



COURTESY PHOTO/BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES

Operation 11th Hour resulted in 42 defendants, 54 federal search warrants and 37 state search warrants, as well as the seizure of 25 firearms, nine vehicles, approximately 42 pounds of methamphetamine, more than 1,000 fentanyl pills, nearly 2 pounds of fentanyl powder and more than 2 pounds of cocaine, according to information from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Operation 11th Hour nets 42 defendants after 15-month investigation

By NANCE BESTON
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — A 15-month investigation launched after a deadly 2025 gang-related shooting has resulted in 42 defendants, dozens of search warrants, significant drug seizures and the removal of firearms from the streets of Moses Lake and Grant County.

Federal, state and local law enforcement officials announced Thursday that the final six arrests connected to Operation 11th Hour were made Wednesday in Moses Lake and Spokane, bringing the investigation to a close.

“This case is an excellent example of the impact that can be made when federal and local law enforcement work together to target issues in our communities,” Moses Lake Police Chief Dave Sands said in a statement. “I am grateful for all the work done at every level of this operation to take illegal weapons and drugs off our streets.”

The operation began after a March 21, 2025, shooting in the 500 block of Loop Drive that left a 14-year-old boy dead and four others wounded. Moses Lake police later identified the attack as gang related.

“That was kind of the impetus to conduct significant emphasis on violent criminals in the Moses Lake and Grant County area,” MLPD Capt. Mike Williams said.

According to the Bureau of Alcohol,

Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Operation 11th Hour focused on violent offenders, gang members, firearm traffickers and armed drug traffickers.

The investigation led to 54 federal search warrants, 37 state search warrants and 42 defendants.

An ATF statement said Wednesday’s arrests of Floyd Young, Eutimio De Padua Contreras, Wilmer Garcia-Marquez, Juan Preciado, Juvenal Herrera-Mata and Cristobal Rios Sostenes marked the final phase of the operation. The suspects face charges including unlawful firearm possession, methamphetamine distribution and cocaine distribution.

Authorities seized 25 firearms, nine vehicles, approximately 42 pounds of methamphetamine, more than 1,000 fentanyl pills, nearly 2 pounds of fentanyl powder and more than 2 pounds of cocaine.

“It’s a good amount,” Williams said of the drug seizures. “It’s definitely put a crimp in the supply in Moses Lake for sure.”

ATF Public Information Officer Anna Schmidt said the methamphetamine and fentanyl seizures got a lot of narcotics off the street.

“When you think about how many deaths that fentanyl could have caused in the wrong hands, those are significant seizures,” Schmidt said.

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Adams County Sheriff’s candidates talk retention, AC Jail at Othello forum

By CHERYL SCHWEIZER
Staff Writer

OTHELLO — Recruiting and retaining staff and continuing work on the Adams County Jail were among the questions fielded by the candidates for Adams County Sheriff at a candidate forum Tuesday.

Incumbent Dale Wagner is being challenged by Matthew Carlson, an officer with the Ritzville Police Department. The two men ran for the same office in 2022.

When asked about priorities, Wagner said the jail is one of his top priorities, but it’s a very complicated problem.

The jail was closed in May 2022 after an incident that left a corrections officer and an inmate seriously injured. But Wagner said the challenges at the jail date back a long way.

“It’s been an issue that I’ve been working very strongly on the last few years, basically since I’ve been the sheriff. We did a jail study in 2014 that said tear it down, build new or remodel,” Wagner said.

“We had it re-evaluated here recently when an incident occurred in our jail, and they said the same thing. I’ve been working very hard as the sheriff along with the commissioners and other people involved to get that jail up to speed when it comes to funding for the remodel and

ADAMS COUNTY SHERIFF CANDIDATES



Dale Wagner

“I disagree strongly with opening the county to outside living. The reason for me is because I want to police, and I want my guys to police, the people we love and care about, so that people understand that they can call any of my deputies at any time.”



Matthew Carlson

“We’ve got thousands of people in the county that have warrants that are misdemeanors or gross misdemeanors that we can’t book into a jail, so they just get let go. Getting the jail open would actually help the county with the safety aspect.”

COURTESY PHOTOS/DALE WAGNER AND MATTHEW CARLSON/GRAPHIC BY COLUMBIA BASIN HERALD

those kind of things.”

Remodeling is only part of the solution, he said.

“We still have the problem of hiring people. People are not wanting these jobs anymore for whatever reason. It doesn’t help that a lot of our (candidate) pool is in Othello and the jail is in Ritzville, and so people don’t want to travel. And that’s been a hard thing for us to get people hired and be qualified to do that,” he said.

Carlson said reopening the jail is tied into one of his top priorities, which is public safety.

“We’ve got thousands of people in the county that have warrants that are misdemeanors or gross misdemeanors that we can’t book in to a jail, so they just get let go. Getting the jail open would actually help the county with the safety aspect,” Carlson said.

Carlson would make some changes to enhance public safety, he said.

“I agree with (Wagner) on the safety. We need to have that, but to get that, we also need to have better coverage of the county with the deputies,” Carlson said. “There are several times that the northern part of the county doesn’t have anybody. That happens quite a bit. So, trying to get them to be there where we need them, that would be great.”

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Moses Lake School District seeks community members for two new advisory committees



FILE PHOTO

Vanguard Academy’s project-based learning model will be among the topics reviewed by the Moses Lake School District’s new High School Learning Options Committee, one of two advisory groups currently seeking community members. Applications for the committee close Monday.

By NANCE BESTON
Staff Writer

MOSES LAKE — The Moses Lake School District is encouraging students, families, educators and community members to help shape the future of local schools by serving on two newly formed advisory committees focused on student wellness and high school learning opportunities.

Applications for the district’s High School Learning Options Committee close Monday, while applications for the newly announced Wellness Committee are due Oct. 16.

District officials say

the committees are part of a broader effort to increase community involvement in district decision-making while addressing issues affecting student achievement, health and overall well-being.

“We want community involvement across the board,” Moses Lake School District Director of Public Relations Ryan Shannon said. “These are two great committees that allow our community to engage, to ask questions, to voice concerns and also to be part of the process.”

The Wellness Committee was created following discussions

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