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\$1

Road rebuilding planned around new Love's Travel Stop

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — The plans for the new Love's Travel Stop on the south side of Interstate 90 in Moses Lake include major upgrades to the two roads that provide access to the property: Sage and Prichard roads.

The new truck stop and convenience store will be

built near the eastbound freeway exit at milepost 174. The company has submitted building and site plans to the city for its review.

The announcement of the project generated concerns among nearby residents, especially over the possible impacts to traffic on Hansen, Sage and Prichard roads.

The facility is designed

to have trucks on the east side of the property and passenger vehicles on the west side. There is no route from one side to the other through the parking lot. Traffic must exit to Prichard Road or Sage Road to access the other side of the property.

The site layout has entrances and exits on Prichard, Idaho and Sage roads. Passenger vehicles

will enter and exit the site from Idaho or Sage roads. Trucks will use Prichard Road or Sage Road.

Lynne Lynch, public information officer for the city of Moses Lake, said the company will be required to rebuild a section of Sage Road, from Sage Road's intersection with Idaho Road and the intersec-

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Senate passes capital budget

By ANGELICA RELENTE
Herald Legislative Writer

The Washington state Senate unanimously passed a 2021-23 capital budget proposal during a virtual legislative debate Tuesday.

The capital budget bill now goes to the House for further consideration.

Senate Bill 5083 would allocate \$6.23 billion for capital projects planned for the 2021-23 fiscal biennium, according to the bill's text. Funding would come from state general obligation bonds and other sources, such as fees and taxes.

The state's capital budget appropriates money for "acquiring, constructing and repairing capital assets such as land, buildings and other infrastructure improvements," according to the bill's text.

SB 5038's companion, HB 1080, is scheduled for an executive session in the House Capital Budget Committee at 8 a.m. Wednesday.

Sen. David Frockt, D-Seattle, is SB 5038's primary sponsor. He said during the virtual legislative debate the governor had a "very, very bold" capital budget proposal. SB 5038 is, by far, the most aggressive and significant capital investment in history, he said.

"We'll put thousands of Washingtonians back to work," Frockt said. "It will grow the economy, (and) it will help us move past the COVID-driven recession."

Sen. Mark Schoesler, R-Ritzville, said during the virtual legislative debate legis-

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A near-century of remediation



Sam Fletcher/Columbia Basin Herald

Grant County public works director conducts his biweekly tour of the landfill on a recent Tuesday.

Public works haunted by old Grant County landfill

By SAM FLETCHER
Staff Writer

The old Grant County landfill, a chunk of land directly adjacent to the active one and otherwise indistinguishable from the hillside, has been closed to the public since 1974. Much like the active landfill at 3803 Neva Lake Road NW, in Ephrata, the old site requires daily maintenance.

According to Grant County Public Works Director Sam Castro, the end is nowhere in sight, either.

For each cell, or section, of the new landfill, liners were placed to protect the land below it, Castro said. This includes cell three, which is set to be operational within the month, barring permitting delays.

When the old landfill became operational in 1942, this standard was not in place yet, according to the Department of Ecology. The result? Almost a century of remediation work.

"Those of us that are responsible for operating and maintaining it have the responsibility to do so for 30, 40, 50 years beyond the closure," Castro said. "And the reason for it is to ensure we are not contaminating the earth."

In 1979, the Environmental Protection Agency added the old landfill to the list of hazardous sites, due to the burial of 2,350 drums of industrial waste four years prior. A 1990 assessment found contaminants from the landfill seeping into the aquifer directly below it.

While the aquifer is not used for drinking water, toxic contamination can still be harmful for the wildlife, land and people around the site, Castro said.

In 2008, a massive process of landfill capping launched, including covering the site with dirt to protect it from rain-



Department of Ecology/courtesy photo

In 2008, contractors removed 2,350 drums of industrial waste from the old Grant County landfill.

fall. Without a cap, the water mixes the waste with the ground, creating leachate and permanent ramifications to the soil below, according to the Department of Ecology. At this time, every single toxic drum was dug up and removed from "the hole," as it's colloquially referred to.

In 2012, public works staff removed 1,210 cubic yards of contaminated soil.

In 2017, the extraction of 87,000 gallons of groundwater began, including funneling it into an on-site treatment facility and releasing it to evaporate, a process which continues to this day.

