

KUMA-FM

QUARTERLY ISSUES / PROGRAMS LIST

2024 QUARTER 1

<p>1/6/24</p>	<p>Law Enforcement</p>	<p><b>UMATILLA</b> – Alexis Aviles Escobar, 20, of Umatilla was arrested at Beach Access Road on Wednesday on multiple felony charges including second-degree attempted murder. Umatilla County Deputy The judge who issued the warrant had set no bail. When Aviles Escobar was arraigned, his bail was set at \$125,000. Hayes said the defendant bailed out by posting 10 percent of that amount later in the same day. District Attorney Jameson R. Hayes confirmed that he was picked up on a secret indictment warrant by the U.S. Marshals Service, the Oregon State Police, and the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office OSP Lt. Karl Farber told us that the arrest stemmed from a drive-by shooting two years ago in which no one was injured. The case against Aviles Escobar is being prosecuted in Umatilla County, and the deputy district attorney said there will be other such cases. "This case is one of many similar cases that have been investigated on the west side over the last couple of years," he wrote in an email. "It is an example of an upward trend of gun violence among young people in the Hermiston/Umatilla area. LE (law enforcement) agencies and the DA are making these investigations and prosecutions a priority in order to enhance public safety and curb the threat of danger to innocents." In addition to second-degree attempted murder, Aviles Escobar is also charged with first-degree attempted assault, attempted unlawful use of a weapon, criminal mischief (vandalism), and two counts of unlawful possession of a firearm.</p>	<p>Umatilla County Deputy District Attorney Jameson R. Hayes</p>
<p>1/12/24</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p><b>PENDLETON</b> – Oregon's community colleges are joining forces for the 2024 session of the legislature that begins next month. They intend to object to a move by the state's Higher Education Coordinating Council to create a new formula that determines who qualifies for Oregon Opportunity scholarship grants. Blue Mountain Community College President Mark Browning said that formula only looks at two factors, the cost of tuition and the fees. "That means that 85 percent of those dollars will go to students who are attending four-year institutions," Browning said. "The entire criteria of this scholarship is to help under-served populations. That speaks directly to the mission of every community college in this state." Browning said he has already met with legislators from BMCC's region. "We have been very engaged with our delegation, and I have to say that Rep. (Bobby) Levy (R-Echo) jumped on this very early on and just banged doors down and would not be denied," Browning said. "That's what we're really pushing for there."</p>	<p>BMCC President Mark Browning</p>
<p>1/25/24</p>	<p>Law Enforcement</p>	<p><b>Crime, kidnapping, crimes against women</b> <b>PENDLETON</b> – Pendleton police officers assisted by a Umatilla County Sheriff's deputy rescued a woman early this morning (Thursday) and arrested Louie Shippentower, 38, of Hillsboro on charges of first-degree kidnapping, menacing, reckless endangering, reckless driving, second-degree disorderly conduct, and felony driving while suspended. Police Chief Chuck Byram says two people witnessed a disturbance and contacted 911. "If not for their timely reporting, this incident could have had a different ending," Byram said. The witnesses said a man had a woman cornered at the Babe Ruth Park. Officers arrived and found the two, who had a past relationship. The investigation revealed that the man was supposed to be giving the woman a ride home, but instead he went a different route, threatened to kill her, and refused to let her out of the vehicle. "Ultimately, the female was able to exit the moving vehicle when the male driver slowed down to turn the corner at Northgate and Northwest Carden Avenue," Byram wrote in a news release. Byram said that the case is being forwarded to the Umatilla County District Attorney's Office, adding that no further information will be released to protect the integrity of the investigation.</p>	<p>Police Chief Chuck Byram</p>
<p>1/29/24</p>	<p>Community</p>	<p><b>Medical malpractice</b> <b>SPOKANE</b> – Eastern Washington U.S. Attorney Vanessa Waldref has announced that the United States and state of Washington has filed a complaint in federal district court against MultiCare Health System, a Tacoma-based hospital and healthcare system that owns and operates MultiCare Deaconess Hospital and MultiCare Rockwood Clinic in Spokane, alleging that MultiCare knowingly endangered patient safety and falsely and fraudulently billed Medicare, Medicaid, and other federal health care programs for spinal surgery procedures performed at Deaconess between 2019 and 2021 by Dr. Jason Dreyer, a former neurosurgeon. Between 2013 and 2019, Dreyer practiced at Providence St. Mary's Medical Center in Walla Walla, a hospital owned and operated by Providence Health and Services. In 2019, amidst allegations that he was performing medically-unnecessary surgeries, harming patients, and falsifying diagnoses, Providence permitted Dreyer to resign. The complaint against MultiCare alleges that, following Dreyer's resignation from Providence, MultiCare hired him to perform neurosurgery services at Deaconess. The complaint alleges that during MultiCare's hiring process, it became aware of concerns and "red flags" about Dreyer and his surgical judgment from his time at Providence, but, recognizing that he was a "workhorse", made the decision to hire him and allow him to begin seeing patients and performing surgery at Deaconess Hospital in July 2019. The complaint further alleges that in October 2019, MultiCare recognized that Dreyer was performing a high volume of surgeries and generating significant revenue for MultiCare, and so placed Dreyer on an incentive compensation structure, meaning that the greater volume and complexity of surgeries performed by Dreyer, the more money he would make. The complaint also alleges that in February 2020, the United States Attorney's Office specifically informed MultiCare that it was investigating concerns that Dreyer was harming patients, falsifying diagnoses, and performing medically-unnecessary surgeries. According to the complaint, despite receiving this information, as well as multiple internal complaints and concerns that Dreyer was performing medically unnecessary surgeries at MultiCare and endangering patients, MultiCare made the decision to allow Dreyer to continue seeing patients and performing surgery until the Washington Department of Health summarily suspended Dreyer's ability to perform surgery in March 2021. In April 2022, Providence agreed to pay approximately \$22.7 million and implement a standard of care corporate integrity agreement to resolve its liability concerning surgical procedures performed by Dreyer and another neurosurgeon that Providence billed to federal health care programs. In April 2023, Dreyer agreed to pay approximately</p>	<p>Eastern Washington U.S. Attorney Vanessa Waldref</p>

