

Gubernatorial candidate visits Hermiston, Boardman

Stan Pulliam arrived Feb. 10 to visit Martha's House

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Oregon gubernatorial candidate Stan Pulliam said he is visiting all corners of Oregon to learn how locals take on the state's biggest problems.

The Republican, who is the mayor of Sandy, brought his campaign Thursday, Feb. 10, to Eastern Oregon with a morning stop in Boardman and an afternoon tour of Martha's House in Hermiston.

"I'm a mayor, and so I've always really heavily believed in local control and local solutions to our problems," he said.

His visit to Martha's House gave him an opportunity to see how Hermiston is handling its housing shortage. He said Martha's House impressed him with its community engagement.

"My experience as someone who grew up in my hometown of being involved in service organizations is that there is something special about the feeling when you are able to help out a fellow neighbor," he said.

When a person is trying to transition out of situations that aren't favorable, there is opportunity to



Ben Lonergan/Hermiston Herald

Stan Pulliam, Sandy mayor and Oregon GOP gubernatorial candidate, speaks with administrative staff Thursday, Feb. 10, 2022, at Martha's House in Hermiston.

help, he said, and that is "a special deal."

Pulliam expressed his hope he can help people, too, by addressing the concerns of locals.

The tour has concentrated on "a lot of Main Street businesses," he said, and he added his campaign started with such operations. But

the tour also takes in places such as Martha's House, in addition to schools, where he could explore educational options.

"We've done a tour through southern Oregon so far," he said. "This is our second leg of the tour. On that one, we went up through Eugene and Springfield to Med-

ford and Grants Pass."

The next stint brought them Feb. 9 to The Dalles, and then to Boardman the morning of Feb. 10 before the visit in Hermiston and a meet-and-greet that night in Pendleton. Next, the tour heads to the coast.

"We're trying to cover all of the

corners of the state," Pulliam said. "What we're trying to see is what are the different solutions in the different corners of the state that different neighbors are figuring out on how to tackle our biggest problems," he said.

Pulliam on mask mandates, COVID-19

While in Boardman, he addressed several topics, including mask mandates.

"I think it's time for personal choice on masks," he said.

He repeated his message in Hermiston after his tour of Martha's House.

As he took the tour, he wore a mask, and he said it was important to respect businesses and organizations when they required mask usage. Still, he stated people should have the option to decide if masks are right for them or not.

He said he was vaccinated and has isolated himself whenever he felt ill.

"I do not know whether or not I have had COVID," he said.

He said he may have had it but does not think "we should test every time we aren't feeling well." Instead, he explained, "We should just do the right thing, which is follow the doctor's orders, and isolate and not go to work, and not try to spread our viruses to one another."

Umatilla officer was among locals to help in Richland shooting

By ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Herald

Following a deadly shooting in Richland, Washington, the Umatilla Police Department sent one of its own to help.

Lt. Keith Kennedy rushed to the scene of the shooting Feb. 7. Two people had been shot, and one had died, at the Fred Meyer store in Richland. Officers from numerous agencies were present. Kennedy's job was to perform a "perimeter watch" in case the suspect remained nearby, according to the Umatilla Police Department.

"They wanted anyone who could come to come," Kylie Baker, Umatilla police administrator, said. "They really didn't know at that point what the scale of this event was going to be."

Her department, Baker said, only had two or three officers on duty at the time, including the school resource officer, charged to look over Umatilla schools. That left Kennedy as the only person available to assist, Baker said.

"Basically, what happens from a law enforcement perspective, is once they get on scene at a major event like that, they check in with a command post," Baker said. "Whatever the most immediate need is at that time, that's what they get assigned for that event."

Kennedy's perimeter watch was with a pair of other officers from different departments.

Baker said it is uncommon for her department to send officers to locations as far away as the Richland Fred Meyer, which is more than 40 miles away.

"I've worked here about 10 years, and normally that's not standard protocol," Baker said. "But normally, we don't really have five-scale events occurring in our area, fortunately. So, it doesn't happen very often, but when agencies call and say, 'We need

help,' if we have someone available, we'll definitely go."

Baker said there were "definitely people from other departments in this area, as well" to assist.

Aaron Christopher Kelly, 39, was arrested late Feb. 7 on the freeway between the town of Sprague and Spokane, Richland police said in a Facebook posting.

Police dispatchers in Richland received a call reporting yelling and possible gunshots in the store at 11:03 a.m. Feb. 7. The first officers responding arrived just one minute later, police said.

Richland interim Police Chief Brigit Clary said responding officers found the two victims near each other in the store and said although lifesaving measures were tried, one already had died.

The wounded victim was a store employee who was taken to a hospital, she said. He had surgery and was listed in critical condition, police said. Neither victim was identified.

The suspect and the victim who died talked before the shooting, according to store video footage seen by police. Police said they don't know what was said and whether the two knew each other. Police also reported the person who died was not a store employee.



Kennedy

Experts: Food industry must adapt to labor shortages

Boardman Foods VP of operations advocates for promoting from within

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
E0 Media Group

The worker shortage isn't a temporary trend that farmers and food processors can hope will soon blow over, experts say.

As insufficient labor plagues the agriculture and food industries, employers must persistently compete for workers while investing in automation, according to experts at Food Northwest's annual processing and packaging expo Feb. 3 and 4 in Portland.

"This is the new normal. Things will not go back to how they were before," said Osvaldo Granillo, sales director with Redzone Production Systems, which helps companies with worker productivity.

Retaining employees is key — apart from the expense of recruiting and training workers, companies face an "opportunity cost" when they can't fill orders due to an insufficient workforce, he said.

Employee retention doesn't just boil down to spending more on wages, especially with the new generation of workers, Granillo said.

A survey of young workers found pay rates are 14th on their list of concerns, while enjoying their job is the top consideration, he said.

Workplace culture is a cru-

cial consideration for employers who are competing against other companies whose workers perform similar tasks, said Matt Crabtree, sales director with Redzone.

Given a choice between filling boxes with products or peeling onions, for example, a worker may choose the company "where people want to go and spend their time," he said.

"Retention is the cheapest thing you can do to maintain productivity," Crabtree said.

It's worth spending the time to continuously educate and train employees, focusing on communication and soliciting feedback on work processes, said John Damon,

workforce development manager for Food Northwest, a food industry group.

Workers are less likely to jump ship if they see a future at the company, he said.

"In this environment, you've got to keep engaging them and make them feel important," he said. "If they feel like family, they will stay."

Bright employees can act out and become "smart alecks" when they're bored, so it helps to provide them with a purpose and opportunities for advancement, Damon said, so they "see a career path where they didn't see one."

Promoting people from within the company ensures

that employees in leadership roles know "every crack and cranny" of the operation, said Debbie Radie, vice president of operations at Boardman Foods.

"My top mechanic today started on my trim line," Radie said.

Boardman Foods has a generous paid time-off policy and started an all-day child daycare program to retain female employees who'd otherwise be compelled to stay home during the pandemic, she said.

"We find creative ways for people to have that work-life balance," Radie said, "even on the work floor trimming onions."

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