Three-quarters of this work was grant-funded by the Department of

Ecology because of the Model Toxics Control Act, a 1989 initiative to provide money for toxic cleanups, said eastern region media spokesperson Joye Redfield-Wilder.

Basically, the act puts a wholesale tax on petroleum products, which provides money for cleanup, specifically for such legacy pollution or toxins occurring before modern environmental laws were in place, she said.

The other 25% of the money is split by Grant County and the city of Ephrata, Castro said, as both are listed as Potentially Liable Parties by the

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State accepting applications for fourth round of business grants

By CHARLES H. FEATHERSTONE
Staff Writer

OLYMPIA — The Washington State Department of Commerce is accepting applications from small businesses for grants of up to \$25,000.

Applications for the fourth round of the Working Washington grants are due no later than April 9. To be eligible, companies or self-employed individuals must: have been in business prior to Jan. 1, 2020; have reported gross annual revenue between \$25,000 and \$5 million on a 2019 tax return; have a physical business location in Washington separate from the business owner's home; and have lost revenue or incurred increased costs due to COVID-19-related emergency measures.

According to the state Department of Commerce, non-profits, schools, day cares, health care providers, or other professional services (such as

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Shooting

Police search for suspect in Othello incident. **A2**

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Weather

LANDFILL

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Department of Ecology. The Remedial Action Grant provided \$5.2 million for the removal of the barrels alone, Castro said.

“The amount of funding that we’ve received for this cleanup is unprecedented,” he said. “(Officials) don’t know of any other community or operator in this case, Grant County and Ephrata, or any other site that has received so much grant funding for the cleanup, and I’m grateful for that.”

Castro credits earning these funds to the county’s great working relationship with the Department of Ecology, as every project stakeholder genuinely wanted to do the right thing, as well as the incredibly effective and talented project managers, he said.

On an ongoing basis, water samples are collected and treated, Castro said. Methane is also captured and released off site for cleaner air.

And, the old landfill is monitored for settlement, which means organic material beneath the cap is still breaking down and releasing methane on site, he said. Once workers stop recording settlement, the site is no longer releasing toxins.

Since these efforts have been taken, the volatile organic compound concentrations decreased from three million micrograms per cubic meter to 100, according to Department of Ecology data.

“The good news is that we are making so much progress on the cleanup,” Castro said. “It’s taking a lot of effort, I realize that, but at least there’s progress. I would not want to inherit something where we’ve invested all this time and energy and money and we haven’t made any progress.”

This data weighs heavily into the decisions for the future of the new landfill, Castro added.

When acquiring new land for waste, it must be surveyed for endangered plants and

animals, as well as valuable archeological artifacts, Castro said. After inquiring about a lot adjacent to the current landfill, they found artifacts leftover from the 20th century and were unable to purchase it.

The current landfill area was chosen for its layer of basalt, Castro said, which helps protect the land from contaminants. It’s important, he said, because any new landfill could fill up in a mere 10 years and require an additional 50 of remediation if the land wasn’t well-protected.

Once the post closure requirements are met on a toxic site, the Department of Ecology issues a No Further Action (NFA) letter, allowing the county to redevelop the land, Redfield-Wilder said.

“It’s to protect human health and the environment, but also to provide an economic benefit to these communities that might be suffering because of these polluted sites,” she said.

For such landfills, these letters are rare, as the source of contamination cannot fully be removed, she said.

The old Grant County landfill currently resides in remedial investigation limbo.

“They have completed several significant interim actions at the site, but they have not decided on a final remedy yet,” Redfield-Wilder said. “It’s a complex site with several aquifers impacted and different flow directions.”

If he ever receives an NFA, Castro predicts it won’t come until 2043, he said, almost 70 years after its closure.

At that time, Castro speculates the land will convert to a new transfer station or recycling facility, he said, which will be less harmful to the environment than a new landfill.

It’s important the public is aware of these concerns, Castro said.

“They are also stakeholders. This is their country,” he said. “They elect the commissioners that are overseeing day-to-day operations of their county, so in my opinion transparency to the public is critical.”

