

Two killed in shooting outside Hermiston

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
NEWS EDITOR

An altercation between four males resulted in the shooting death of two of them and a gunshot wound to a third, according to Sheriff Terry Rowan.

Rowan said at 8:18 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 29, dispatch received a call from Alejandro Madrigal of Umatilla stating that he and his father, Jaime Madrigal, had been in an altercation with Raymond Rios and Hugo Madrigal-Leon on Sagebrush Road near Bensel Road outside Hermiston. According to Rowan, Alejandro said Jaime had been shot and that Alejandro had shot Rios and Madrigal-Leon in self-defense.

Law enforcement arrived to find Raymond Ryan Rios, 18, and Hugo Madrigal-Leon, 19, both of Hermiston, deceased. Rowan said Jaime was treated at the hospital for a gunshot wound, and Alejandro had



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald
A stop sign marks the intersection of Sagebrush Road and Bensel Road near Hermiston on Friday, Oct. 30, 2020.

some injuries stemming from the initial altercation. They cooperated with law enforcement.

He said Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, Umatilla Morrow Major Crime Team, the Oregon State Police Forensics Lab and Umatilla County District Attorney were still investigating and "sorting things out."

He said at this time he was not aware of whether

the shooting had any connections to other shooting incidents earlier in the year. He also said it is believed that the four named above were the only ones involved in the incident, which is why USCO's first release of information on the morning of Friday, Oct. 30, stated, "At this time, there is no reason to believe there is any outstanding danger to the community."

The incident represented the fourth and fifth possible homicide deaths in or just outside of Hermiston this year. Law enforcement has also reported at least four drive-by shootings of vehicles or homes where no one was injured, and in August a man was seriously injured in a shooting in the parking lot of the Hermiston Safeway.

Hermiston Police Chief Jason Edmiston said the pandemic has caused such unusual circumstances this year that it is hard to consider crime statistics from 2020 and previous years an "apples to apples" comparison. Overall, however, reported crime in Hermiston for the first three quarters of 2020 has dropped by 32% compared with the same period in 2019, and violent crime is down 23%, according to records Edmiston provided the East Oregonian. But the increase in shooting incidents in the area compared to recent years is an unfortunate, serious devel-

opment, he said.

The third-quarter crime report shows either one or zero homicides or attempted homicides each year in Hermiston from 2011 to 2019. FBI data going back even further shows the same trend of one or zero homicides per year reported by HPD going back to 2009. FBI statistics show Umatilla County Sheriff's Office reported five homicides in its jurisdiction in 2016, and between zero and two all other years between 2009 and 2019.

Edmiston referred questions about the specific details of the Oct. 29 shooting to the sheriff's office, but in answer to a question about whether the shooting appeared to be connected to any other shooting incidents in the Hermiston area this year, he did say that when more information is released there might "be some dots that could be connected."

He said HPD continues to investigate major crimes from earlier in 2020. In

the case of Jordan Delano Crandall, who was found deceased with a gunshot wound outside of Hermiston on March 18, he said law enforcement is getting closer to being able to provide "some resolution." In the case of Jesus Eli Lopez, who was found deceased of a gunshot wound in Hermiston on June 9, Edmiston said they are also making headway working with law enforcement in another state in regards to a suspect.

While Rowan said he did not know for sure whether either Rios or Madrigal-Leon were students at Hermiston School District, the district sent out a news release on Friday afternoon stating it had learned of the death of a senior at Hermiston High School and a recent graduate of the school. The district stated that a "virtual safe room" had been set up and counselors were available to speak to students and staff who were struggling with the news.

Local schools stay closed despite loosening rules

By **ANTONIO SIERRA**
and **ALEX CASTLE**
STAFF WRITERS

When Gov. Kate Brown announced new public health standards for schools to reopen, it allowed dozens of schools across rural Oregon to reopen.

But for most schools in Umatilla County, it won't mean much in the short term, as Umatilla County still falls well short of the new, less-rigorous goal.

Under the new metrics, schools' reopening status will now be evaluated over two-week intervals for case rates per 100,000 and test positivity rate, and designated into one of four zones.

In the green zone, all schools can reopen to stu-

dents of all ages when a county records a case rate of 50 or fewer cases per 100,000 people and a test positivity rate below 5%.

In the yellow zone, elementary school students can return for some in-person instruction in a hybrid model when a county records a case rate of 100 or fewer cases per 100,000 people and a test positivity rate below 8%.

The orange zone is for counties to transition into preparing for in-person instruction when they've recorded 200 or fewer cases per 100,000 and a test positivity rate below 10%.

When counties record rates above those figures, they'll be in the red zone where no in-person instruc-

tion is permitted.

Umatilla County case numbers have been rising steadily in October. From Oct. 18-31, the Oregon Health Authority reported 223 new cases of the virus, which amounts to 274.8 cases per 100,000 people. The county's test positivity rate was 17% during those two weeks.

In order to reach the orange zone, Umatilla County would need to report fewer than 162 cases over a two-week stretch. To reach the yellow zone, that number would need to drop below roughly 122 new cases over two weeks, and then even further to roughly fewer than 60 cases to reach the green zone.

Umatilla County Public

Health Director Joe Fiumara has mixed feelings about the new metrics but said Nov. 2 that he felt they were "a step in the right direction."

"On one hand, it's not really impacting us because we're still quite a ways away from meeting the metrics to get kids back in school on a regular basis," he said on Nov. 2. "On the other hand, I do like the direction they went with this."

Though the state also dropped the previous requirement that schools remain closed unless the statewide test positivity rate also dropped below 5% for three consecutive weeks, Fiumara is concerned that the metric will continue to keep local schools closed.

"The same issues that

went into it at the state level still apply at the county level, and so I'm still hopeful that eventually it will go away," he said.

While online teaching will still be the primary method of educating children in Umatilla County for the foreseeable future, many local districts are taking advantage of an exception that allows them to bring in small groups of students for in-person instruction for a few hours each week.

The new set of rules further softened the rules around small-group learning, bumping up the maximum cohort size from 10 to 20 students and lifting the cap on the maximum number of students that can occupy a building.

Hermiston Superintendent Tricia Mooney said the district is studying the new regulations to see if it should alter its small-group program, but there are logistical hurdles to consider like student transportation.

InterMountain Education Service District Superintendent Mark Mulvihill said local districts unsuccessfully lobbied to increase the maximum number of in-person hours allowable under the small group exception, but overall, he was happy with the new rules.

The administrators agreed the new reopening metrics are attainable, but when they'll meet them will be reliant on their communities' ability to slow the spread.

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