



Gingerbread house contest is open to the public
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AUBURN REPORTER

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2021

Auburn Police Department selects new assistant chief



COURTESY PHOTO

By HENRY STEWART-WOOD
henry.stewart-wood@soundpublishing.com

Three Auburn Police Department officers were promoted during a ceremony on Monday, Dec. 6, including a new

assistant chief, according to the department. When Chief Mark Caillier was appointed to the position of chief in October, it left the department without an assistant chief, according to the department.

The department performed a thorough interview process, and on Dec. 6, Commander Sam Betz was promoted to the position of assistant chief, according to the department.

See **CHIEF**, Page 2 Auburn Police Department.

Mayors meet to address crime

By OLIVIA SULLIVAN
osullivan@soundpublishing.com

Mayors of South King County cities met privately on Friday morning as the first step in addressing the surge of violence affecting the south Puget Sound region. Federal Way Mayor Jim Ferrell said in a statement that the Dec. 3 meeting was “a positive step and a work in progress.” The meeting was attended by Ferrell and mayors Dana Ralph of Kent, Nancy Backus of Auburn and Armondo Pavone of Renton. “We are speaking about important issues impacting our entire region,” Ferrell said. “While we continue to work toward a comprehensive and broad-based set of solutions, I can tell you what we will do locally.” “This meeting was scheduled to strategize next steps on how we collaborate with police, legislators, prosecutors and judges,” said Kent Mayor Dana Ralph. “We all have a role in how to keep our community safe. In time, we look forward to sharing our plan and accomplishments in conjunction with our partners.” When asked for comment, Auburn Mayor Nancy Backus deferred to statements already given on behalf of the group. Ferrell said the coalition will ask their King County partners for a commitment to hold high-impact offenders accountable.

See **MAYORS**, Page 2

1 person killed in collision



COURTESY PHOTO

One person died in a van vs. semi collision at 15th Street Northwest and Ron Crockett Drive on Dec. 6 in Auburn.

By ROBERT WHALE
rwheale@soundpublishing.com

A woman died in a van vs. semi collision at 15th Street Northwest and Ron Crockett Drive on Dec. 6 in Auburn. When crews from the Valley Regional Fire Authority, South King Fire and Rescue, the Auburn Police Department, and King County Medic One arrived at the scene shortly after 7 p.m. Monday night,

they found three seriously injured people. Crews worked quickly to free one of the injured parties from the van while they treated the other two. A 22-year-old woman, place of residency not given, was pronounced dead at the scene. The other persons, no ages given, were transported to area trauma centers with serious- to life-threatening injuries. “We are still early in the investigation,”

Kolby Crossley, public information officer for the Auburn Police Department, said Wednesday afternoon, “but what our officers have come to at the moment is that speed was a factor, and there were unrestrained occupants in the vehicle. Whether or not the female who died was restrained is unconfirmed at this time.” Auburn Police closed 15th Street Northwest at SR-167 in both directions to conduct their investigation.

King County woman one of 1st in state to test positive for omicron

By HENRY STEWART-WOOD
henry.stewart-wood@soundpublishing.com

The Omicron COVID-19 variant has been discovered in King, Pierce and Thurston counties, according to the Washington state Department of Health. The DOH in partnership with the University of Washington Medicine's Virology Lab discovered the three cases on Dec. 4. The patients range in age from 20 to 39, according to the DOH. The vaccination status of the three individuals is unknown at this point.

Washington is now the 13th state in the U.S. that has identified Omicron cases, said Dr. Umair Shah, Washington Secretary of Health. A woman in her twenties in King County contracted the new variant, according to the DOH. Samples were taken between Nov. 29 and Dec. 1 and were confirmed at a lab in Washington. It is not likely the cases are related, according to the DOH. “We knew that it was a matter of time before omicron was sequenced in our state and so we were anticipating this very news,” Shah said. “We strongly

urge people to get vaccinated and get their boosters as soon as possible to maximize their level of protection from any variant.” A lot is still unknown about the Omicron variant, such as how transmissible and severe it is, according to the DOH. However, preliminary data suggests the Omicron variant spreads more readily than the Delta variant, Dr. Jeff Duchin, King County Health Officer said. In addition to this, people who have had COVID-19 in the past are more likely to be re-infected with Omicron, according to preliminary data, Duchin said.

The good news is that the tools we've been using to fight COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic will still work for the Omicron variant, Duchin said. “Omicron may pose new challenges that we will need to respond to, but compared to the early days of the pandemic, we know much more about COVID-19, and we're better prepared for it,” Duchin said. Wearing face masks indoors, getting vaccinated, and avoiding large crowds are the best ways to protect yourself and others from all strains of COVID-19, including the

Omicron variant, Duchin said. Although there has only been one case of Omicron identified in King County, it is likely not the only one, and more cases are expected to be identified, according to King County Public Health. The existence of the Omicron variant in Washington is not a reason to panic, but it is a reason to be concerned, Shah said. “We may be tired of this virus but as Omicron and our current surge of Delta in our state show, this virus is certainly not tired of us,” Shah said.

See **OMICRON**, Page 2



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Omicron

From Page 1

A rapid surge of cases in Washington in which most infections and serious infections are among the

unvaccinated is a possibility, Duchin said. It's not clear yet how effective the vaccines are at preventing Omicron but the high vaccination rate in Washington will likely help blunt the impact of a surge in cases, Duchin said.

Mayors

From Page 1

For the upcoming Legislative agenda, Ferrell is recommending the Federal Way City Council seek to re-criminalize controlled substances, and to "fix the pursuits section of HB 1054 to allow police officers to once again utilize 'reasonable suspicion' standard in investigative stops." The Federal Way Police Department will share information with other agencies to document

drug referrals. This way, Ferrell said, police can move more quickly amid the current laws to get to the third interaction with those in possession of hard narcotics, to arrest and prosecute offenders. Ferrell also said Federal Way is planning to develop a South King County Top 10 list of high-impact offenders (for drugs and guns). The city will also aim to identify a main source of drug production and distribution. This information and Top 10 list will be shared with regional agencies, he added.

Gingerbread house contest open to the public

By HENRY STEWART-WOOD
henry.stewart-wood@soundpublishing.com

Auburn's gingerbread house contest is open for the public to enjoy at the Auburn Community and Events Center in Les Gove Park. The contest features 17 unique gingerbread houses and other structures designed and created by Auburn residents.

