

ROAD

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He said that process is "working much better than it has in the last 25-30 years."

However, road advocates say the conversation is still coming too late in the process — after decisions are proposed and through the comment period.

Myers said the Court is monitoring the forest projects and proposals.

"We're sorry if it appears things are moving slowly, but things are moving," he said.

However, people in the audience said they are in the dark about the Court's position on roads, despite five or six meetings that focused on the issues.

"None of us have any idea where you stand," said Rod Smith, noting the ordinance requires the Court to either support or reject closures proposed by the Forest Service.

Billie Jo George echoed that frustration, noting that when Forest Service officials make presentations to the Court, "there's never any result."

"At what point do the three

of you say, 'you can close this road' or 'you can't close this road?'" she asked.

She said the Forest Service is decommissioning roads to meet a quota, and the Court should take a stand.

Sam Palmer said he's getting the sense the Court is answering to the Forest Service, not the people. He urged them to send a letter to the Forest Service, and the public, saying they will not allow another road closure—and that all roads will be considered open until documentation is provided to justify a change.

Palmer also said there has been talk in the past about the Forest Service giving the roads over to the county.

"I think we should take them. That's our infrastructure," he said.

Howard Gieger said the Court should realize that closing just one road may "lock up a lot of land."

He suggested the Court should send a "cease and desist" on roads, and also ask for specific National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents.

Sproul noted that "access is a real hot-button issue, and our access in our county is at a turn-

ing point ... And it's getting worse, not better."

He raised concerns about recent talk that pressure on roads will jeopardize logging and timber work on the forest, comments the group took as a threat.

"That's childish," he said. "Don't do it any further."

Myers said he didn't believe the Court had made such threats, and noted that comments may have been taken out of context.

The threat concern also came up in a previous Court session, drawing a response from Russ Young of Iron Triangle. He said he felt a comment by Malheur Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin had been "spun" and misunderstood.

He said the comment came in a broader context about the way working together creates solutions while disputes over issues like roads could bog down the progress under way on the forest.

Gieger said the threat talk is still circulating in the county, and he and others attributed it to Commissioner Boyd Britton. Some said it was recorded on tape, which prompted Myers to caution that he hoped such taping was done legally.

JOB

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Gerry was one of four applicants interviewed for the Grant Union job, including Grant Union teacher Didgette McCracken, Vale School District superintendent Matthew Hawley, and Crane School District superintendent and principal Gail Buermann.

The interview team for the position included Shelley, Witty, board chair Chris Cronin, board member Ben Holliday, Kim Smith, Andrea Combs, Jason Miller, Sandy Brown, Randy Hennen, and Matt Jones.

Witty said the process of choosing the best person for the job was highly competitive, adding the team felt Gerry was the most qualified out of a pool of quality candidates.

Gerry's teaching and administrative career has been at Prairie City, where he has been superintendent the last three years. He taught there for 13 years, including seven years at the elementary level and six at junior high level. He also has been athletic director the past nine years.

Gerry earned his master's degree at Oregon State University and received his initial administrative license at University of Oregon.

The vote to hire Gerry was unanimous among school board members at the meeting, including Cronin, vice chairman Zach Williams, Mike Cosgrove, Gordon Larson and Kelly Stokes

and Holliday. Board member Tracie Unterwegner was absent, on a trip with Grant Union students to the Ashland Shakespearean Festival.

According to preliminary minutes from the meeting, during the public forum portion, John Day resident Chuck Amling requested the salary and benefit packages of both the superintendent and principal positions as well as their educational background and qualifications.

He suggested the district could save money by combining the two positions, and use the savings to bring back programs such as home economics.

Larson replied that the board looked at those combinations and didn't believe it was feasible at this time, adding that such an arrangement could be overwhelming to a candidate new to a position.

Cronin also said the board discussed those options and nothing is off the table, and that at some point that type of arrangement might be necessary. She added the district has cut administration over the last 10 years, and at this time additional reductions are not necessary.

