



**SPRING
FOR IT!**

Athletes on track for new season
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Malheur supervisor revisits 2014 road order

Beverlin: New orders will take site-specific tack

By **Scotta Callister**
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Acknowledging the past process was confusing, Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin last week announced he's taking a new approach to road closure enforcement orders.

Beverlin, meeting with the Grant County Court March 11, said he will rescind a September 2014 order signed by then-Supervisor Teresa Raaf and review decisions covered by it, project by project. He expects the review to look at projects dating back at least five years.

He plans to produce new enforcement orders specific to each of the projects he reviews, rather than taking the omnibus approach that has been used up to now.

Each new order will be presented to the county for review by the Court and Sheriff, he said.

The September 2014 order sparked protests last fall from residents and members of the county's Public Access Advisory Board, who charged the Forest Service was closing roads in Grant County without bringing the changes to the county first. A 2013 county ordinance requires county involvement when access changes are proposed on the public lands.

In response, Beverlin pledged to review the order, identify any roads it covered in Grant County, and determine when they were closed.

He presented his draft results last week, including a map with the road changes marked. Tags attached to the map cited project names and National Environmental Policy Act decision dates for each project area. The dates ranged from 1991 to more recent large-landscape projects including Jane, from a 2010 decision; Soda Bear, from 2011; and Marshall-Devine, 2012.

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FOOD for thought

A treasure trove of ag memories for this Ag Day

By **Scotta Callister**
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — It's not only a lifestyle — agriculture is big business in Grant County.

The numbers tell the tale. Sally Bartlett, the county's economic development coordinator, points to the latest Census of Agriculture available, for 2012, showing the county producing about \$26 million in the market value of agricultural products sold.

Per farm, the market value was up to \$64,000 for that year, from about \$46,000 five years earlier.

Bartlett notes other key facts: The number of farms stayed the same in the five-year comparison: 398 in 2012 and 2007. About a third were large — 110 of them over 1,000 acres — but the range goes down to about nine farms with

less than 40 acres. Of the ag land, the Census says 64 percent was in pasture, 18 percent in woodland, and 14 percent, crops.

Livestock sales outproduced crop sales by about 55 percent, reflecting the county's climate, terrain and soils.

But whether local folks grow hay, peaches, cattle or sheep, agriculture has long been an integral part of the community and its economy.

Shana Northway, Oregon State University Extension Service agent for the county, says in our modern world, many people don't realize the important role that agriculture plays. One reason: Statistics indicate that a tiny percentage of the nation's population — about 2 percent — produces food and other ag products for the rest.

"So people become disconnected, in their daily lives, from where their



The Eagle/Scotta Callister

Cattle dot the winter pastures near Prairie City, with Strawberry Mountain as a scenic backdrop.

food comes from," she said. "Even here."

In addition, many people are unaware of the work that rural landowners do to protect and nurture the natural resources.