The gingerbread houses will be on display at the Auburn Community and Events Center until Dec. 18. Voting is open to the public, so swing by and vote for your favorite gingerbread house. There are three different categories to vote in: youth, adult and "Battle of the Badges," in which the Valley Regional Fire Authority and the Auburn Police Department are competing against each other.



COURTESY PHOTO

Chief

From Page 1

"I am humbled to be in the position of Assistant Chief and look forward to earning the trust and confidence of my fellow employees and the

community," Betz said. In addition to Betz's promotion, Sergeant James Nordenger was promoted to Commander, and Officer Jason Blake was promoted to Sergeant, according to the Auburn Police Department. Betz has worked for the

Auburn Police Department since 2006. He holds a bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies and Christian Ministries from Azusa Pacific University, according to the Auburn Police Department. Betz was promoted to sergeant in 2013 and again to commander in

January 2020. During his time on the force, Betz has worked a number of different jobs within the department including as a detective for the Special Investigations Unit and on the Valley SWAT Team, according to the Auburn Police Department.



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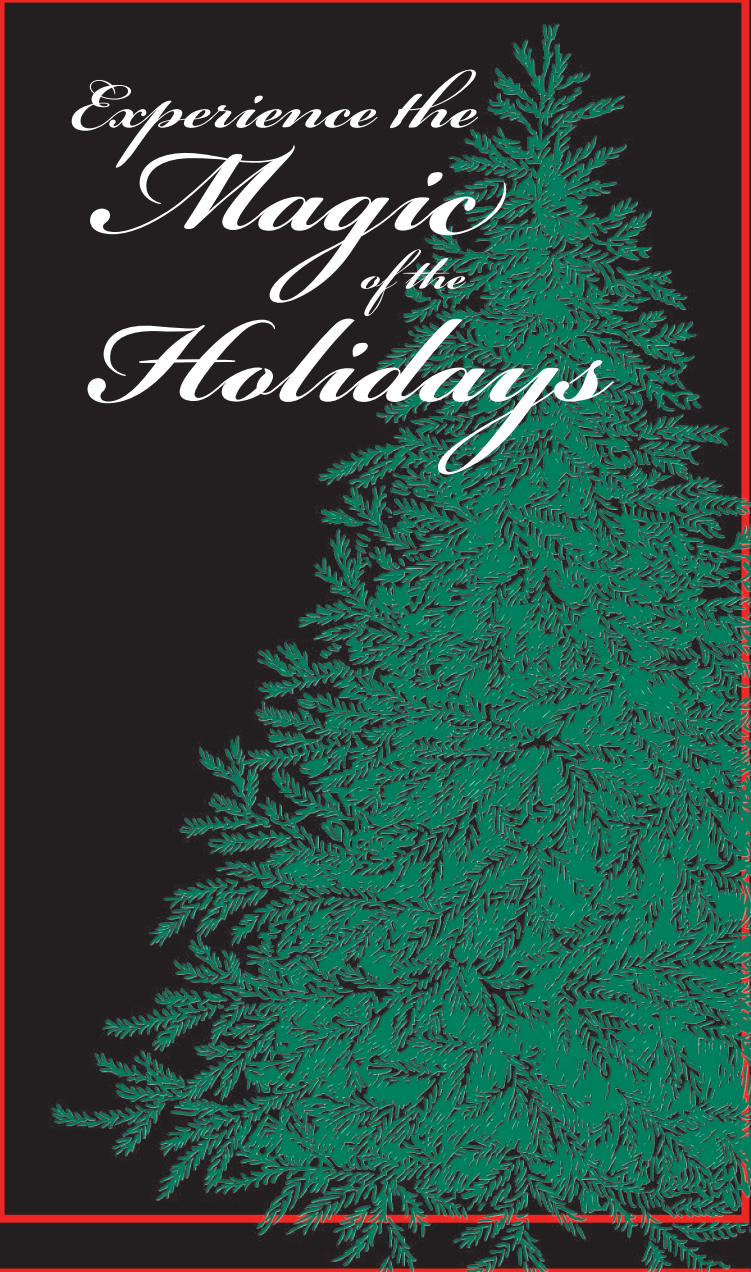
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Justice Center: Old Auburn building with a storied past

Perhaps I’m weird, but I have always enjoyed looking at Auburn’s older buildings and imagining what they were like on opening day.

Back when they generated buzz, when all the furnishings were new and shiny, and Auburn’s much smaller and more-easily-impressed population milled in and around and gawked at all the marvels.

Now, I don’t know if the old Max House Apartments on 1 East Main ever offered anything gawkable, but it remained a common feature of our urban landscape from its first day in 1927 until it burned during the early morning hours of July 24, 2021.

Now the city assures us the Max is about to come down, making way for something modern and — here’s the critical thing — not burned. Community development folks assure us the process has already begun, though nothing will be visible from the street for a few weeks.

Another building with a history worth looking at — and not because it houses the Auburn Police Department and King County District Court — is the Auburn Justice Center at East Main and D Street Southeast. Too cramped to answer all that police demand of it more than a decade after remodeling, the Justice Center has already been the subject of city studies seeking to gauge the cost of building a new police department elsewhere, years from now.

But as Auburn natives of a certain ripeness may remember, the Justice Center began as something completely different on its first day, Friday, April 19, 1946: Dahlgren-Massey Fine Foods.

According to Myron Massey’s obituary in the Auburn Reporter on July



ROBERT WHALE
WHALE’S TALES

28, 2008, before building what at the time was said to be “the largest free-standing supermarket west of the Mississippi River,” he and his business partner, Roy Dahlgren, had operated a smaller market several blocks westward, where, from 1934 to 1946, “they gained a widespread reputation for their mastery of merchandising.”

And if the 4-page treatment that the grand-opening of Dahlgren and Massey’s new digs received in the old Auburn-Globe News on April 17, 1946, is to be believed, they made the market the place for Auburn residents to be on that day, as attested by the photos that show hundreds swarming inside to gawk.

“Most modern on the Pacific Coast and probably in the entire country,” the paper boasted.

And at the time, it was. Among the store’s many innovations, the paper counted: “A modern meat department” with “a porcelain-lined reefer” (refrigerator). Under the management of Dahlgren himself, “a light lunch and soda fountain department” that served up Fulmer Ice Cream, a “popular, Auburn-made product,” “a complete bakery, a spacious display room for groceries, a frozen-food department, an up-to-the-minute, vegetable and fruit department, cooking utensils and glassware,” and a tobacco, candy, and “on-the-go” drug department.