Salary for the new Grant Union principal position is \$89,500 a year. Current enrollment at Grant Union, the largest school in the county, is 584.

The Prairie City School Board has scheduled an emergency meeting, with an executive session to discuss personnel issues, at 6:30 p.m. this Wednesday, April 22, in the school library.

The meeting is expected to touch on the superintendent resignation, along with a social studies position and the 2015-16 master calendar.

COMMUNITY VOICES

Grange active in community

To the Blue Mountain Eagle

In honor of "Grange Month" this April, Mt. Vernon Grange No. 659 is extending an invitation to all Grant County residents to consider joining this community service organization.

Mt. Vernon Grange began in 1925 in Mt. Vernon. In 1949 the building burned to the ground — when it burned, it was the first fire responded to by the new Mt. Vernon fire truck.

In 1953, the Grange was rebuilt at its present location, across Highway 26 from Clyde Holliday State Park. The land was donated by the Holland family and the building was built by donated labor of Grange members.

In October of 2014, members discovered that the septic tank had failed. After many months of getting the permits to replace it, the new septic is finished. The Grange offers its appreciation to all of the members and local businesses that helped with everything it took to get this done.

The Mt. Vernon Grange is a very casual group, not as structured as some larger Granges.

The Grange meets on the second Friday of each month, beginning with a potluck at 6:30 p.m. and the general meeting at 7:30 p.m. It's guaranteed to be a great meal every month.

Anyone who would like to check out the Grange before joining can come to a meeting as our guest. For information call Grange master Ron Dowse, at 541-

575-4268, or secretary Jean Sagert, at 541-575-1007.

Among the activities the Mt. Vernon Grange is involved in are two yearly fundraisers: a pancake feed in January and the Christmas Bazaar on the second Saturday in November. The Grange also sponsors a candidate night during election years.

The Grange Hall has donated to 4-H for their achievement awards dinner, to families for funeral dinners, and to local ditch companies for annual meetings.

The Grange also donates money to fundraisers for cancer patients, victims of fires (including the Lostine Grange), renovations at the Grant County Fairgrounds, Glenn and Rose Ann Palmer's annual community

Christmas dinner, and the Grant County Food Bank, and gives fresh fruit to the Blue Mountain Care Center.

The Grange also is involved in supplying the dictionaries for third-graders in Long Creek, Monument and Dayville and helps the Ellis Tracy Legion Auxiliary in giving to Humbolt and Seneca students. These dictionaries are given to the students to keep.

The Grange also rents its hall for \$55 a day. Renters include two churches, and it also is available for parties — retirements, birthdays, anniversaries — and groups that need a meeting place.

We invite people to come check out the Mt. Vernon Grange!

— Submitted by Jean Sagert, Grange secretary

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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.

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COUGHLIN & LEUENBERGER welcomes

DAVID R. AUXIER, Attorney at Law

Mr. Auxier has joined our firm effective 4/15/15. He is an experienced litigator licensed in Oregon and Idaho and has been practicing law since 1990. His practice will emphasize trial work, domestic relations, personal injury, real estate and business litigation.

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THANKS

to all who attended, supported, sponsored, and helped with making the second annual Long Creek Emergency Services Appreciation Dinner a wonderfully successful community event! The evening raised over \$5000 for the Long Creek Volunteer Ambulance and Volunteer Fire Department!

CURRENT AMBULANCE CREW VOLUNTEERS

EMTs (Emergency Medical Technicians):
Amy Kreger, Myla Corley, Craig Palmer, Joe Gibson

Ambulance Drivers:
Neita Sue Brockway, Ed Stuttmann

FIRE DEPARTMENT VOLUNTEERS

Fire Chief: Don Porter
Assistant Chief: Mike Gibson
Fire Chaplain/Firefighter: Ed Stuttmann
Traffic Control: David Hines
Firefighters: Joe Gibson, Denise Porter, Craig Palmer, Ralph O'Dell
Cadet Firefighters: Caleb Fechtig, Lineah Barnett