



PLAY BALL!

Spring sports go into full swing

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County settles Gravley lawsuit

A second case continues in District Court

By **Scotta Callister**
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Attorneys for Grant County and James N. Gravley have forged a \$100,000 settlement in the first of two discrimination lawsuits that arose from a 2013 hiring discussion.

Lawyers for both sides confirmed the settlement amount.

The county's attorney, Karen M. Vickers of Mersereau Shannon LLP in Portland, said the money will be covered by the county's insurance through City-county Insurance Services.

Both she and Matthew Ellis, Gravley's Portland attorney, declined to discuss specifics of the case, which went to mediation before it was resolved.

With the settlement, the U.S. District Court in Pendleton dismissed the lawsuit with prejudice, meaning the plaintiff cannot file another lawsuit on the same grounds.

Vickers said there's no admission of liability by the county.

Gravley was a parole and probation officer for Grant County Community Corrections until he was fired in June 2014.

His lawsuit, filed last September, contended he was dismissed after he complained about co-workers using lesbian slurs to describe a job applicant. It named the county, Myers, Community Corrections director Dean Hoodenpyl, and County Clerk Brenda Percy as defendants. He sought some \$800,000, claiming lost wages, distress and injury to his reputation.

In its response, the county said the dismissal was for a different reason, and argued that county officials acted in good faith to comply with the laws. The filing also claimed "qualified immunity" for the defendants.

County Judge Scott Myers declined

to comment on the case or other litigation stemming from the hiring meeting.

The county still faces a lawsuit filed last December by Terry Hanson, the job applicant. Her complaint named the county and Hoodenpyl as defendants.

She is alleging discrimination on the basis of sex or assumptions about sexual orientation.

In a March 3 filing in District Court, the lawyers proposed a schedule for discovery to be completed in April and motions filed no later than Sept. 15.

The filing notes the parties also discussed alternative dispute resolution, but said at that time they were not interested in taking that course.



Eagle file photo

And they're off! Children of all ages scramble for Easter eggs during the 2014 Elks Lodge hunt at Seventh Street Complex in John Day. Hunts are planned in several Grant County communities this Saturday, April 4.

Squad sets off device in Prairie

Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — The Oregon State Police bomb squad was called in last week after a Prairie City landlord discovered a homemade fireworks device in a rental home.

John Day Police Department, which provides police services in Prairie City, responded to the incident on Wednesday, March 25, and called in the OSP East Explosives Unit, based in Hermiston.

Police Chief Richard Gray said the device — which turned out to be an M-80 style firecracker that had been modified — apparently was left behind by a tenant who moved out of the rental home; the property owner found it while cleaning up, and turned it over to Sgt. Damon Rand.

Gray said Rand determined the device, while not live, could be detonated. He moved it to Prairie Wood Products lot where the explosive experts could examine and dispose of it.

The OSP team detonated the device safely about 7:40 p.m., OSP reported.

The incident remains under investigation, Gray said.

EAGLE Q&A

PET TALK

Preventative care is key

By **Cheryl Hoefler**
Blue Mountain Eagle

Medical experts stress prevention as the key to good health — and not just for people.

The Eagle recently visited with Dr. Julie Stafford, a veterinarian at John Day River Veterinary Center, to discuss the importance of regular pet wellness checks and other vital factors in good pet health.

Q: Why are regular wellness exams so important?

A: The key is preventative care. We want to make sure your critters are as healthy as they can be, and catch things before they happen. People want their pets to live as long as they can and that's our goal, too. It starts with education and getting pets in more often for regular care.

Q: How often should an owner take their pet in for a check up?

At least every year, even if your pet seems healthy. It's important to remember that pets have a shorter life span and age at a faster rate than humans. If you take your critter in less often than that, it would be like taking your child in to the doctor as a baby or toddler and then not again he or she is a teenager.

"Senior" pets — dogs older than 7 and cats older than 9-10 — should be brought in more often because things can happen quicker as animals age.

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The Eagle/Cheryl Hoefler

Dr. Laura Meadows checks on a local pooch at John Day River Veterinary Center.

Ready, set — go for the eggs!

Activities coming up throughout the county

Blue Mountain Eagle

We've got some egg-citing news: It's time for Easter fun!

Several egg hunts and other activities are coming up this weekend throughout Grant County.

Here's the schedule:

Friday, April 3

• John Day Fire Station: Egg coloring from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Saturday, April 4

• Mt. Vernon Park: Egg hunt at 10 a.m., courtesy of the Mt. Vernon Fire Department, who will also offer rides on fire engines throughout town.

• Dayville City Park: Egg hunt at 10:30 a.m. There will be four age divisions, from infant through sixth-grade, with a guarantee of prizes and fun for all. Prior to the hunt, will be the town's second annual Bunny Hop 5K Run/Walk. Registration is at 8 a.m. and the 5K at 9 a.m. The cost is \$10 a person, with proceeds going toward the town's Fourth of July celebration. Call Dayville City Hall, 541-987-2188, for more information.

• Seventh Street Complex: Egg hunt at 11 a.m., sponsored by the John Day Elks Lodge. Areas of the field will be divided up into four age groups, with prizes galore. The Easter Bunny will be available too, for photos.

• Grant Union High School, Three Flags Field: Egg hunt at noon, by the John Day Fire Department. The field will be divided into age groups, with lots of prizes. Children will be able to hop aboard fire engines, and also visit with the Easter Bunny.

STUDENT ART



McKenna Elliott

Grade 9

Grant Union High School

Teacher: JJ Collier

U.S. House OKs county payments

Measure next must get Senate approval

Blue Mountain Eagle

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. House last week passed a two-year extension of the Secure Rural Schools program that provides payments to rural timber counties.

The extension was announced by U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, who was suc-

cessful in getting it included in a bill to reform doctor pay under Medicare. The measure passed by a vote of 392-37.

Walden, R-Oregon, lauded the approval, but also stressed the need continues for a "permanent fix for our forested counties."

"But this is an emergency, and what we're doing today is providing a lifeline to our school children in classrooms in rural counties that are forested under federal land, and making sure

law enforcement have the resources they need," he said.

The two-year extension is expected to be considered by the Senate this week.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, called the House vote "concrete recognition that linking the safety net to unsustainable and unacceptable logging practices can never become law."

Walden urged quick action in the Senate, and noted the president has said he will sign it.

Walden also said further action is needed in Congress toward a permanent solution that reforms federal forest policy.

"I remain fully committed to working on forestry legislation that puts people back to work in the woods, reduces the threat of wildfire, and produces the revenue to allow for self-sustaining counties and the people in them," he said. "I just hope this time, with a new majority in the Senate, we'll be able to move forward."