WHITE RIVER VALLEY MUSEUM
The April 17 edition of the old Auburn Globe advances the opening of Dahlgren-Massey Fine Foods two days later.

But that wasn’t all. How about: “A special room to ripen tomatoes to full color,” “an intercommunication system for speedy service of patrons,” large store rooms and modern offices, “ample refrigeration for proper care of perishable foods,” and “an automatic doughnut machine in the bakery?”

A modern “steam heating system” and a Ray Oil Burner, supplied and installed by “W.A Davis 137 East Main, Phone 8-J,” kept the interior of the

WH-Davis-designed, art-deco structure cozy.

When Dahlgren left the partnership in 1955, Massey changed the market’s name to Massey’s Food Center, and so it remained until its closure. According to Massey’s obituary, his “loyal customers flocked to the store to participate in marketing activities such as cooking school, donkey, pony, bicycle, and TV give-a-ways, and giving free groceries to customers who came on horseback or in a covered wagon.”

I knew many an Auburn kid who rode the mechanical pony out front. I was in there with my mother on June 22, 1969, reading an Archie comic book off the revolving stand, when I heard the news that Judy Garland had died. Funny the things we remember.

Besides the building itself, which underwent a complete overhaul in the mid-2000s to remold it into the Justice Center decades after its closure, all that is visible today of all the touted marvels is

the four-color, “beautiful neon sign on top of the marquee,” designed and installed “by City Sign Company, of Tacoma, John H. Keller proprietor.” Such a stunner the sign was in its day, the paper noted that “at least one resident called to report that she saw Northern lights the first night it was illuminated.”

I think all of that makes the old building worth another look, don’t you? Robert Whale can be reached at ruwhale@auburn-reporter.com.

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More than 12,000 people in the greater Seattle area are homeless. 10% of those are under the age of 18.

Photography: Lee Jeffries and Francis Catania, Retouching: Rebecca Bausher

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SEATTLE'S UNION GOSPEL MISSION

Black drivers disproportionately pulled over in King, Pierce counties

By HENRY STEWART-WOOD
henry.stewart-wood@soundpublishing.com

Despite finding no evidence of significant statewide bias, Washington State Patrol officers disproportionately pull over Black drivers in King and Pierce counties, according to a study by Washington State University researchers.

The study, which examined 3.4 million traffic stops between Jan. 1, 2015, to

Dec. 31, 2019, found that no groups were “significantly” over-represented in officer contacts or calls for service, according to the study.

The study compared the officer contact data with census data. A demographic is over-represented if they are stopped at a rate higher than their proportion of the statewide population. The study defines “significant over-representation” as a difference of 5 percent or more.

However, there were still disparities in officer-initiated stops, according to the study. Black drivers made up 5.7% of officer-initiated traffic stops during the four years examined despite only making up 4.3% of the total population in Washington, according to the Office of Financial Management.

In 2019, that disparity was even larger and Black drivers accounted for 6.2% of all stops initiated by state patrol officers, according to the study.

White people made up 74.4% of officer-initiated traffic stops despite making up 78.2% of the total state population, according to OFM.

The disparities between Black and white drivers was even higher in King and Pierce counties, according to the study. In King County, 11.5% of officer-initiated stops were of Black drivers, who make up 7% of the county’s population. White drivers made up 62.3% of stops, but 66.2% of the county’s population.

In Pierce County, Black drivers are significantly over-represented in officer-initiated stops as they made up 12.7% of stops, but 7.7% of

the total county population. Conversely, white drivers are underrepresented, making up 68.8% of stops and 74.3% of the county’s population.

The researchers at WSU created a disparity index to determine if disproportionalities exist for ethnic or racial groups on a statewide level. The index shows that white people are stopped at a rate that would be expected considering their proportion of the population.

Black drivers are over-represented when compared to their proportion of the population and all other races are underrepresented, according to the study.

In addition to this, the study found that Black, Hispanic and Native American drivers were more likely to be searched by WSP officers than white drivers, according to the study.


Despite being less likely to be searched, white people were more likely to actually have contraband compared to Black and Hispanic people between 2015 and 2019, according to the study.

Native American people were less likely to actually have contraband compared to white people in 2018 and 2019, despite being searched more often, according to the study.

The study concluded that this could indicate WSP officers have lower probable cause standards for Black, Hispanic and Native American drivers compared to their white counterparts, according to the study.

WSU researchers plan to continue working with the WSP to address the disparities for Black and Hispanic drivers, according to the study.

Jackie Hintz



Jackie Hintz, our sweet mother, peacefully passed away Sunday, November 21, 2021. She was born Jacquelyn Rae Nesbit on Christmas Day, 1927, in Wadena, Minnesota to James and Margaret Nesbit. As a small child, the Nesbit Family moved to Jamestown, ND, then to Tacoma before settling in Aberdeen, Washington and then on to California in the later years. Jackie graduated from Weatherwax High School in Aberdeen, Washington in 1946 and then worked as a telephone operator. She met her future husband Fred Hintz who was stationed in Westport with the U.S. Coast Guard, and they were married soon thereafter in Berkeley, California. Later, they moved to Auburn, Washington in 1953 to make their home and build their family.

Jackie was preceded in death by her parents, loving husband, sister, and brother. Jackie is survived by her son, Jim Hintz and wife Annette; daughter, Lisa Rankin and husband Brent; granddaughters Amber Moore, her husband Chris, and Sarah Lydiard and her husband Chris; and three great grandchildren, Avery Mae, Colton & Austyn. She was also very blessed to have six extended grandchildren: Christa, Tristan, Shaun, Candace, Kerrie, and Bronson, as well as many extended great grandchildren she called her own. Mom was the best mother ever, always happy and lived life to the fullest. She always brought joy to those around her and those whose lives she touched and was loved by so many. She will be so greatly missed.

King County unemployment is down after COVID-fueled recession

By HENRY STEWART-WOOD
henry.stewart-wood@fedwaymirror.com

The unemployment rate in King County is slowly but surely declining as the economy recovers from the worst months of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data from the Washington Employment Security Department.

The not seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for King County in October 2021 was 4.4%. In October 2020, the rate was 6.3%. This is a massive improvement from the record unemployment rate of 15.1% in April 2020, according to the ESD.

King County’s October 2021 unemployment rate is slightly lower than the statewide rate of 5%, according to the ESD.

