

UMATILLA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"Conservators of the Peace"

Sheriff Terry L. Rowan

Undersheriff Jim Littlefield



PRESS RELEASE

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Pendleton, Oregon

Contact: Lieutenant Josh Roberts, 541-966-3651

Umatilla County Sheriff's Office Conducts Operation on Encampments Along the Walla Walla River

Today, the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office, in cooperation with the Milton-Freewater Police Department, completed an operation to clear unauthorized encampments along the Walla Walla River, from Cemetery Road Bridge to just north of Eastside Bridge in Milton-Freewater. This action was undertaken following multiple complaints from citizens and land owners in the area, as well as a town-hall meeting on the subject on September 30th. The operation was the result of a comprehensive effort, which began on October 4th with initial contacts to notify individuals at the encampments of trespassing on private property.

"The Umatilla County Sheriff's Office is committed to treating all members of our community with dignity and empathy, including those who are unhoused" says Lt. Josh Roberts. "Throughout this process, our teams provided clear information and multiple contacts to encourage voluntary compliance and offered resources whenever possible." Today's operation involved reaching out to three remaining individuals still camped in the area. One person, 55-year-old Aaron Matthew Lake, was taken into custody on charges of Criminal Trespass in the Second Degree and Depositing Trash within 100 Yards of Waters.

While we recognize the challenges faced by those without stable housing, we also have a responsibility to enforce local laws and protect the safety of the public from trash and biohazardous waste, particularly along sensitive waterway areas. This operation reflects our balanced approach—supporting our community's health and safety while working compassionately with those in need.

For more information, please contact the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office.

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