

# Police make arrest in 2015 murder case

Hermiston Herald

Hermiston police Thursday, Jan. 13, made an arrest for a 2015 murder of a Umatilla man.

Jose Maria Oseguera, 40, now is in the Umatilla County Jail, Pendleton, on probable cause charges of second-degree murder, unlawful use of a weapon, felon in possession of a weapon and contempt of court and failure to appear.

Police arrested Oseguera for the homicide of Alonso

Madrigal. Hermiston police Chief Jason Edmiston in a press release stated in the evening of March 4, 2015, Madrigal, 23, was “senselessly murdered” in the parking lot of a convenience store in the 400 block of Northwest 11th Street, Hermiston.

From early in the investigation, several persons of interest were identified and for the last six-plus years, Hermiston detectives have worked on the investigation, according to Edmis-

ton. Days after the murder, detectives flew to California, where a vehicle involved in the homicide was located and seized.

Hermiston police detectives with Oregon State Police and the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team arrested Oseguera at about 7 p.m. in the parking lot of Walmart, 1350 N. First St., Hermiston.

At the time of his arrest, according to Edmiston, Oseguera “possessed a loaded handgun, crystal sub-

stance suspected to be methamphetamine and a large amount of cash.”

Detectives have remained in constant contact with the family of Madrigal, Edmiston also reported, and Hermiston police told Madrigal’s family about the arrest.

Throughout this investigation, Hermiston police received assistance from the Umatilla-Morrow County Major Crime Team, the Umatilla County District Attorney’s Office, the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Office

crime lab, the police department of Huntington Park, California, and the United States Marshals Service.

And on Jan. 13 before the arrest, the Umatilla Police Department assisted while Hermiston detectives were in Umatilla. Edmiston also said the Hermiston Police Department’s biggest thank you perhaps needs to go to Madrigal’s family.

“They have been so incredibly patient and understanding with us as our detectives worked the

investigation,” he said in the press release. “We had all the pieces of what transpired that fateful night, we were just waiting for a break we prayed would come. Within the last couple of months, that break happened, and the DA’s office presented the information to a grand jury where an arrest warrant was eventually issued for Mr. Oseguera. It is our sincere hope that once brought to justice with a conviction, the family will have some sense of closure.”

## New computer, forklift training program starts

By ANTONIO SIERRA  
Hermiston Herald

The Port of Morrow on Jan. 10 announced a new partnership with Blue Mountain Community College that includes free forklift training in Boardman and free non credit computer classes.

“We have heard from employers and job seekers that there is a need for short term bilingual training,” Port of Morrow Director of Workforce Development Kalie Davis said in a

statement. “We are excited to partner with Blue Mountain Community College to make these opportunities easily accessible and free.”

The noncredit classes will be at the BMCC Workforce Training Center and won’t require students to be enrolled at Blue Mountain to attend, according to a port press release.

The curriculum includes courses in Microsoft Word and Excel offered in both English and Spanish. A forklift simulator also is available during the center’s

business hours and can be accessed in a number of languages.

The new programming also got plaudits from BMCC Workforce Training Center Director Anne Morter, who said the college’s Boardman campus is now a “regional training hub” for Morrow County residents.

As BMCC looks to grow enrollment and boost its presence across the region, its sought out partnerships with other organizations. Last summer, the college

launched a new unmanned aerial systems by starting a noncredit program with the Volatus Group, a company based at the Pendleton UAS Range. And in December, Blue Mountain signed an agreement with Washington State University Tri Cities to make it easier to transfer between the two schools.

Morning and evening class times have been set through May. More information on the courses and registration info can be found at [www.portofmorrow.com/workforce-training/home](http://www.portofmorrow.com/workforce-training/home).

## Lawsuit against Good Shepherd seeks more than \$4.6 million

By ERICK PETERSON  
Hermiston Herald

A medical malpractice lawsuit against Good Shepherd Healthcare System and a doctor seeks more than \$4.6 million.

Kimberly A. Helms of Ione is bringing the lawsuit, which claims negligence on the part of Dr. Andrew John Haputa as well as “vicarious liability” by Good Shepherd. Attorney Kelly L. Andersen of Medford filed the complaint Jan. 10 in Umatilla County Circuit Court.

According to the document, Helms received gallbladder surgery from Haputa on April 3, 2021, and during the surgery Haputa cut her common bile duct and her right hepatic artery.

“Not realizing his mistakes, he then compounded his errors by using surgical clips to clamp the common bile duct and the hepatic artery,” the complaint states.

The lawsuit also accuses Haputa of several acts of negligence, including performing a surgery beyond his abilities, not obtaining a “critical view” during the surgery of key organs, not taking photographs during surgery to help identify and locate the key organs and “failing to discontinue the surgery rather than cutting what he could not see.”

Helms in the complaint claims she has suffered

an extended hospitalization and corrective surgery because of injuries resulting from the surgery, in addition to pain that limits her “normal and usual activities.”

She seeks the \$4.6 million to cover the loss of physical abilities, medical bills, impairment of past and future earning capacity.

