

# MILL

Continued from Page A1

Last month the company had 132 employees in John Day. That's up from about 90 last May, before the swing shift was added.

Daucsavage said he's working to confirm availability of additional timber the company has under contract.

He said supply issues have been building over the past five months, as anticipated log deliveries didn't materialize. He declined to specify what contracts were involved.

News of the layoffs triggered ripples of concern about the status of the Malheur National Forest's 10-year stewardship contract, but forest officials and industry observers told the Eagle the program is sound and operating as intended.

Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin said the contractor, Iron Triangle, is "performing exceptionally well under the contract" and has met all the timelines and requirements to date.

Beverlin also clarified that the stewardship work was never intended to fully supply the decks of any one mill, but to provide a predictable base operators could count on and bolster with additional timber buys.

"We can't promise a specific amount, a volume or type of timber to a specific mill," he said.

With forest health as the goal, the contract is rolling out a series of "task orders" or landscape-scale projects that produce a range of ma-

terials, from large timber to small wood and biomass — each type suited to specific mill operations.

The process has provided timber for the Malheur Lumber log decks. Beverlin said 90 percent of the large sawlogs in the first task order went to the John Day mill.

"That's a direct benefit to the community," he said.

The addition of a second shift — the first such expansion at Malheur Lumber since 1998 — was a success story for a mill that was on the verge of closure in 2012 but rebounded.

Last year's expansion came as a sign of confidence that the stewardship contract and accelerated restoration would provide more certainty for the local timber industry. For the company, the new hires would help with the volume expected from fire salvage out of the area and cross train for jobs elsewhere on-site, including a new small-log plant planned for the mill. The new plant would allow the mill to process some of the huge volume of smaller wood produced by forest restoration work — wood not suited for the existing sawmill.

The company said at the time the small-log operation would be up and running this winter, perhaps by the end of 2014.

However, Daucsavage confirmed this week that the small-log plant is on hold as the company deals with permitting issues with the state Department of Environmental Quality.

He said the company still plans to take on small wood

but also needs an ample supply of large timber for the sawmill.

He noted the company has invested \$1 million in the plant this year, making improvements in the biomass plant, addressing DEQ issues, and upgrading equipment.

Beverlin said news of the layoffs was disappointing for the community and for the Forest Service, which wants to support local jobs and economic growth.

He said he wasn't familiar with the issues regarding the small-log mill, but he's hopeful that Malheur Lumber will resolve them and start up the plant.

He said the local infrastructure is a critical need.

"We need the local infrastructure here," he said. "We need them here to process a wide variety of materials that are coming from the forest."

Beverlin said the available volume, especially for the smaller materials, is abundant.

He said the forest has been meeting its targets for harvest, which includes everything from biomass to large timber. The forest hit 55 million board feet in 2013, more than 65 million board feet in 2014, and is on pace to exceed that in 2015.

"And we continue to work with our partners to investigate ways to locally process biomass and small-diameter sawlogs, as this remains the critical issue for ecological and economical forest restoration activities on the Malheur and Eastern Oregon as a whole," he said.



The Eagle/Scotta Callister

**Ice flakes into crystals atop the frozen surface of a pond, as freezing temperatures persisted across the county last week. Warmer weather moved in this week, melting snow from roads and posing the possibility of ice jams on area creeks and rivers.**

## ODOT: Slow down, chain up, think twice

With the weather alternating from freezing to melting, and highway snowpacks following suit, the Oregon Department of Transportation is offering 10 wintertime driving reminders to help keep travelers safe in the Eastern Oregon region.

Travelers are reminded that snow and ice persist on roads in the mountain passes and along Eastern Oregon highways this week.

The 10 tips:

- Drive for the conditions of the road: Adjust your speed to the road conditions. The operative phrase: Slow down!
- Plan extra travel time: Give yourself plenty of time for winter travel to reduce stress and help keep you focused on safe driving.
- Turn off cruise control if snow or ice is present: You may lose control if cruise control is active in wet or slippery conditions.
- Travel with warm

clothes and emergency supplies: With temperatures in single digits and below zero at some locations, be prepared in case you become stuck in a traffic jam or road closure. Always carry food and water, a flashlight, extra cell phone batteries, blanket and other emergency supplies.