The ESD estimates around 1,242,523 people are currently employed in

the county and 57,244 are currently unemployed.

Unemployment claims have also decreased and are more or less back to normal, according to the ESD. The weekly unemployment claims for the week of Nov. 14-20 fell below the number of claims for the same week in 2019, prior to the pandemic, according to the ESD.

Non-farm employment increased by over 12,000 jobs from September through October 2021, according to the ESD.

Each major industry sector is reporting a year-over-year recovery from the recession, ESD economist Anneliese Vance-Sherman said.

The largest gains in employment were in the governmental, professional and business services, Vance-Sherman said. The biggest losses were in the construction industry, according to the ESD.

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Message to Sound Transit: Not in my backyard

It is easy to oppose something you don't like — particularly if it is expensive — but also hard to think objectively if a project will be an inconvenience to you.

Where is the best location for the Sound Transit maintenance facility? This decision will have an impact on any area it is placed in. Because it will serve locations in South King County, it seems obvious that the facility should be in South King County before light rail heads on to Tacoma and eventually Olympia. But other maintenance facilities will be needed in north Seattle and Bellevue as the connections come on line from Snohomish County.

Up until now, it has seemed like the decision was months or even years away. But the Sound Transit board is likely to select a preferred alternative by its Dec. 16 meeting and finalize that selection in late 2022 after further in-depth study. We could get an early clue to their thinking as soon as the Dec. 9 at the meeting of the expansion committee. King County Councilmember Claudia Balducci, from



BOB ROEGNER

Bellevue, chairs the expansion committee and says she will come to the Dec. 9 meeting with a recommendation.

One location site is at the Midway Landfill in Kent. The other two sites are in south Federal Way at South 336th Street, which is a 59-acre site between I-5 and Pacific Highway 99. If selected, two churches and two businesses with about 94 employees would need to be relocated along with 73 residential evictions. Also, the area has a minority population of 7,973 people. The 344th Street alternative site is 62 acres and is between I-5 and 18th Place South. Both Federal Way options are projected to cost

between \$1.2 billion and \$1.4 billion and could be completed in about three years. If the 344th Street site is selected, it would require Ellenos Yogurt manufacturing and Garagetown private storage to move, including 217 employees along with 60 unit owners and three churches.

The Midway site is the most expensive and would take the longest to build, which troubles the chair of the 18-member Sound Transit board, Kent Keel, who is a University Place City Councilmember and also a member of the system expansion committee. He makes the point that adding more years and billions of dollars doesn't seem to make sense. However, the board is made up of mostly elected officials who want to be reelected. And most of the public participation has favored the Midway site because no one is inconvenienced, either through their business or home being in the way at that location.

However, that just makes the Midway location the path of least resistance because it is a Superfund

waste location fill site. The site is located between S. 240th Street and between Pacific Highway South and I-5. This site is projected to cost \$1.8 billion to \$2.4 billion and take six to eight years depending on which design is selected. This issue seems like it has been around for many years of controversial debate, but the list was only cut to three sites a few months ago.

The public participation has been mostly those who have a business or home in the two Federal Way locations, and it is easy to understand why they oppose the two Federal Way locations, which is part of the reason that the elected officials in Federal Way oppose the two Federal Way sites. They want to be reelected. Businesses and residences affected have formed a political action Committee of 60-70 residents and have tried to learn where Sound Transit is leaning. The Group is called "Protect Federal Way." Given the changes in the city council with the recent elections, don't expect the council to change positions. And it will look like "not in my

backyard" will win again.

The Sound Transit Board is governed by 18 elected officials proportional to the population in the Sound Transit district. Ten members are from King County, four are from Pierce County and three are from Snohomish County. The Secretary of Transportation also sits on the board. I'm a little surprised that the Midway site is still in contention given the potential dangers to the future of the Sound Transit staff who will work there, but it is the most politically expedient because no one is inconvenienced by its selection. However, the Sound Transit board is not done with this topic and there are some advantages. The 400 employees who work at the facility will earn about \$80,000 per year. The professionals who will build the facility can't give an iron-clad agreement that nothing will ever happen over to the 30 years or more that Sound Transit employees will work there.

But would you want a relative of yours working at a Superfund site? Even the salaries of the employees

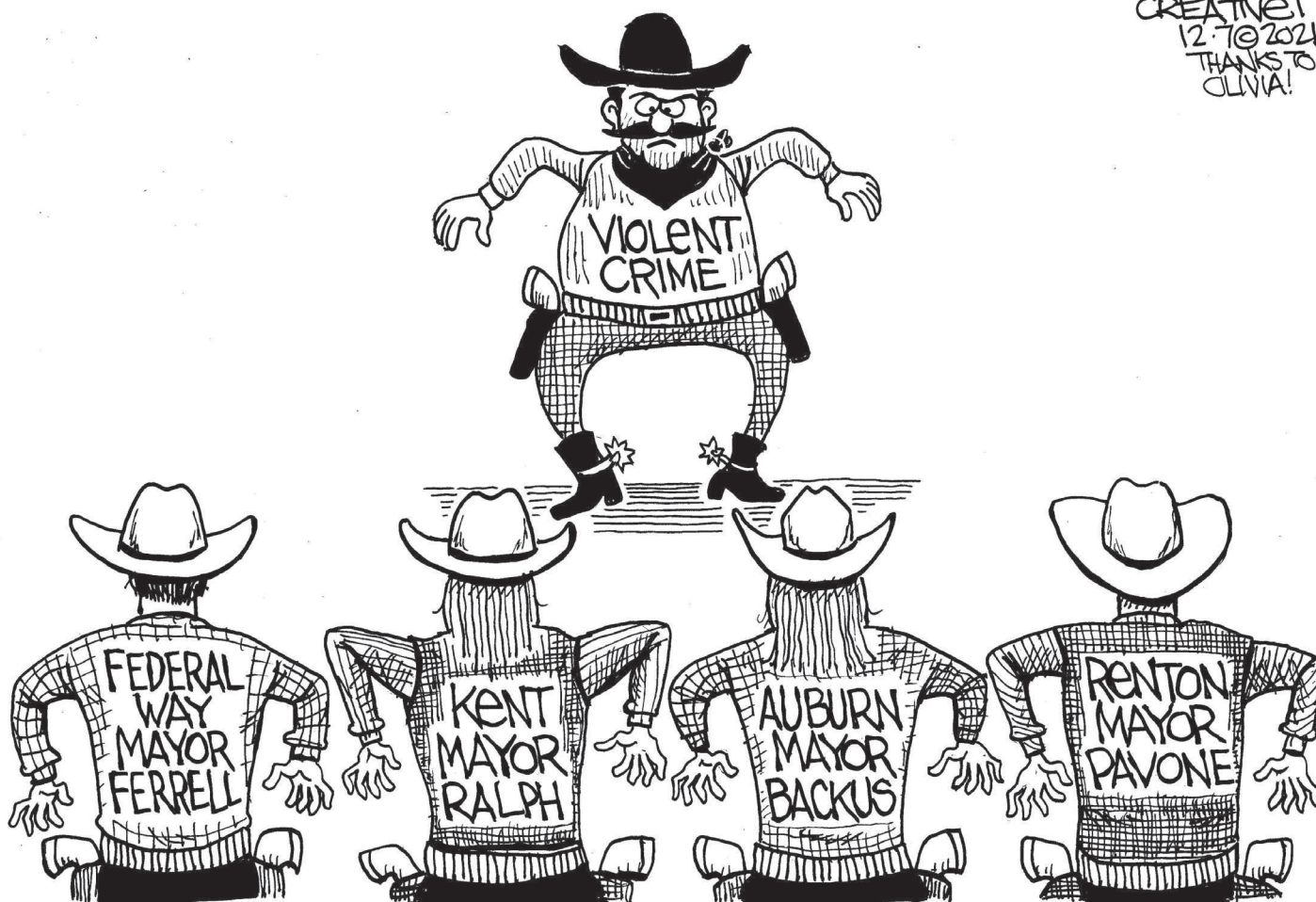
didn't influence the Federal Way council to drop its opposition and they say economic development is important to them. The city of Kent has said it will not oppose the Midway site, and the Puyallup Tribe prefers the Midway site due to the potential impacts to ecosystems such as fish habitats and water resources. And to add to the intrigue, rumors continue to circulate one of the church owners in Federal Way could be a willing seller.