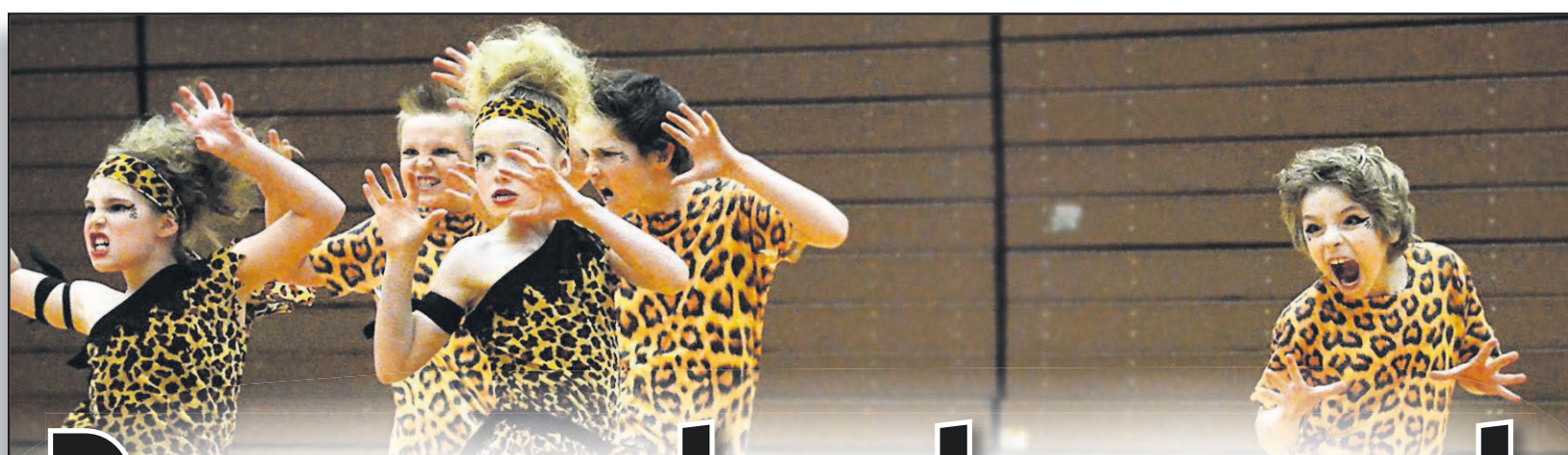
"People never seem to see the stewardship that ranchers and farmers do to preserve the land," she said.

She said raising awareness in those areas is a goal for programs of the Extension Service.

The agency also chronicles the challenges, accomplishments and trends in local agriculture. For nearly a century, the university has tasked its county agents with annual reports that tracks progress, contacts and more.

In recent years, Northway said, production of these reports has gone digital, but the old bound journals live on in the Extension office, a treasure trove of ag history in the county.

In recognition of National Agriculture Day, March 18, the Eagle is publishing excerpts from those journals for its readers — as a tribute to those who toil the land and a reminder to those who benefit from their labors. See Page A7.



Dancers dazzle crowd

Showcase deemed a success

By **Angel Carpenter**
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Dancers from varied levels of expertise leaped into the hearts of their audience at last Thursday's Spring Showcase.

More dancers than ever participated in the program, and the stands were packed at the Grant Union Junior-Senior High School gym.

"We had a great evening," said event coordinator Shannon Adair. "It was great to see all the kids having fun performing and to see some young kids picking up those skills."

Dancers from the youngest Level 1 team to the Grant Union varsity team participated with large group performances as well as small group and solo routines.

The Grant Union Gold seniors were recognized with flowers, including Amy Lallatin, Lucrezia Noseda, Auna Waldner, Jenny McCloskey, Carli Gardner and manager Charli Bowden.

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Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

The Level 2 dance team dancing to "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" at the Spring Showcase. Top photo: Taking the audience to a jungle setting, the Level 3 dance team roars onto the stage. Photo at left: Varsity dancer Jenny McCloskey takes the stage solo at the Spring Showcase. Visit MyEagleNews.com for more photos.

STUDENT ART



Betty Wilson
Prairie City School
Grade 4
Teacher: Sue Thompson

Walker tops Republican straw poll

At Dorchester, party eyes ways to stay relevant

By **Katherine Lacaze**
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — About 300 people gathered to deliberate the future of the Oregon Republican Party at the 51st annual Dorchester Conference last weekend at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

The main event was Sunday's presidential straw vote,

a conference tradition where attendees selected their top candidate for the Republican Party in the 2016 presidential election.

The winner of the 2015 Dorchester straw poll was Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker with 39 votes. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush was the runner-up with 22 votes. Florida Sen. Marco Rubio was third.

A few attendees, before the vote, suggested Jeb Bush could be a problematic candidate for his last name alone

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EO Media Group/Katherine Lacaze

Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., Second District, was the keynote speaker for the 51st annual Dorchester Conference in Seaside, held Friday through Sunday.