- Use caution when taking alternate routes: If the route you were planning to travel is closed (due to weather or a crash), think twice before taking an alternate route suggested by your GPS navigation system. These systems may not take into account winter road conditions on secondary highways.
- Use chains and traction tires: When chains are required, use the next chain up area to put on your tire chains. Continuing to drive in the snowy conditions hoping the road will improve is not a safe idea. Neither is stopping in the mid-

dle of the highway to put on tire chains.

- Chain up areas and highway shoulders are not playgrounds: Use designated parking areas and never use chain up areas or highway shoulders as a place to play in the snow.
- Don't park your vehicle along the highway: Parking in highway shoulders prevents plowing activities, limits access for emergency responders and creates a safety hazard for other road users. Abandoned or parked vehicles along the highway will be towed.
- Stay home if conditions are bad: Consider postponing your trip if road or weather conditions are extreme.
- Know Before You Go: Visit TripCheck.com or call 511.

For more information about winter travel, including links to chain-up videos and more, visit: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/Pages/winterdriving.aspx>

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## Parenting classes on tap

Blue Mountain Eagle

**JOHN DAY** — A free six-week "Active Parenting" series is slated to begin Monday, Jan. 12, at Families First Parent Resource Center.

Sessions will be 5 p.m. on Mondays, Jan. 12, 19 and 26, and Feb. 2, 9 and 16. A free dinner will be offered from 5-5:30 p.m., followed by the class from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Free childcare is included.

Parents will learn skills in opening up lines of communication, using nonviolent discipline, encouraging school success, defusing power struggles and more.

To register, call Families First at 541-575-1006.

**Nominate Your Educational Hero**  
*Educators play an extremely important role in our community and are often underappreciated.*

This year, Doug's Motor Vehicle Repair is saying "Thank you, educators" by honoring an "Educator of the Month."

Each month one local educator will be highlighted in the *Blue Mountain Eagle* and will receive a \$50 gift certificate from Doug's Repair. Educator of the Year will receive \$1,000 to be donated to school of their choice.

Nominate your Local Hero by picking up a nomination form at the *Blue Mountain Eagle* or Doug's Repair, or download a copy from the *Blue Mountain Eagle's* website — [www.bluemountaineagle.com](http://www.bluemountaineagle.com).

47

## 2015

Continued from Page A1

has not selected the one for the project yet. She said the Foundation will try to finalize a hire by this spring.

The architect will be tasked to produce preliminary drawings and schematics, which will be shared with the community. Unterwegner said the Foundation will seek input from the County Court, the court-appointed Grant County Library Advisory Board, and the public as work continues toward a final design.

The goal is to build an updated, accessible library which would then be given to the county as a replacement for the county library on Canyon Boulevard.

The Foundation plans to build the library on the northwest portion of the old junior high school property on Canton Street.

The Foundation bought the property from Grant School District No. 3 in 2012. After completing the required asbestos abatement, the group sold the school building and the land on which it sits to Blue Mountain Custom Homes, which has plans for

office and business space there.

The Library Foundation retained the vacant property where the new library will sit, as well as two buildings leased for the Kam Wah Chung Interpretive Center.

Unterwegner said Blue Mountain has been great to work with, and the plans for community and business uses should be a good fit with the new library complex.

Once the library designs are in hand, the Foundation plans to move ahead with a capital campaign to raise grants and donations for the construction project.

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## BREAKING NEWS ALERTS

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Dr. Rushton is a Preferred Provider for Lifewise and Blue Cross/Blue Shield and a Medicare participant.

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**EVERY OTHER TUESDAY**  
*The doctor speaks Spanish— El doctor habla Español.*

## Local artist to be feted

Blue Mountain Eagle

**JOHN DAY** — All are welcome to a reception spotlighting local artist Mytchell Mead and his works this Thursday.

The event will be from 6 to 8 p.m. at The Corner Cup, located at the stoplight in John Day.

## Want to burn? Renew

Blue Mountain Eagle

**JOHN DAY** — The City of John Day is reminding residents that 2014 outdoor burn permits expired on Dec. 31.

Residents can renew permits at City Hall, or find the form and more information online at [www.cityofjohnday.com](http://www.cityofjohnday.com).

Permits are free. People should check for air quality advisories before burning, and follow the tips on the permit for safe burning.