Watch the political messaging after the final vote on which site is selected. Some board members will argue that the Midway site is too expensive or unsafe, while others will message that they were listening to the public should the Midway site be chosen. If the site chosen is Midway, then taxpayer money doesn't mean much, nor does the safety of future Sound Transit employees. Reelection is what counts.

Federal Way resident Bob Roegner is a former mayor of Auburn. Contact bjroegner@comcast.net.

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In a U.S. Chamber of Commerce poll released in early December, the findings spell trouble for America's employers, whether they are in the private or public sectors. It found

that over 60 percent of the respondents are in no hurry to return to work and over one-third of the unemployed are not actively going after a job or looking at all.

The problem is growing worse. A large number of respondents feel they can

get by for at least another six months before they have to find employment. The survey discovered that one-sixth of the jobless say the amount of the money they are receiving from unemployment benefits and government programs makes it "not worth looking" for work, the Chamber added.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports there are 10.4 million open jobs and people are quitting at an all-time record high. Bottom line: there were 2.3 million fewer workers in the workforce last October compared with the same month in 2019.

COVID has changed work and workers. People who traditionally commuted to the office ended up working remotely. A Harris Poll in October found that 76 percent of employees want to make work permanently flexible.

"The desire for work flexibility is being met with a conflicting message — about three-quarters of their employers think they (workers) are more innovative and work harder in the

office or on-site," the Harris Poll found.

Not all work can be done remotely or with a flexible schedule. An obvious example is a utility line worker. For example, electric grid engineers can connect remotely to plan projects, but when an electric transmission line goes down, it is a whole other story. Sorting out jobs which can be remote is a challenge, but all jobs need people willing to work.

Employers are raising wages and benefits to recruit workers, but find it troubling when someone is hired and doesn't show up on the first day, or they interview just to fulfill obligations to continue receiving an unemployment check.

In Washington state, Gov. Jay Inslee and the Legislature suspended the job search requirements at the start of the pandemic. With the economy recovering, job search requirements were reinstated. This means the jobless must look for work and document at least three approved job search activities each week in order to remain eligible for



DON C. BRUNELL

unemployment benefits.

On the employer side, the Harris Poll found that a lack of concern for people's work/life conflicts is a problem. Roughly two-in-five people quit because the employer did not take their concerns into consideration during the pandemic.

Employer attitudes make a difference. Among those who work fully remotely, 40 percent who implemented practices and policies since the pandemic resulted in people staying on the job.

Looking ahead, here's what needs to happen.

First, President Joe Biden and Congress need COVID recovery programs that encourage people to return to work. However, they cannot make it more worthwhile for people who are employable to continue

to postpone returning to work.

Second, those providing jobs need to tailor work sites and jobs to fit into the post-pandemic economy. For example, commuting daily into the inner city is expensive and time consuming. Monthly parking rates are high, the price of gasoline is skyrocketing, and pre-COVID traffic congestion is not only time consuming, but frustrating.

One answer is to lease office space outside the city's core for meeting and internet connectivity space. People can come together and meet while still working remotely.

Finally, people must realize COVID is not a temporary inconvenience. It is permanent. Finding ways to put people back to work is essential to our post-COVID survival.

Don C. Brunell is a business analyst, writer and columnist. He retired as president of the Association of Washington Business, the state's oldest and largest business organization, and lives in Vancouver. He can be contacted at theBrunells@msn.com.

AUBURN REPORTER

1010 S. 336th St., Suite 330, Federal Way, WA 98003
253-833-0218

Carol Greiling, Advertising Director
cgreiling@soundpublishing.com

Andy Hobbs, Editor
ahobbs@soundpublishing.com

Henry Stewart-Wood, Reporter
henry.stewart-wood@soundpublishing.com

Robert Whale, Reporter
rwhale@soundpublishing.com

Laura Theimer, Multimedia Sales Consultant
laura.theimer@soundpublishing.com

Rob Shults, Regional Circulation Manager
rshults@soundpublishing.com

Submit news and letters to the editor
at submissions@auburn-reporter.com

Delivery inquiries: 888-838-3000
or circulation@soundpublishing.com

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More than 129,000 kids in state get 1st dose of vaccine

REPORTER STAFF

Across the state, more than 129,000 children ages 5 through 11 have received their first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech pediatric vaccine since eligibility expanded to include younger kids on Nov. 3, according to a Dec. 2 state Department of Health news release.