2/8/24	Law Enforcement	<p>Driver safety, law enforcement, public safety, transportation safety MILTON-FREEWATER - Oregon State Police has been allocating available resources in the Milton-Freewater following an increase in traffic collisions on Highway 11.</p> <p>“So, when we have more than one patrol trooper available or on duty in the Pendleton area, we try to get one resource to go up and patrol in the Milton-Freewater area,” OSP Lt. Karl Farber said.</p> <p>In collaboration with the local community and Rep. Greg Smith (R-Heppner), OSP has been increasing patrols in the area to reduce serious crashes and those driving behaviors which commonly contribute to serious injury or fatal crashes.</p> <p>Farber encourages motorists to pay attention along the stretch of Highway 11 from Milton-Freewater to Stateline Road. “A lot of driveways, businesses, a lot of roadway departure areas on that roadway with a fairly high-speed limit,” he said. “So just be on the lookout for vehicles entering and exiting the roadway.”</p> <p>OSP encourages motorists to report suspected impaired drivers and those engaging in reckless driving behavior to local law enforcement agencies.</p> <p>As for permanently stationing a trooper in Milton-Freewater, Farber explains “That decision comes from Salem, from general headquarters. They must make sure they look at all the numbers and the numbers, you know, they work out for personnel.”</p> <p>Meanwhile, Rep. Smith is working towards finding the funding to have a trooper committed to that area.</p>	OSP Lt. Karl Farber
2/22/24	Law Enforcement	<p>Crime, manslaughter, burglary, crimes against women MILTON-FREEWATER – The Milton-Freewater Police Department has identified the suspect in Sunday’s deadly robbery of the Red Tea Garden Chinese Restaurant. Chief Joe Shurtz said his department, along with partner law enforcement agencies, are diligently working to apprehend Emerald Julia Pena, 39.</p> <p>Shurtz said his department now has probable cause to arrest Pena on charges of first-degree robbery and second-degree manslaughter, both classified as Measure 11 crimes.</p> <p>Family members have identified the victim as Shu Yi Wu, 56, the restaurant’s owner.</p> <p>Currently, law enforcement knows Pena’s whereabouts and is working to take her into custody. Shurtz is appealing to anyone with information about Pena’s whereabouts to contact their local law enforcement agency immediately. He warns the public should not attempt to contact Pena.</p> <p>At 7:27 p.m. Sunday, MFPD officers responded to the restaurant that just occurred. When officers arrived, they located Wu who had been injured. Officers learned Pena was in the bar of the establishment and allegedly took the change drawer from the cash register before leaving the business. Pena was confronted outside, then came back into the business.</p> <p>Wu’s daughter, Sally Zhu, explained her mother was thrown to the ground during the robbery sustaining a severe head injury and was transported to Providence St. Mary Medical Center in Walla Walla.</p> <p>“She (Wu) went through a four-hour surgery to stop the bleeding,” Zhu said. “Unfortunately, she did not survive her traumatic injuries and passed away the following morning (Monday).”</p> <p>Shurtz said MFPD and partner law enforcement agencies, are working to apprehend Pena and “deliver justice to the family affected by this senseless act.”</p>	Chief Joe Shurtz
2/14/24	Law Enforcement	<p>Driver safety, public safety, transportation safety COLLEGE PLACE – The speed limit from Northeast Rose Street to State Route 125 will be 25 miles per hour starting this Friday. Currently, there are sections where the speed limit is posted at 30 and 35 miles per hour.</p> <p>College Place Police Chief Troy Tomaras said the speed limit reduction on College Avenue follows the recommendations of a recent engineering study.</p> <p>“In large part due to increased traffic on our roadways, combined with community growth and site distance from connecting roadways, driveways, and parking lots,” Tomaras said.</p> <p>CPPD officers will be conducting enforcement to help ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>“We know this is a big change for our community, so education will be the focus over the next month,” Tomaras said.</p>	College Place Police Chief Troy Tomaras
2/14/24	Community	<p>Heath and Environment, Occupational Health and Safety WALLA WALLA – The Washington State Department of Ecology has released new data on how much and for how long gasoline leaked from an underground storage tank at Stillwater Holdings Chevron, 7 East Rose Street.</p> <p>In a letter sent Monday to the gas station’s owners, Ecology said the leak appears to have begun during the last week of June and continued until gasoline and gasoline vapors were detected in the basement of the Marcus Whitman Hotel on Sept. 14.</p> <p>Based on analysis, an estimated 2,500 to 3,000 gallons of gasoline leaked at a rate of one gallon per hour from the regular gasoline underground storage tank. The premium gasoline and diesel fuel underground storage tanks do not appear to be leaking.</p> <p>Ecology is trying to determine why a statistical continuous automatic leak detection test for detecting leaks from the Stillwater Holdings Chevron’s underground storage tanks failed to detect a leak for three months while tank inventory logs flagged a potential problem. It is Ecology’s recommendation that additional tests be performed on the current on-site leak detection system to rule out other potential problems.</p> <p>It is also Ecology’s understanding that the probe and sensors installed specifically inside the regular gasoline underground storage tank failed sometime in mid-September.</p>	Washington State Department of Ecology