The lawsuit further claims Good Shepherd is negligent in retaining Haputa. It states that six months after being hired, police arrested the doctor at Good Shepherd Medical Center, Hermiston, for driving under the influence of intoxicants, as well as for third-degree assault, reckless endangering and reckless driving. He pleaded guilty to the DUI charge and the state dismissed the other charges. He was sentenced to jail and the suspension of his driver’s license.

“Haputa’s arrest at Good Shepherd and his resulting criminal conviction were warnings to Good Shepherd that Haputa posed a danger to Good Shepherd patients. Good Shepherd was negligent in retaining Haputa after those events,” the document states.

The lawsuit added the Oregon Medical Board on Oct. 7, 2020, publicly reprimanded Haputa.

Good Shepherd has not yet responded to a request for comment.

## Bentz says 2020 election was ‘bought’

By DICK MASON  
EO Media Group

Oregon U.S. Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, does not believe former President Donald Trump’s claim that President Joe Biden won the 2020 presidential election because of voter fraud.

“The election was not stolen, it was bought,” Bentz, a first-term congressman, said during a meet-and-greet held Jan. 6, in La Grande.

Bentz said Democrats had an enormous edge in funding donors with deep pockets, including one who donated \$400 million to Biden’s campaign. Bentz said the Democrats spent several times more money per vote than the Republicans did.

Bentz referenced a large donation Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg made and suggested it benefited Biden and Democrats.

According to a 2020 article from the news website Vox, Zuckerberg and his wife, Priscilla Chan, personally made a \$300 million donation to two groups: Center for Tech and Civic Life and the Center for Election Innovation



Alex Wittwer/EO Media Group, File

Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, speaks to residents during a meet-and-greet Jan. 6, 2022, in La Grande.

& Research. The money was specifically designated to recruit poll workers, supply them with personal protection equipment and set up drive-thru voting. The rest was distributed to state election officials throughout the country.

Both groups are 501(c)(3) nonprofits, which are legally prohibited from political campaign activity.

Bentz is hopeful Republicans can win control of the House of Representatives in mid term elections in November. He noted, though, that is when heavy lifting will begin for

Republicans. He said House minority leader Kevin McCarthy, R-California, issued this warning earlier when speaking at a gathering of about 40 Republican freshmen in Congress.

McCarthy said members of the minority party have it easier because they often find themselves just voting no. McCarthy said, however, they will find when they are in the majority party the situation can be more challenging.

“He told us, ‘When you are in power you have to make things happen, it is hard,’” Bentz said.

Bentz spoke in La Grande on the one-year anniversary of the day Trump supporters rioted at the Capitol Building in an attempt to reverse the results of the 2020 presidential election. Bentz said he believes Democrats are blowing the Jan. 6 riot out of proportion in an attempt to divert attention from the issues people really are concerned about.

“It is a huge opportunity for them to distract the nation from inflation,” Bentz said.

Bentz also said United States Attorney General Merrick Garland is asking the FBI to investigate a rise in harassment and threats of violence against school board members nationwide. Bentz said it is not the FBI’s place to do this.

“This is what communities should be looking into,” he said.

On Oct. 4, Garland released a memo directing the FBI to meet with federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement to develop strategies to address “harassment, intimidation and threats of violence” against school board members and school employees.

## Congressman decries River Democracy Act

By RONALD BOND  
EO Media Group

Oregon Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, denounced the River Democracy Act on the House floor Jan. 11, saying the legislation that would label 4,700 miles of waterways as “Wild and Scenic” would instead leave them “just waiting to be burned and ruined.”

“The overwhelming majority of my 62 county commissioners have serious and unanswered concerns about the dangers the act presents,” Bentz, a freshman congressman, said during his floor speech. “Chief among them is that this designation will prevent what needs to be done to protect these watersheds, placing them in a bureaucratic wasteland where it will take years, if not decades, to initiate and then complete plans that may or may not allow the treatment activities needed right now.”

Bentz noted that with a mile-wide corridor — a half-mile on each side of the designated areas — being marked Wild and Scenic, the area cordoned off, 4,700 square miles, would be about the size of Connecticut.

Bentz said the bill would allow just one method of fire prevention — prescribed burning — which he contended would actually increase the threat of fires.

“I cannot emphasize enough how dangerous it is to use prescribed burns in overgrown, densely packed, dry forests without thinning the forest first,” he said. “Prescribed burning before thinning puts at extreme risk the very rivers and watersheds the designation is supposed to protect. It is like dropping a match in a tinderbox. It is impossible to contain these types of fires once they start.”

“The River Democracy Act, if passed, would threaten watersheds, homes, businesses, farms, ranches, livestock and, most importantly, human lives.”

Bentz also denounced the bill for not containing “explicit protections” for uses of the land, including, “sustainable timber harvests, hunting, grazing, fishing and mining.”

“Regardless of legislative intent, the applicable agencies will have broad authority to restrict these activities,” he said.

The RDA, introduced last year by Sen. Ron Wyden and backed by Sen.

Jeff Merkley, both Oregon Democrats, has been condemned by several county commissioners in Eastern Oregon. Union County commissioners voted in October 2021 to send a letter to Wyden asking him

to remove the roughly 135 miles of waterways in their county from the act. Part of their issue with the RDA, they claimed, was that methods in place for designating rivers as Wild and Scenic were not adhered to.

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