Vaccinating children is a crucial step forward as we work to stop the spread of COVID-19 and end the pandemic, according to the news release.

“While COVID-19 is often milder in children than adults, children can still get very sick and spread the disease to family and friends, which is an even bigger concern as people gather this holiday season,” said Dr. Umair A. Shah, state secretary of health. “As a father, knowing our children are vaccinated helps me breathe a sigh of relief. I am confident they are now much safer and more protected than they were just a month ago.”

Getting children vaccinated against COVID-19 can help lower their risk of infection, reduce their chance of getting seriously ill, and decrease their chance of

hospitalization and death. While current overall vaccination numbers are encouraging, there are areas across the state with lower vaccination rates that have increased risk. Pediatric vaccination rates range from nearly 26% in Puget Sound to less than 8% in the South Central and North Central regions, according to the news release.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of 13 children and teens age 18 and younger in Washington. Vaccination is especially important for children with chronic health conditions that increase the risk of severe disease. Data reviewed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration found the pediatric vaccine to be safe and more than 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 disease.

The Pfizer pediatric vaccine is given in two doses at least 21 days apart, which means children vaccinated in early November are now eligible for their second dose. While one dose does offer some protection, completing the series boosts the vaccine’s effectiveness. Kids are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they receive their second dose.



A Puget Sound Fire Authority employee administers a COVID-19 shot Dec. 1 to a Tahoma School District student. COURTESY PHOTO

Everyone age 5 and older is currently eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. To find a vaccine location near you, visit

Vaccine Locator, Vaccines.gov, or call the COVID-19 Information Hotline at 1-800-525-0127, then press #. Language assistance if

available. For more information, visit VaccinateWA.org/kids or talk to your child’s trusted health care provider.

Data: Pandemic has changed attitudes toward housing in King County

By CAMERON SHEPPARD
cameron.sheppard@
soundpublishing.com

More than half of King County residents say they are likely to move in the next five years, according to results from a survey conducted by DHM Research and marketing agency Quinn Thomas.

The survey consisted of 501 adult residents of King County and was conducted Oct. 15 through Oct. 26, 2021. The margin of error for this survey is ±4.4%.

Results from the recent survey found that 55% of King County residents said they are likely to move in the next five years. Among those, 44% think it’s most likely that they will stay in the Seattle area compared to 36% who expect to move outside the area, and 21%

who are unsure where they’ll end up.

Of the respondents who said they were likely to leave, 80% said the cost of housing would be a reason for them to leave, 57% said crime rates would be a reason for them to move, and 64% cited the local government response to homelessness as a reason.

Of those same respondents, 83% included outdoor recreation as a reason to stay, 78% included arts and entertainment as a reason to stay, and 74% included work opportunities as a reason to stay.

The top places for those who were unsatisfied with where they live and want to move to another area in the community include neighborhoods such as West Seattle at 9%, North Seattle at 6%, Bellevue at 6% and

Downtown Seattle at 6%.

According to the survey results, over 50% of King County residents support increasing housing density. The survey also tried to gauge public support for some ideas for potential methods of achieving increased housing density.

Some of the ideas with the highest levels of support include allowing apartments and condominiums in Seattle neighborhoods that are currently zoned for single-family housing, which 55% of participants supported; allowing housing to be built on undeveloped land, which 64% of participants supported; and converting empty offices into apartments, which 77% of respondents supported this idea.

Some of the most opposed ideas

include reducing parking requirements for new home construction, which 37% of participants opposed and only 47% supported; as well as allowing more houseboats on lakes, which 40% of participants opposed and only 37% supported.

The survey also intended to measure how factors that influence housing choice have changed over the course of the pandemic.

It found that some of the factors that have seen the largest changes towards being valued as “less important” included having a larger home with more rooms, with 47% of respondents saying they have found that to be less important; having a bigger yard, with 44% of respondents answering that way; and living in home that is farther apart from others, with 41% of participants saying

this became less important to them during the pandemic.

Among the factors that have become more important to housing choice through the pandemic, a neighborhood with less crime, 72% of participants included this; a neighborhood with fewer homeless people, 65% responded this way; and being able to work from home, 61% included this factor as becoming more important to them during the pandemic.

According to the survey results, 24% of respondents said because of COVID, they pay their monthly rent or mortgage at least once, of those folks, 63% said they tried to access emergency rental assistance or mortgage forbearance programs, and of those, 38% said they received the help they needed from those programs.

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Housing-first approach to homelessness plan OK'd

By CAMERON SHEPPARD
cameron.sheppard@
soundpublishing.com

The King County Council has passed an implementation plan for King County's Health Through Housing program, which aims to house up to 1,600 people experiencing chronic homelessness.

Health Through Housing is a regional approach to homelessness that will purchase facilities with single-occupancy units, such as hotels and nursing homes, and turn them into emergency supportive housing and permanent supportive housing. It is funded with a 0.1% sales tax that the King County Council passed in 2020.

"Health Through Housing gives our region new tools to address homelessness and the economic, racial, institutional, and historic inequities that accompany it," said King County Councilmember Joe McDermott. "Today's action carries forward King County's commitment to addressing the systemic barriers that create vast disparities in our community and a regional response to this crisis."

In 2021, Health Through Housing expenditures went

to purchase nine properties in Seattle, Renton, Redmond, Auburn, and Federal Way. King County anticipates acquiring three additional locations.

The implementation plan passed on Tuesday, Dec. 7, will govern expenditures of Health Through Housing dollars from 2022 to 2028.

The county says their paramount goal of the implementation plan is the creation and ongoing operation of 1,600 units of affordable housing with related services for households in King County that are experiencing chronic homelessness or are at risk of experiencing chronic homelessness. In addition, it will reduce racial and ethnic disproportionality among people experiencing chronic homelessness in King County and it will create and operate a mobile behavioral health intervention.

The plan anticipates expending \$333.7 million for capital financing and site improvements, \$309.5 million for emergency and permanent supportive housing operations, \$67.2 million for behavioral health services outside of Health Through Housing sites, \$3.7 million to build capacity of agencies who represent

communities disproportionately experiencing chronic homelessness, and \$5.5 million for evaluation and performance measurement.

It establishes the Health Through Housing Advisory Committee, which will advise the Executive and County Council on Health Through Housing related matters, advise DCHS on Health through Housing implementation, review performance data, and report annually on the expenditures, accomplishments, and effectiveness of Health Through Housing. The Advisory Committee will also collaborate with program staff and providers to establish performance measures, which will be shared publicly through an online dashboard.