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TODAY	TONIGHT	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly sunny	Clear	Mostly sunny and warm	Pleasant with sunny intervals	Mostly cloudy	A couple of showers possible
High: 68°	Low 37°	72° 37°	66° 41°	66° 44°	64° 36°

Precipitation

Ephrata	Monday 0.00"	Year to date 1.32"
George	Monday 0.00"	Year to date 2.83"
Moses Lake	Monday 0.00"	Year to date 1.07"
Quincy	Monday 0.00"	Year to date 1.56"

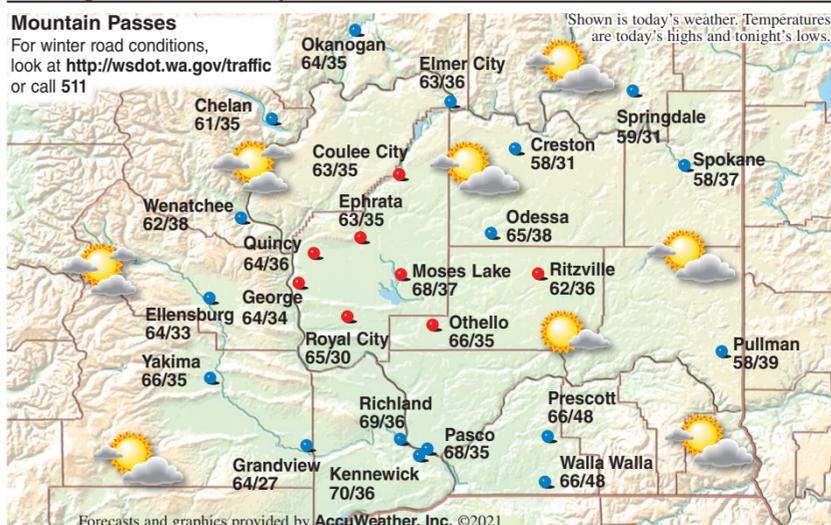
Sun and Moon

Sunrise today	6:38 a.m.
Sunset today	7:26 p.m.
Moonrise today	11:43 p.m.
Moonset today	8:24 a.m.

Moon Phases

Last	New	First	Full
Apr 4	Apr 11	Apr 19	Apr 26

Washington Weather Today



Police search for suspect in Othello shooting

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER
Staff Writer

OTHELLO — Othello police are searching for a suspect who shot an Othello man in the leg outside his home early Tuesday morning.

The victim, Christopher Rocha, 22, told police he was outside his house at about 6 a.m. in the 600 block of South 20th Avenue when he saw a man dressed in black and wearing a black mask standing nearby.

Rocha told officers

he confronted the man, who pulled out a gun. As Rocha was turning away the man shot him in the leg. Rocha was transported to Othello Community Hospital for treatment. The injury was not life-threatening, according to an Othello Police Department’s social media post.

The shooter is described as a man, about five feet, three inches tall. He was last seen running down an alley toward Cemetery Street from 20th Avenue, the OPD post stated.

Officers searched the area with the help of a K-9 unit from the Adams County Sheriff’s Office, but the suspect was not found. Police are developing a motive for the suspect being in the area.

The OPD also is asking for help. Residents in the area are asked to review any security camera footage from the relevant time frame, and people who have any information about the case can contact the police department at 509-488-3314.

Ed Petersen, direc-

tor of communications for the Othello School District, said Scootney Springs Elementary School was locked down briefly and families were asked not to come to campus and to avoid the area.

All other district schools were placed on a modified lockdown, Petersen said. The modified lockdown meant doors were locked and window shades drawn, he said. The lockdown was lifted after about 20 minutes and classes started as normal on all campuses.

BUDGET

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lators from both sides of the aisle respected each other during the process of crafting SB 5038.

“We generally agree on (the) wise use of federal funds for the betterment of our state,” Schoesler said. “(This bill) leaves some bonding capacity available for the next biennium.”

Under SB 5038, \$668 million would be reserved for local government infrastructure, according to a legislative document. Out of the \$668 million, \$440 million would support efforts to expand broadband access to rural and underserved locations in the state.

“This is one of the most signif-

icant things we can do,” Frockt said, referring to the broadband access portion in SB 5038.

Funding would also be allocated to affordable housing loans and grants, totaling \$315 million, according to the document. Out of the \$315 million, \$205 million would go to the state’s Housing Trust Fund.

