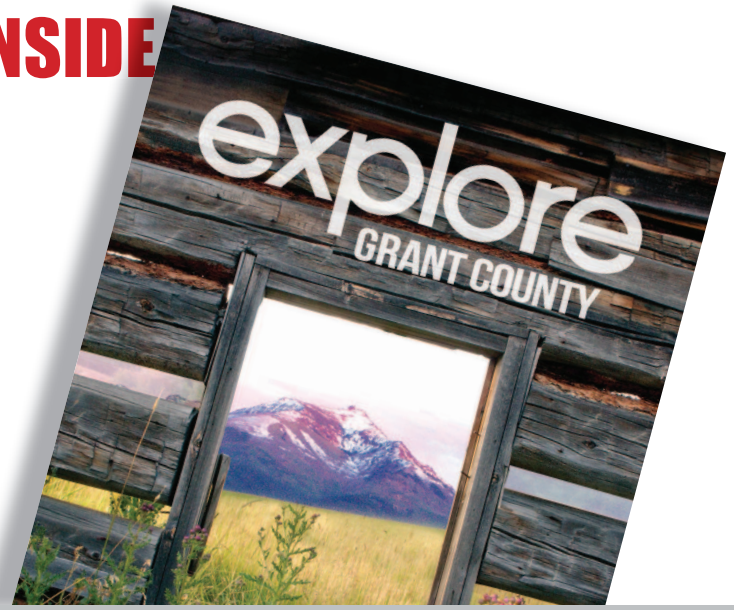


The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2017

• No. 14

• 20 PAGES

• \$1.00

www.MyEagleNews.com



Horse-powered

Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

Gary Gregg, left, and Jim Jensen visit about a stagecoach Jensen is restoring.

Wheels of wagon business slowing down



The Oxbow Trade Co. in Canyon City has a display of various horse-drawn wagons and carts which are also for sale, as well as wagon parts and unique hand-crafted goods. Tours are available when the owners Jim and Mary Jensen are in the shop.

Wagons are lined up outside the Oxbow Trade Co. owned by Jim and Mary Jensen.



By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Horse-drawn wagons hearken to a slower era, but the nostalgia industry creating the old-fashioned vehicles has itself been slowing down.

John Day resident Gary Gregg has been making horse-drawn wagons and carts for 18 years. At one point, Gregg was building up to 40 carriages a year, but the wheels of his business aren't turning as fast as they used to.

"If I had my way about it, we'd all have a horse and buggies," Gregg quipped. "I like that type of era, that moment in time ... to kind of slow down and live longer. It was a good way of life, way back when."

Gregg, now in his 80s, worked with horse-drawn vehicles as a child. During summers in Klamath Falls, from ages 10 to 12, he ran a team of horses with haying equipment. He worked for two meals and \$1 a day for nine hours a day.

"Most people let the kids run the teams," he said. "Tractors were on the ranch. They did the heavy work."

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Jim Jensen, left, and Gary Gregg look at a pony-sized two-seated bobsled which needs a fix at the Oxbow Trade Co.

Bill would create tax credits for fire buffer

Hearing held last week in Salem

By George Plaven
EO Media Group

Oregonians who live in and around the forest may receive a tax credit for establishing wildfire buffers around their property under a proposed bill in Salem.

Senate Bill 1017 calls upon the state forester to set new guidelines for buffers, encouraging the removal of all trees within 300 feet of any residential structure. Homeowners who comply with the standard would be granted an annual tax credit, though the amount has not yet been specified.

Sen. Ted Ferrioli (R-John Day) is sponsoring the bill, which received a hearing last week before the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee. Ferrioli's district was ravaged by wildfire in 2015, when the Canyon Creek Complex burned more than 110,000 acres and destroyed 43 homes.

"Oregonians have been hard hit by damaging wildfires and this bill will help better prepare our communities for future disasters," Ferrioli said in a statement before the March 29 hearing. "By passing this bill, we can save money and increase defensible buffers, but most importantly, we can help Oregonians better avoid grief and suffering associated with property loss."

Lawmakers adopted the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Program in 1997, which has since been implemented across 17 counties. The program encourages wildfire protection buffers of between 30 and 100 feet — depending on the location — which property owners self-certify every five years.

The bill would increase the buffer space to a minimum of 300 feet in order to qualify for a tax credit, with some exceptions based on the terrain.

Doug Grafe, fire protection division chief for the Oregon Department of Forestry, said roughly 40 percent of 151,000 property owners have been certified through the program. Certification may protect landowners from liability up to \$100,000 should a fire spread through the area, though Grafe admits that is a difficult standard to enforce.

By providing tax credits, SB 1017 aims to grow interest in the program using a carrot, rather than a stick. ODF does not have a position on the bill, though Grafe said he imagines more people would be interested in engaging with the program if there was some kind of incentive.

However, Grafe said the bill would likely increase the administrative cost of the program since ODF would be doing annual certifications for the tax credit, instead of certifications every five years. The program currently costs \$60,000 per year to administer, not including personnel.

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Federal budget cuts have local impact

Trump budget promotes defense, cuts programs

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

President Donald Trump's proposed budget provides for increased defense and immigration control spending, while decreasing spending on many domestic programs.

The budget blueprint for 2018 released by the Office of Management and Budget provides a \$54 billion increase in defense spending without increasing the national debt.

It would also increase funding for immigration enforcement at the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security, include additional resources for a border wall, beef up Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol and increase funding to address violent crime and opioid abuse.

Much of this additional funding would come from cuts to foreign aid and domestic programs.

The budget would eliminate funding for numerous agencies including the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency, the National Endowment for the Arts and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. In the blueprint, Trump urges agencies receiving cuts to do more with less.

The budget is still in its early stages and must be

approved by both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate before becoming law.

"From rebuilding our armed forces to beefing up our border security and safeguarding our nation's sovereignty, this budget makes security priority one," Budget Director Mick Mulvaney said.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon described the budget as prioritizing special interest and defense contractors while attacking American families. He especially took issue with a proposed 26-percent budget cut to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The USDA provides loans and grants to lower income, rural communities to help more than 2.3 million Americans have clean drinking water and modern wastewater treatment facilities. In 2016, more than \$1.7 billion was provided to more than 600 communities and \$17,391,182 was awarded for 14 different projects in Oregon, according to a report released by the Democratic Party.

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Secure Rural Schools funds drastically cut

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County schools and roads are facing decreased funds in the wake of the U.S. Congress failing to reauthorize Secure Rural Schools funding.

Oregon relies on these payments to continue providing education to rural areas.

SRS funding has brought almost \$4 billion since 2000 to Oregon's timber counties and schools. The Forest Service now will revert to making payments of 25 percent of the federal timber sale revenue from national forestlands

generated in each county, according to U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon.

The 25-percent payments to Oregon are projected to total slightly more than \$7 million, in contrast to the \$95.2 million Oregon received in 2016.

In 2016, Grant County received roughly \$4.2 million in SRS payments from the Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service. In 2017, it is projected the county will receive only roughly \$200,000, according to Wyden.

"Oregon counties depend on SRS funding to

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