The Council passed the measure unanimously.

"With the passage of this plan, we take another step towards implementing a real, proven strategy that will bring hundreds of our neighbors off the streets and into safe, stable housing," said King County Council Chair Claudia Balducci. "I appreciate the regional partnerships that will make it possible for us to provide infrastructure throughout King County."



PHOTO BY HENRY STEWART-WOOD / SOUND PUBLISHING

The exterior of the Clarion Hotel located on B Street behind the municipal airport in Auburn is among the properties purchased by the Health Through Housing program.

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Man charged with murder after man fatally shot, left in ditch

By OLIVIA SULLIVAN
osullivan@soundpublishing.com

A Kent man is accused of shooting a man at a Federal Way gas station and leaving his body face-down in a ditch a few miles away, according to the King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

Robert Nelson III, 24, of Kent, was charged with first-degree murder on Dec. 1. He is being held in lieu of \$2 million bail and his arraignment is set for 9 a.m. Dec. 15 at the Maleng Regional Justice Center in Kent.

Nelson is accused of fatally shooting Uso Hale, 39, and leaving his body face-down in a watery ditch in unincorporated King County. Hale's body was discovered near the 4600 block of S. 352nd Street on Nov. 12 after neighbors called to report an object in the ditch.

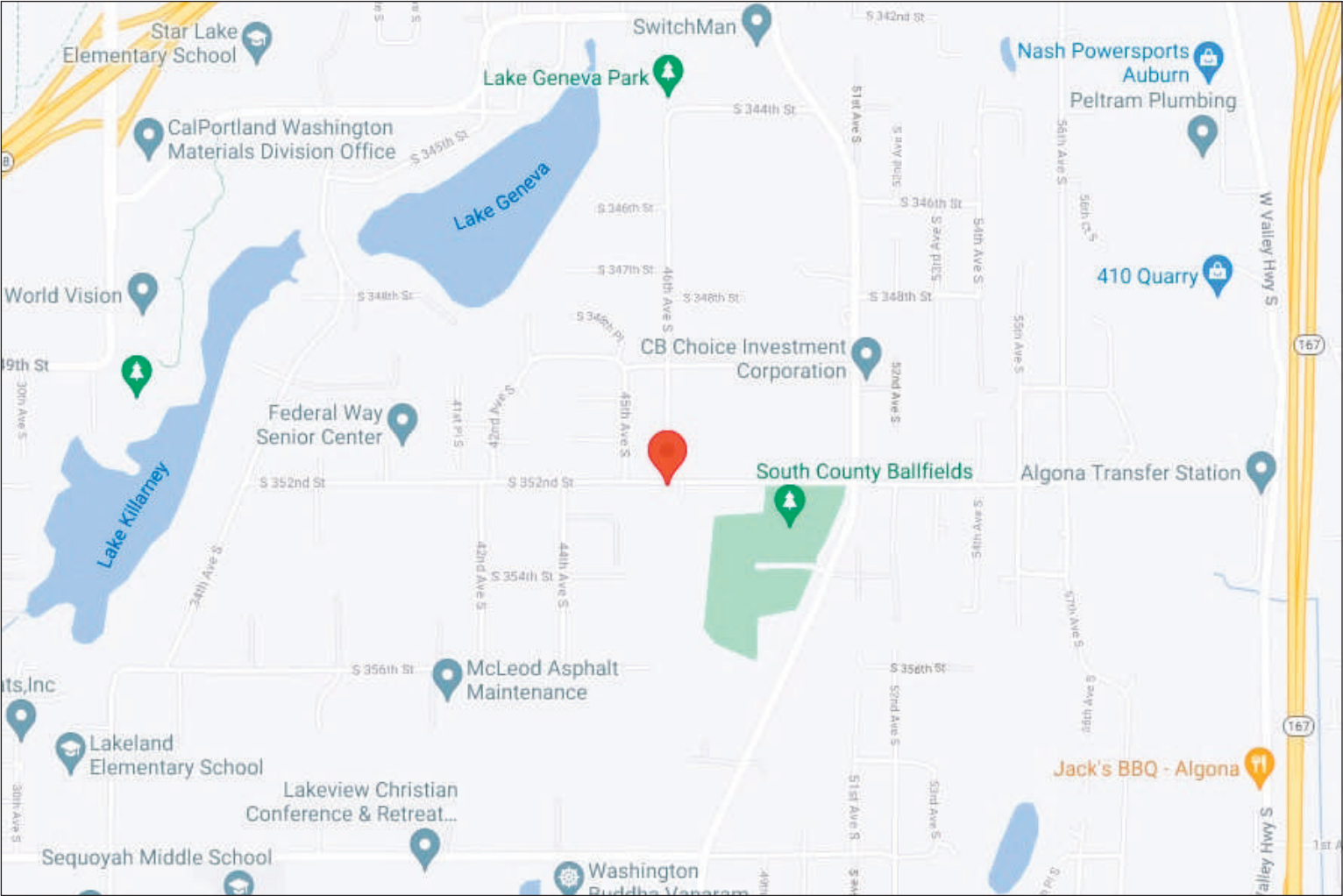
An autopsy by the King County Medical Examiner's Office reported Hale had been shot at least seven times and ruled his death a homicide. He had bullet wounds to his left cheek, chin, neck, right thigh and left arm and two wounds on his left torso. Five .45-caliber bullets were removed from Hale's body, according to charging documents. Hale's last known address was at a Federal Way apartment complex.

Prosecutors say Nelson allegedly shot Hale in the front seat of his car at a Mobil gas station (32002 Military Road South) when people were present at the gas pumps and inside the store. Later, investigators found a bullet struck and was lodged in one of the gas station windows.

Nelson allegedly fled the parking lot and left Hale's body in a ditch minutes later, documents state, and took steps to get rid of his car. The .45-caliber gun registered to Nelson has not yet been located.

Nelson's "willingness to commit such a violent crime in a public place, risking the lives of others present, make clear that he poses a substantial danger to the community," Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Jennifer Petersen wrote in the charging documents.

According to the charging documents, a close friend of Hale's said



SCREENSHOT

Uso Hale's body was discovered near the 4600 block of S. 352nd Street on Nov. 12 after neighbors called to report an object in the ditch.

the day before his death, a man Hale had robbed of \$1,500 came looking for him in a dark, four-door vehicle believed to be a black Cadillac. The man came into the residence and "made things right," documents state. The close friend later identified the man as Nelson, according to investigators.

