 20 years of Family Medicine expertise, treating a large variety of different health conditions that will benefit his patients.

"I am happy to fulfill the need of primary care in Hermiston and the surrounding communities, and look forward to positively impacting the health and well-being for patients of all ages, through all stages of life."

- Dr. Shanley

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