3/8/24	Government	<p>Washington Legislature, behavioral health, early learning, education</p> <p>OLYMPIA - With the unanimous approval of Washington's 2024-25 supplemental capital budget, Sen. Perry Dozier (R-Waitsburg), Rep. Skyler Rude (R-Walla Walla) and Rep. Mark Klicker (R-Walla Walla), announced more than \$13 million in 16th District-funded projects were included in the statewide spending plan.</p> <p>Projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$1.5 million for the Columbia Valley Center for Recovery, on top of the \$5 million allocated for it in 2023.</li> <li>\$2.55 million for the Lions Park Community Center.</li> <li>\$175,000 for the YWCA Walla Walla Childcare Center.</li> <li>\$105,000 for the new Prosser Clubhouse.</li> <li>\$98,000 for resurfacing and revitalizing the Prescott public pool.</li> <li>\$100,000 for the new Waitsburg Childcare Center.</li> <li>\$1.13 million for College Place Fire Department energy-efficiency upgrades.</li> </ul> <p>\$4.6 million for fire protection and smoke dampers at the Washington State Penitentiary's Intensive Management Unit.</p> <p>\$196,000 million for designing the Mill Creek fish passage from Colville Street to Third Avenue in Walla Walla.</p> <p>"Thanks to a collaborative, bipartisan effort, we've strategically allocated funds across the 16th District to tackle vital areas such as behavioral and mental health, early learning, public safety, and environmental stewardship," Rude said.</p> <p>"This supplemental budget proves that when we work together, we achieve common goals that benefit our district and all of Washington state."</p> <p>The final 2024-25 supplemental capital budget allocates a total of \$1.33 billion, including \$130.6 million in bonds. The plan makes significant investments throughout the state in K-12 school construction, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment facilities, and early learning facilities, leaving \$547,000 in remaining bond capacity.</p>	Sen. Perry Dozier (R-Waitsburg), Rep. Skyler Rude (R-Walla Walla) and Rep. Mark Klicker (R-Walla Walla)
3/13/24	Community	<p>Emergency services, fire suppression, public safety</p> <p>WALLA WALLA COUNTY – The Walla Walla County Fire District No. 4 Board of Fire Commissioners meet today (Wednesday) at 4 p.m. to discuss placing a levy on the Aug. 6 primary election ballot. The meeting will be held at Station 41, located at 2251 S. Howard St.</p> <p>According to the fire district, revenue from the current fire levy is not keeping up with costs to provide emergency services. Costs increase four to five percent each year, while the fire district is limited by state law to just a one percent revenue increase annually.</p> <p>The board is considering asking voters to raise the fire levy \$0.38, from \$0.88 to \$1.26 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. If approved by voters, the fire levy will maintain essential emergency services, fund additional personnel, renovate Station 41 to add additional sleeping quarters, and replace aging apparatus.</p> <p>Walla Walla County Fire District No. 4 provides fire suppression and emergency medical service to 9,250 people over 125 square miles in the unincorporated areas west, south, and east of the cities of Walla Walla and College Place, and Walla Walla Regional Airport. The district relies on volunteer, part-time and full-time emergency personnel.</p>	Walla Walla County Fire District No. 4 Board of Fire Commissioners
3/14/24	Education	<p>Education, Oregon Legislature, Workforce Housing</p> <p>PENDLETON – Pendleton School District Superintendent Kevin Headings first heard about 250 acres that could be dedicated to housing on the east side of Pendleton when he first came to work for the district more than a year ago. He's among those who are pleased that the Oregon Legislature is sending an estimated \$3 million to get things moving. "Workforce housing for us is a boon for the school district," he said. "More people moving into Pendleton means more students, more enrollment."</p> <p>Enrollment for the Pendleton School District has been slowly shrinking over recent years. Meanwhile, studies have shown that the housing shortage means people from other cities and towns are commuting to work in Pendleton but living elsewhere. Headings hopes that will change once the infrastructure is laid and construction begins.</p> <p>"There's just over 4,000 people that drive into Pendleton from outside to work," he said. "For a lot of those 4,000 employees, the reason they don't live in Pendleton are for two reasons. Number one is for lack of childcare, which we're getting increased with Pendleton Children's Center, and number two is workforce housing. We're hoping these developments will see indirect increased enrollment."</p>	Pendleton School District Superintendent Kevin Headings
3/14/24	Education	<p>Education, student housing</p> <p>WALLA WALLA - Site work is officially underway on College Creek Village, a new residential village at Whitman College. Set to open in August 2025, the new apartment-style living community, which includes three new residence halls, is designed to house more than 200 juniors and seniors. The new residence halls will be in a park-like setting along College Creek with recreation and gathering areas for students to enjoy.</p> <p>College staff said some folks have wondered what will happen to the iconic weeping cherry tree when the new residential village is built. The answer is the tree, along with other mature trees, will be integrated into the landscape.</p> <p>On the construction side, builders will use green building practices as the halls will have natural light, LED bulbs, electric vehicle charging stations and low-flow water fixtures.</p> <p>"The projected total cost of the Junior-Senior housing project is about \$75 million and it will be funded through gifts from our generous donors, reserves, and some debt," Whitman College Vice President of Communications Gina Zandy Ohnstad said.</p> <p>College Creek Village is one of Whitman College's most ambitious building projects ever. An animated rendering of the junior-senior village is available at <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQMwzz6ndJQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQMwzz6ndJQ</a>.</p>	Whitman College Vice President of Communications Gina Zandy Ohnstad