Interviews with people close to Hale revealed that Hale was allegedly meeting up with that same man to sell him blue pills, about \$2,000 worth, on Nov. 11. When Hale got out of a family member's car at the gas station and into the nearby two-door Audi, the family member reported hearing shots fired. The family member attempted to follow the Audi after it fled, but lost sight of the vehicle as it sped up the hill from Peasley

Canyon Road.

Video surveillance footage shows a vehicle stopping near the ditch in unincorporated King County around 4:08 p.m. Nov. 11. The vehicle, believed to be the Audi, seemed to park for about a minute, then drove away, documents state.

A plastic baggy filled with small blue pills and another baggy filled with "blue mush" — presumed to be fentanyl or Oxycodone pills — were found in Hale's pockets, along with a black cell phone. Detectives also found two copper .45-caliber bullets near Hale's body in the ditch.

Police used photos of Nelson to link him to the person in the surveillance footage near where the body was dumped. Phone records also show Nelson received a call from Hale around 3:53 p.m. Nov. 11 and

about 20 minutes later, his phone records show, his device was in the area where Hale's body was dumped, documents state.

Nelson was arrested on Nov. 24 while driving a black Cadillac, registered to his grandfather. Both the car and his apartment were searched. Police recovered a 9mm handgun, gun ammunition and a baggie of blue pills from the car.

A magazine full of .45-caliber ammunition, a gun box to a .45-caliber pistol, and boxes of copper .45-caliber ammunition were recovered from Nelson's apartment in Kent.

Charging documents state that as detectives were searching the Cadillac, "Nelson was upset and asked multiple times why detectives were searching the vehicle." After

informing Nelson that police had a warrant, Nelson allegedly said: "It's not that vehicle."

He was taken to the Burien police station for questioning when he requested to speak with his attorney.

Through the King County Sheriff's Office investigation of the homicide, sheriffs determined that the actual shooting most likely occurred in the parking lot of the gas station or close by, according to Cmdr. Tracy Grossnickle of Federal Way Police.

"Since KCSO has jurisdiction over the entire area, they kept the case and filed charges," Grossnickle said. "Due to them keeping the investigation and filing charges, it is not going to [be] considered a Federal Way homicide by our Department."

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The Valley Regional Fire Authority responded to 274 calls for service between Nov. 29 and Dec. 5, among them the following.

Nov. 29

Aid call: 8:58 p.m., (Lakeland Hills). Firefighters evaluated a woman who'd been pepper sprayed during a business robbery and then left her on scene with Auburn Police.

Nov. 30

Aid call: 2:31 p.m. (Auburn). Firefighters examined an Auburn senior citizen who was complaining of injuries from a fall, and then transported her to a local hospital.

Dec. 1

Accident: 2:19 p.m. (Auburn). Firefighters responded to a vehicle into a carport that had caused the carport to collapse. They treated a man for minor

injuries on scene, and a private ambulance transported him to MultiCare Auburn Medical Center (MAMC).

Dec. 2

Aid call: 2:25 p.m. (Auburn). Firefighters and King County Medic One responded to a woman just about to give birth. They arrived to find the baby had already been delivered. Firefighters evaluated the mother and paramedics evaluated the newborn and both were found to be healthy and uninjured. Mother and child were left at home in the care of a midwife.

Dec. 3

Aid call: 11 a.m. (Auburn). Firefighters helping an Auburn senior who was complaining of a fractured leg after falling from her parked vehicle noted an obvious deformity near her ankle, so they splinted it and transported her to a local hospital.

Dec. 4

Car vs. pedestrian: 2:20 a.m. (Auburn). VRFA firefighters and King County paramedics responding to the 2200 block of Dogwood Street for a car vs. pedestrian accident found a 41-year-old man on the side of the road with a broken femur. The man would not allow firefighters to splint the injury, and at his insistence, paramedics transported him to Auburn MultiCare instead of Harborview.

Accident: 1:17 p.m. (Auburn). Firefighters responding to an accident involving five vehicles on State Route 18 treated a child for a small cut. Nobody required transport.

Dec. 5

Aid call: 9:44 a.m. (Lakeland Hills). Firefighters examined a man who was complaining of chest pain and transported him to MAMC for further evaluation.

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OLIVIA SULLIVAN/THE MIRROR
The Federal Way Performing Arts and Event Center is located at 31510 Pete von Reichbauer Way S.

FEMA to send mobile COVID-19 vaccination unit to Washington

By OLIVIA SULLIVAN
osullivan@fedwaymirror.com

The federal government is stepping in to help Western Washington residents receive COVID-19 vaccines, starting first in Federal Way. A Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mobile COVID-19 vaccination unit will soon be sent to several western Washington communities, Gov. Jay Inslee announced on Dec. 2.

The first mobile site location is planned to open Dec. 20 at the Federal Way Performing Arts and Event Center, 31510 Pete von Reichbauer Way S. Additional locations are to be determined.

The Federal Way site is expected to operate for about 30 days. Mobile vaccination sites administer about 250 vaccinations per day, according to FEMA.

“This is great news in the ongoing fight against COVID. I am grateful for our strong partnership with the federal government,

and these FEMA Family Mobilization Clinics coming to King County is a great result of that partnership,” said Inslee. “This is an innovative model that will help increase equitable access to vaccination for all Washingtonians.”

The mobile vaccination unit is offered in partnership with the Washington State Department of Health, the King County Executive’s Office, Public Health – Seattle & King County, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Washington State Emergency Management Division, and King County Emergency Management.

“We’re grateful for President Biden’s leadership, and for the partnership of the White House in keeping everyone in King County safe this winter, including one of the first Family Vaccination Units in the nation operating right here in south King County,” said King County Executive Dow Constantine.

“The free home tests and other new tools in President Biden’s plan, paired with our vaccine verification program here in King County, will help keep families healthy during the holidays, schools open for our students, and ensure small businesses and restaurants can recover,” Constantine said.

Booster demand is strong in King County because people know vaccines are safe, effective and provide an added layer of protection in the community, said Dennis Worsham, interim director for Public Health – Seattle & King County.

The mobile vaccination unit from the federal government helps expand vaccination capacity as some are waiting for appointments and allows for the flexibility to station vaccination resources where the need is the greatest, he added.

“It’s this kind of strong partnership among local, state, and federal partners that is key to our recovery,” Worsham said.



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