



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

The city of Echo recently received \$1.7 million in funding for upgrades to its wastewater infrastructure. One of the primary upgrades will be the installation of a pipeline to link the Echo system to the city of Stanfield’s wastewater treatment facility.

Echo receives funding to upgrade wastewater system

By NADA SEWIDAN
FOR THE HERMISTON HERALD

The last time the city of Echo upgraded its wastewater infrastructure was in 1985, which is why they were recently provided \$1.7 million in funding for upgrades.

John Huffman, state director of USDA Rural Development, said improvements to Echo’s wastewater system are essential for the town’s economy, health and safety. Huffman said sometimes it is difficult for a small town to come up with the finances for a major infrastructure upgrade, but that it is necessary.

“Utility services are essential for public health and safety, as well as for economic vitality, but maintaining the necessary infrastructure is sometimes not feasible for a small town’s

budget,” he said.

The project will include constructing a pipeline that will enable treated wastewater to be directed to the Stanfield collection system instead of into the Umatilla River. The funding will also support renovations to the wastewater plant’s lift station and pressure main.

In 2017, the city began searching for funding to redirect its recycled water from being dispensed into the Umatilla River. The decision to upgrade the system comes after the treatment did not meet Department of Environmental Quality standards. Without the upgrade, Echo would face significant fines.

Dave Slaght, city administrator-recorder for Echo, said the city is in conversation with engineers and they are hoping to get the project completed in 18 to

24 months.

“We’re very grateful to get the grant and loans,” Slaght said. “We’re going to be able to get our system back in compliance, and we’re really excited about moving forward and at least getting our system operational.”

USDA Rural Development invests millions of dollars into rural communities, providing funding to upgrade water treatment and waste disposal systems, storm drainage, and other infrastructure developments in rural communities. Rural areas, with a population of 10,000 or less, can apply for funding year-round.

“The grant and low-interest loan from USDA will enable this very small, rural Oregon community to meet the needs of its residents and businesses for years to come,” Huffman said.

Stanfield resident dies in Baker County crash

HERMISTON HERALD

A Stanfield woman was killed Friday, Aug. 7, in a single-vehicle crash on Interstate 84 in Baker County, according to a press release from the Oregon State Police.

Heydi Yajaira Sandoval, 31, was operating a 2019 Nissan Rogue SUV westbound on the interstate when it left the roadway, hit a metal snow fence and rolled, the release said.

Sandoval, who was not wearing a seat belt, suffered fatal injuries and was pronounced deceased.

OSP was assisted by Oregon Department of Transportation and Baker City Fire Department.



Photo contributed by Oregon State Police

Oregon State Police Troopers and emergency personnel respond to a single-vehicle crash on Friday, Aug. 7, 2020, on Interstate 84 near milepost 291.

Motorcycle crash outside Echo kills Texas man

HERMISTON HERALD

A motorcycle crash Friday, Aug. 7, outside of Echo killed one person, according to a press release from the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office.

Raymond Michael Rone, 69, of Flower Mound, Texas, was riding the motorcycle on Reith Road near Ramos Lane, the release said. A motorist reported to dis-

patch around 5 p.m. that the motorcycle was down with the operator pinned underneath it.

Deputies responded along with Stanfield Police Department and Oregon State Police. Echo Quick Response Team and Umatilla County Fire Department also responded.

Rone was pronounced deceased at the scene.

UCFD1 responds to record number of calls in July

HERMISTON HERALD

Umatilla County Fire District 1 responded to a single-month record number of calls for service in July, answering 525 calls in 31 days.

The new record shattered the previous mark of 459 calls in a single month, according to a news release from the district.

“We’re a growing community and we’re accustomed to the steady increase in calls for service over time. But this is the biggest jump I can remember and it really pushed us to the limit,” Chief Scott Stanton said in a statement. “The extra calls for COVID-19 transport played a role in that, but even without them it would have been the busiest month we’ve ever seen.”

Emergency medical technicians responded to 425 medical calls, including 59 for transport of COVID-19



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan

Firefighters from Umatilla County Fire District 1 respond to a fire in a pile of tires on West Theater Lane in Hermiston on Tuesday, July 21, 2020.

patients. Firefighters also responded to 22 fires — 18 in fields, three in buildings and one involving a vehicle. Three calls were false alarms.

Because of the high volume of calls, there were 12 delays of ambulance service because all personnel and vehicles were on other calls.

“Having the right number of staff on duty and volunteers on call is one of the biggest challenges we’re facing this year,” Stanton said. “Responding to every call as quickly as possible is our top priority. Every call we get has the potential to be a life or death situation, and we take that very seriously.”



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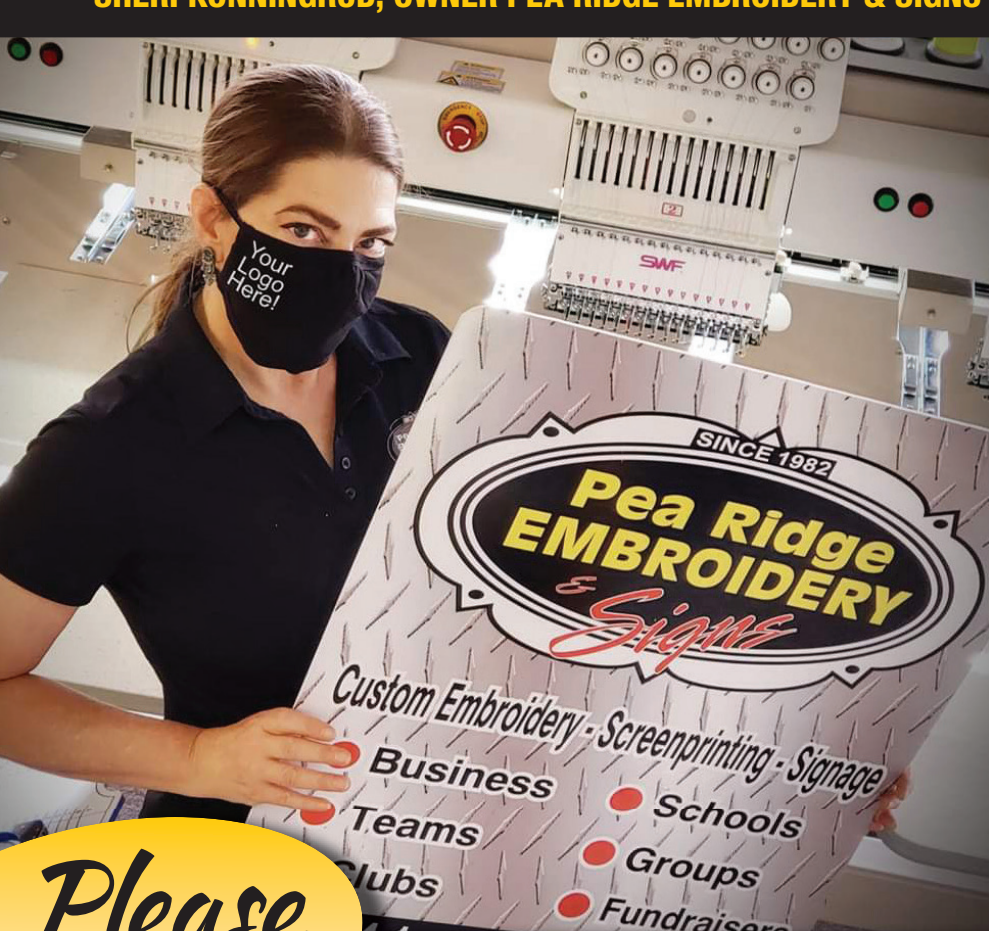
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