

Hood to Coast runner allegedly stole truck

Charged with assault and other crimes

By Jack Heffernan
EO Media Group

A Hood to Coast runner was arrested early Saturday, Aug. 26, after allegedly stealing a pickup truck and running over another racer.

The pickup was servicing port-a-potties at an exchange site near Birkenfeld at about 2 a.m. when David Jon Blackmon, 36, of Bend, allegedly entered it and began driving. Soon after, he allegedly drove the truck through a field where runners were resting.

Three runners were able to move out of the way, while another — Cynthia Gillespie of Canby — was run over and dragged a short distance, authorities said. The truck then stopped

while her leg was pinned under a tire. She was later transferred to Oregon Health & Science University Hospital and released after being treated for minor injuries.

Blackmon allegedly fled the scene after the truck's driver confronted him. Oregon State Police located Blackmon in the nearby woods and charged him with second-degree assault, reckless endangering, unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, unauthorized entry into a motor vehicle, possession of a stolen vehicle and driving while revoked.

Blackmon was taken to Columbia County Jail. Police are still investigating the incident.



David Jon Blackmon

We were 'blinded by the light'

Eclipse has spectacular views, few hassles

By Jack Heffernan, Katie Frankowicz and Brenna Visser
EO Media Group

Porsche Brunzell, sporting a NASA shirt and sweatpants featuring drawings of galaxies, sat at the base of the Astoria Column facing the sun. An admitted space nerd, she had been counting down to the moment for weeks.

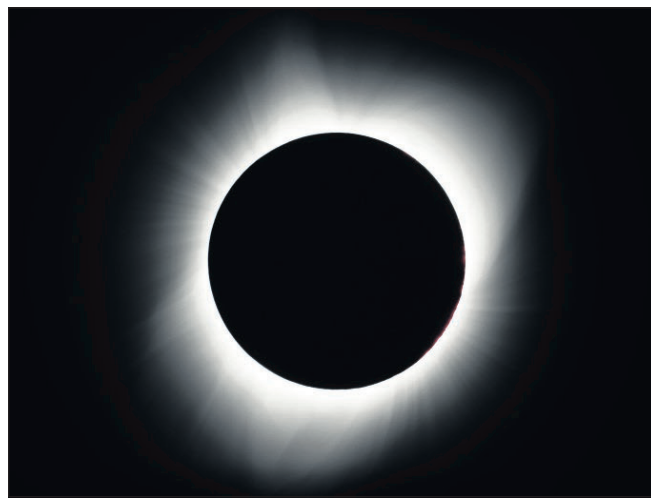
She figured the Column, just up the road from her home, was as good a spot as any to see the celestial event.

"I'm geeking out a bit, trying to calm down," she said about an hour before the solar eclipse as early morning clouds began to fade. "The universe has to give me this."

For Brunzell and millions of people across the United States on Monday, Aug. 21, the universe did just that. But the total solar eclipse did not bring the potential downsides many had feared. There was little traffic gridlock and no unruly crowds — a relief on the North Coast.

Sunny skies

Estimates had roughly 1 million people coming to Oregon over the weekend and Monday, temporarily — and quickly — increasing the state's population by nearly 25 percent. Officials from around the state were expecting massive traffic delays, including in some areas outside the path of totality like the North Coast. But compared to initial wor-



AP PHOTO/TED S. WARREN

The moon covers the sun during the total solar eclipse near Redmond.

ries, it was sunny skies for the state Department of Transportation.

"It's like a busy weekend," ODOT spokesman Lou Torres said. "We didn't encounter anything we couldn't handle."

The Department of Transportation's maintenance crews and communications teams will take the next few days to discuss what worked and didn't work in preparation for future large events.

"This was a great experience," Torres said. "We've never had anything like this in terms of a mass traffic event."

Though some agencies increased patrols and even sent some officers south to aid other departments near the path of totality, law enforcement officials did not report any unusual traffic or criminal activity.

"I think this is a reaction to over-advertising," Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn said.

'Eerily quiet'

In Clatsop County, out of the path of totality, state and

local officials mostly worried about fire and emergency situations that could occur in the days before and after the eclipse when people were traveling to and from their viewing locations. Local forestland and campground managers prohibited all campfires, and the Astoria Department of Forestry Office began staging crews and equipment at key spots across the county last week.

One firefighter stationed near the county's southern border was prepared to camp for several days in case traffic was so bad that it didn't make sense for him to return to the office each day.

By Sunday, the whole thing felt more like a test run for this weekend's Hood to Coast relay than a response to the eclipse. When fire crews near Forest Grove asked for assistance with a wildland fire there, the Astoria Department of Forestry office was easily able to send a few people down.

The celestial event happened right near the end of a

busy month, beginning with a beach volleyball tournament in Seaside the week before and Hood to Coast this coming weekend. The popular recreational Buoy 10 fishery has drawn hundreds of anglers to the area all month long.

On a whim

People who wanted to experience the full eclipse had already traveled south to watch it glide along the path of totality. Those who remained to watch it at North Coast landmarks — the Astoria Column, Peter Iredale shipwreck and Haystack Rock — were largely a mixture of locals and vacationers who happened to be passing through the area.