3/19/24	Education	<p style="text-align: center;">Library services, education, arts, and culture</p> <p>TOUCHET – The Walla Walla County Rural Library District will break ground on its new library building in Touchet on Friday, March 27 at 1 p.m.</p> <p>The official name of the branch will be the Jean Marie Sansom Memorial Library. Sansom, a former library district employee who died in 2020, was a resident of Touchet and worked for the library district for over 20 years. The 3,250 square foot facility includes creating a courtyard space adjacent to the children’s area of the library where future story times can take place. The interior of the building will feature a community meeting room as well as areas for children, teens, and adults.</p> <p>The library will be located at 82 Champion St., adjacent to the Touchet School District, on land purchased in 2019. The new building will replace the 30-year-old modular building which sits on land the Walla Walla County Rural Library District leases from the school district.</p> <p>Executive Director Ana Romero said this project is being funded by capital reserves funding, which has accumulated over many years. Romero said the Port of Walla Walla Board of Commissioners also approved a \$200,000 grant for construction of the library, pending approval from the Walla Walla County commissioners.</p> <p>“The grant is intended to be used primarily for enhancing the outdoor grounds of the library,” Romero said.</p> <p>The actual construction for the new library will start April 1, with substantial completion of construction slated for October 31. Romero anticipates the library will be open to the public by the end of the year.</p>	Executive Director Ana Romero
3/20/24	Education	<p style="text-align: center;">Childcare, Education</p> <p>DAYTON, Washington – YWCA Walla Walla has announced the completion of renovations for RoseMary’s Place, a new childcare center located at 1012 S. Third St. in Dayton.</p> <p>Housed in the renovated Booker Rest Home on the Columbia County Health System campus, this is the result of a collaborative effort between CCHS and YWCA, with the support of community partners – Sherwood Trust, Wildhorse Foundation, Columbia REA, the Blue Mountain Community Foundation’s Warren Community Action Fund, Innovia Foundation, the Columbia County Children’s Fund, and BMCF’s Dayton/Columbia County Washington Fund.</p> <p>The center, which officially opens April 1, will provide services for 40 children aged six weeks to six years.</p>	YWCA Walla Walla