“You don’t have to go very far in my community to see the need,” Frockt said. “I’m very excited about our housing trust fund investment.”

Sen. Judy Warnick, R-Moses Lake, had an amendment that was adopted into SB 5038. Her amendment would extend the timeframe of the joint legislative task force on water resource mitigation to Nov. 15, 2022.

“Without this amendment, (the task force) was set to expire (when) the work has not been completed,” Warnick said.

During the Tuesday morning session, the Senate also approved these bills:

HB 1378 (in a 49-0 vote): Permits health care practitioners to virtually supervise medical assistants during telemedicine visits. Rep. Alex Ybarra, R-Quincy, is the bill’s primary sponsor. The bill now heads to the governor’s desk.

HB 1090 (28-21): Forbids — with a few exemptions — a person, business or state or local government entity to operate or use a contract with a private detention facility. The bill now heads to the governor’s desk.

HB 1070 (36-13): Allows local tax revenue to be used for acquiring and constructing affordable housing and facilities. The bill now heads to the governor’s desk.

Correction

An article in Tuesday’s edition of the Herald gave incorrect information on the next step for SB 5038. The bill, on open carrying of weapons, was amended in the state House and is expected to return to the Senate to be reconsidered.

Lotto

Tuesday’s numbers

Pick 3: 4-7-4

Match 4: 5-12-15-22

Hit 5: 4-12-13-30-34

Mega Millions: 11-37-47-53-56

Mega-Ball 15

Keno: 3-9-10-14-18-29-32-33-38-52-53-57-60-64-66-70-71-73-78-79

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PUBLISHER
Caralyn Bess, ext. 272
cbess@columbiabasinherald.com

ADVERTISING
Bob Richardson,
Advertising Director, ext. 154
brichardson@columbiabasinherald.com

CIRCULATION
Dana Moreno
Marketing and Audience Development
Director, ext. 137
dmoreno@columbiabasinherald.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Dave Burgess, ext. 152
dburgess@columbiabasinherald.com

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LEGALS/OBITUARIES
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Legals/Obit coordinator, ext. 100
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obits@columbiabasinherald.com

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Law enforcement: Reports from MLPD

Moses Lake Police Department March 11

Officers responded to the 1000 block of North Stratford Road for a report of a collision between a semi and another vehicle. Vehicle 1, the semi, was turning right onto Stratford Road from Mart Road ahead of Vehicle 2, which also attempted to turn right onto Stratford Road and

struck Vehicle 1’s trailer. Vehicle 2 sustained damage to the driver’s side front panel, door and mirror.

Officers responded to JR’s EconoMart for a report someone had stolen two beers.

March 12

Officers responded to the 400 block of West Third Avenue for a report of a two-vehicle collision.

Officers responded to the 400 block of South Ash Street for a report of a collision in which one vehicle backed out of a parking space and struck the other vehicle.

Officers responded to Sportsman’s Warehouse for a report of a suspect who had been caught shoplifting.

Officers responded to the 200 block of East Broadway Avenue for a report of a two-veh-

icle collision. Vehicle 2 was westbound on East Broadway Avenue and stopped in the turn lane to turn onto South Balsam Street, Vehicle 1 was southbound, stopped at the stop sign on Balsam Street, and turned left, striking the front of Vehicle 2. Vehicle 1 sustained damage to the left side of the vehicle, while Vehicle 2’s license plate was knocked off.

Officers responded to the 1800 block of West Marina Drive for a report a window had been shot with a BB gun.

Officers responded to the 500 block of South Grand Drive for a report a wooden shelf valued at \$20 had been stolen from a porch.

Officers responded to Safeway for a report of a male subject stuffing meat into his backpack.

March 13

Officers responded to the 1200 block of Fairway Drive Northeast for a report a vehicle’s tires had been slashed.

Officers responded to the 700 block of West Loop Drive for a report of a generator valued at \$2,000 stolen from a backyard.

Officers responded to the 3000 block of West Marina Drive for a report of a catalytic converter stolen from a vehicle.

Officers responded to Walmart for a report a male subject had stolen three DVDs worth approximately \$21.

Officers responded to Lake Auto Parts for a report of a stolen flashlight valued at \$40.

Officers responded to the Alder Street Fill for a report of a two-vehicle rear-end collision.



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