Libbie Stobely and Jeff Skinner of Seattle made reservations at the Hallmark Resort and Spa in Cannon Beach a year in advance. Regulars at the hotel, the two did not consider booking a room in the path of totality.

When pondering whether they should have made plans inside the path or away from possible cloud cover, both had the same response: "Who cares?"

Others, like Tom Chmielewski and Sharon Russel, of Madeira Beach, Florida, ended up making their eclipse plans on a whim. They were visiting Astoria as part of a two-week West Coast trip celebrating their upcoming 30th anniversary. Though they knew of the eclipse, it didn't factor much into the plans they made Monday morning.

"We stumbled upon this and we said, 'Let's go see the totem!'" Chmielewski said. Later that day, they witnessed the eclipse from the Astoria Column.

High-visibility DUII enforcement coming

Over the Labor Day holiday Clatsop County law enforcement agencies will participate in the "Driving While Under the Influence of Intoxicants High Visibility Enforcement" grant from Oregon Impact.

As part of the grant, the law enforcement agencies will have extra officers patrolling the roadways, specifically looking for impaired drivers. It is important to remember that impairment

is not limited to consuming alcohol. Impairment can also be caused by marijuana, inhalants and other controlled substances, such as illegal drugs and prescription medications.

There are several ways to get home safely, such as having a designated driver, calling a taxi or walking.

If you see someone you suspect may be operating a motor vehicle while impaired, call 911 immediately.

POLICE LOG

Aug. 11 12:38 a.m. — 12:52 a.m., The Cove: Multiple subjects are warned about unlawful lodging.

1:11 a.m. — 1:19 a.m., Cinema parking lot: More multiple subjects are warned for unlawful lodging.

2:56 a.m., Estuary parking lot: Unlawful lodgers are dislodged from the parking area.

3:27 p.m., 1200 block Avenue E: A man is arrested and charged with burglary in the second degree.

3:26 p.m., 200 block S. Roosevelt: A subject in possession of methamphetamine is arrested and charged.

Aug. 12 12:18 a.m., Avenue G: A subject is arrested and charged with forgery, robbery in the second degree and harassment.

12:19 p.m., S. Lincoln: A man feeling ill requested medical assistance.

3:31 p.m., 500 block Broadway: A man who committed a "dine and dash" crime also provided false information to police; later it was noticed he had failed to register as a sex offender with the local police department.

4:42 p.m., 400 block N. Prom: A subject was arrested for DUII.

Aug. 13 2:26 p.m., Avenue A and Beach: A man taking pictures of females on the beach was told by police his behavior was making people uncomfortable and to quit doing it.

8:31 p.m., 900 block Avenue S: Police respond to a report of children screaming for help while locked inside a storage unit for six days. No children or any sign of children being held captive were found.

8:35 p.m., Holladay and 16th: A motor vehicle accident with an injury is reported.

Aug. 14 1:26 a.m., Convention Center: A disturbance is reported.

8:07 a.m., 800 block 15th Avenue: Seaside police assist Portland police with a police matter.

16:10 p.m., 400 block S. Roosevelt: An assault is reported.

Aug. 15 12:44 a.m., N. Prom: Suspicious circumstances are reported.

8:25 a.m., 1200 block N. Franklin: Caller reports an injured seagull in their yard. Wildlife rehab was contacted.

Aug. 16 5:50 a.m., 1600 block S. Franklin: Burglary in the 2nd degree, criminal trespass, and theft in the 2nd degree are reported.

4:55 p.m., 300 block S. Columbia: A person is charged with interfering with a police officer.

Aug. 17 3:56 a.m., Broadway Park: A person who has been trespassing from sleeping in the dugout and the park was caught sleeping where he shouldn't have been sleeping.

9:41 a.m., Avenue A: A transient who was sleeping on private property was told to leave.

10:43 a.m., Police headquarters: A person came in to be fingerprinted for a liquor license in Arizona.

11:15 a.m., Goodman Park: A woman suspected of using drugs in the public bathroom was gone on police arrival. A witness made note of the woman's license plate and turned that information over to police.

6:04 p.m., The Prom: Sex crimes are reported.

9:06 p.m., The Prom: A highly intoxicated woman was transported to the hospital by Medix.

Aug. 19 11:15 a.m., 1200 block S. Roosevelt: Caller reports an outhouse on property being improperly used and in violation of the building code. The building management is contacted and told to remove the outhouse and open the indoor toilet facility to customers.

12:07 p.m., McDonald's: A banded white pigeon hanging around McDonald's for a week is captured and boarded at Lyle's until its owner can be contacted.

Aug. 20 5:49 a.m., Highway 101: Officers assist wrangling loose horses on the highway. Horses are returned to the custody of their owner.

3:20 p.m., 400 block S. Roosevelt: Caller complains of offensive littering; a man was

observed emptying a jar or urine on the sidewalk. The illegal urinator is contacted and advised.

18:54 p.m., S. Edgewood: Caller expresses concern for children left alone after mother is taken away by ambulance. Police

were able to contact a responsible adult for the children.

Aug. 21 7:25 p.m., Police headquarters: A woman walked in making suicidal statements and then left. Officers contacted her soon

after; she said she was fine.

Aug. 22 10:47 a.m., 800 block S. Lincoln: A person reported to be in violation of the local laws regarding marijuana cultivation was contacted and advised.

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