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The Eagle/Rylan Boggs
Owners Cindy Kidd, left, and Haley Olson stand for a photo in Rocky Mtn. Dispensary, Grant County's first medical marijuana dispensary.

County's first medical marijuana dispensary to open

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Preparations are underway for Grant County's first medical marijuana dispensary.

Owners Haley Olson and Cindy Kidd said Rocky Mtn. Dispensary will focus on Cannabidiol (CBD) oils, topicals and edibles for humans and animals alike, and they hope to open the family-owned business as early as Jan. 1.

Olson said the county approved their proposed site on Wilderness Road near Mobile Glass of Oregon, and the business has applied for state certification.

The owners said they plan to build their business using local materials, services and labor. They emphasized selling locally grown marijuana, as long as it met set standards.

"We need something to spur the economy here and to keep people from having to travel out of the area, especially in the wintertime," Olson said. "You've got cancer patients trying to make that drive in the wintertime, and it's not safe."

The dispensary will also regularly host traveling doctors from The Hemp and Cannabis Foundation so people can get their medical marijuana cards locally. There are roughly 150 cardholders in the county, according to Olson, and they hope to help more people acquire access to medical marijuana.

The building will feature hefty security measures mandated by state law. Product will be protected by multiple key-coded doors,

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High-speed chase, DUIs keep officers busy

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Local police officers were busy this holiday weekend with a high-speed chase involving meth and a stolen vehicle, unruly subjects and motorists driving under the influence.

Following a vehicle chase on Nov. 26, John Day police arrested JT Lee Knutson, 22, of Burns for possession of methamphetamine, two counts of attempting to elude police, first-degree criminal mischief, unauthorized use



John Day Police Chief Richard Gray

of a motor vehicle and reckless driving. Heather Marie Brown, 27, of Jefferson was also arrested for unauthorized use of a motor vehicle, possession of methamphetamine and attempting to elude police.

John Day Police Chief Richard Gray said officers ran the license plate of a Ford four-door pickup, discovered it had been stolen from Baker City and initiated a traffic stop. Brown and Knutson fled in the vehicle and drove south on Highway 395 and then west on Forest Road 16 reaching speeds of 80 mph during the pursuit. Grant County Sheriff's Office deputies assisted in the pursuit, and the vehicle swerved off the road and struck a power pole, at which time the two fled on foot. Both subjects had felony warrants and were apprehended, and meth was found in the vehicle, Gray said.

On Nov. 25, police arrested Ernest Andrew Chivara, 37, of Chico, California, for driving under the influence,

according to dispatch logs, and Grant County Sheriff's Office deputies responded to a rollover crash with injuries on Ingle Creek Road and arrested David Edwin Hall, 22, of John Day for driving under the influence of intoxicants.

On Nov. 26, police arrested Joshua Haskins of Prairie City for disorderly conduct after John Day Police Department and Oregon State Police responded to a 911 call of an intoxicated pedestrian with a knife on Highway 26 near milepost 172.5, according to Gray.

The Director

Monument, EOU alum shares path to becoming documentary filmmaker

By Kelly Ducote
For Eastern Oregon University

When Skye Fitzgerald broke his hand in a bicycle race, he had no idea his Portland specialist would become the subject of his next documentary.

In his consultation with surgeon Hisham Bismar, Fitzgerald learned the orthopedic hand specialist is from Syria, and the appointment evolved into a conversation about the Syrian conflict, the region's medical needs and Bismar's desire to volunteer his aid.

Six months later, Fitzgerald heard from the doctor, and soon enough they were en route to the Syrian border.

Fitzgerald, a 1993 graduate of Eastern Oregon University and this year's recipient of EOU's Distinguished Alumni Award, enjoys the success of "50 Feet From Syria," not for his own benefit but for the story it tells.

"I do it because I have to do it," the filmmaker said.

The 2015 film highlights Bismar's journey to Turkey — near the Syrian border — where he volunteers his time and expertise to numerous patients affected by the violent authoritarian regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

"I'm drawn to crises in some ways that are difficult to understand, but are important to understand," said Fitzgerald, who recently returned to La Grande for EOU's Homecoming and the Eastern Oregon Film Festival, with a special "50 Feet From Syria" screening on

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Skye Fitzgerald



Contributed photo
ABOVE AND BELOW: Monument alum Skye Fitzgerald filming a search and rescue operation in the Southern Mediterranean in October.

'50 Feet from Syria' voted onto Oscar shortlist for Best Documentary Short, 2016



New hospital CEO sees 'opportunity and potential'

Daly: Stability, confidence and public relations top priorities

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

New Blue Mountain Hospital Chief Executive Officer Derek Daly said his top priorities are ensuring stability in the health system, promoting confidence in the hospital and improving public relations.

"I know we've been through some challenges, and I'm working hard with



The Eagle/Sean Hart

New Blue Mountain Hospital CEO Derek Daly says big-picture goals include stability in the health system, confidence in the hospital and public relations.

people to reach solutions," he said. Daly started Oct. 17 and said he spent his first month learning about the

hospital and establishing relationships with employees and community members. He said he has visited the outlying towns in the county and likes the area.

Originally from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Daly said he is looking forward to the weather here. With an interest in being outdoors, hiking and sightseeing, he said Grant County had exactly what he was looking for.

With a college football coach for a father, Daly said he also enjoys sports and travel, when he has the time.

Being young and single allowed him to take advantage of this opportunity in Grant County, Daly said, and he has rural health care experience.

Daly earned an undergraduate degree in business administration at Augustana University in Sioux Falls. He then obtained a master's of health administration at the University of Iowa while also working for the Academic Medical Center for the university's hospital and clinic.

After receiving his degree, he returned to South Dakota and began working for Sanford Health, a large rural health system with a network of critical access hospitals like Blue Mountain Hospital. He moved up within the organization and most recently was the

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