



# DEQ called in on JD fume probe

Residents should air out their homes

By **Scotta Callister**  
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Southwest John Day residents continue to report nasty smelling fumes rising from the ground into their homes, as officials investigate the source of the problem.

So far, the indications are the fumes don't pose a health hazard, but residents are urged to ventilate their homes

to clear the odor.

"We don't believe it is particularly harmful to people," said Thomas Nadermann, an industrial hygienist with Sterling Industries of Vancouver, Wash. "But is it an irritant? Absolutely."

Nadermann reported the situation to the state Department of Environmental Quality, which is expected to do a site assessment this week.

City Manager Peggy Gray said offi-

cial are hopeful the DEQ will quickly identify the source of the odor. She said the city police, fire and public works departments are ready to assist the state agency in its efforts.

Nadermann was first called in to investigate when the Soil and Water Conservation District reported the problem in March at its building on Canyon Boulevard. The other reports are much more recent, indicating the substance causing the odor is on the move again, underground.

Nadermann and Michael Montgomery, a building contractor who specializes in hazard mitigation, canvassed the John Day neighborhood last Wednesday, May 13, to try to determine the extent of the problem.

John Day Police Chief Richard Gray and Fire Chief Ron Smith also were in the neighborhood last week, checking new reports and talking to the neighbors.

See DEQ, Page A12

# Court: Put road actions on hold

Process is now in hands of FS regional staff

By **Scotta Callister**  
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Court is asking the Forest Service to hold off on road closures in the Malheur National Forest's Elk 16 and Big Mosquito projects.

In a letter drafted last Friday, the Court said they felt the bulk of the work of the projects could be done without immediate road closures.

The letter asks that the roads remain open until the agency can prove "one at a time" that proposed closures are being done legally, with the proper National Environmental Policy Act process and the support of the Court and the sheriff. The latter is required by a 2013 Grant County ordinance regarding access changes on the public lands in the county.

The letter, sent to the Forest Service's Regional Office, was drafted after a special Court meeting last Friday scheduled as the objection phase for the two projects comes to an end.

It was signed by County Judge Scott Myers and Commissioners Boyd Britton and Chris Labhart.

The Court attached 29 pages, copies of letters and emails it received from the public on the issues, to the letter.

Sheriff Glenn Palmer, one of those who submitted written remarks to the Court, also spoke at Friday's meeting.

He said he opposes any more road closures from a public safety standpoint and in keeping with the county ordinance. He cited problems for search and rescue, when roads are gated, bermed or barricaded, and he questioned the legality of such measures.

The Court's letter didn't rule out eventual closures.

"We believe the proposed closures could take place, after taking a step back for a better look at the consequences of these actions," the Court wrote. "Furthermore, this would give the Forest Service more time to build the much needed trust of the American citizens whom it serves."

Trust emerged as an issue in the discussion, which drew about 20 citizens to the Courthouse.

See ROAD, Page A12



# OYSTERS, OYSTERS EVERYWHERE!

By **Cheryl Hoefler**  
Blue Mountain Eagle

SENECA — Oysters must be accustomed to overcast skies and cool temperatures, coming from the coast.

People attending the Seneca Oyster Feed didn't seem to mind the gloomy weather either, as a good-sized turnout filled the small town last Saturday for the popular annual event.

Typical of past years, a line of hungry but patient oyster-lovers wound through the park, while nearby, a crowd also packed around the hamburger stand.

Despite the muddy ground, ball players continued with their softball games, while bundled-up spectators cheered. It was the 24th year for the event, which often draws visitors from well outside Grant County.



Eagle photos/Cheryl Hoefler

Neither softball players nor spectators let the cool, gloomy weather keep them from enjoying ball games during the oyster feed.



From left, Kris Long, Brady Long, Shelby Long and Thaddeus Cowan Thompson keep warm tending oysters on the grill.



Mike McManus, left, and Thaddeus Cowan Thompson dish out plates of oysters for the hungry crowd.

## STUDENT ART



**Jesse Randleas**  
Grade 6  
Humbolt  
Elementary

# A chance to hook a Chinook

ODFW opens special fishery on JD River

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Anglers will get an unusual opportunity over the next couple of weeks to fish for spring Chinook salmon on a stretch of the mainstem John Day River near Kimberly.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife approved the opening of the Chinook fishery this week. It opens this Wednesday and continues through Sunday, June 7.

According to Brent Smith, ODFW fish biologist in John Day, this year's spring Chinook return over Bonneville Dam has exceeded the escapement goals for the John Day River.

"Over 4,000 adults returning to the John Day have crossed Bonneville Dam so far," Smith said. "These high numbers can be credited, in part, to habitat and passage improvements that have occurred throughout John Day basin — much of it on private land."



Wikimedia

A male Chinook salmon.

The open area will be from the Highway 207 bridge, located .5 mile downstream from Service Creek, to the mouth of North Fork John Day River near Kimberly. The span is about 26 miles.

ODFW set the bag limit at two adult Chinook and five jack salmon per day, and anglers must stop fishing for the day once they harvest two adults.

Statewide salmon gear restrictions apply, as noted on page 9-10 of the 2015 Oregon Sport Fishing Regulations.

A Columbia River Endorsement and a combined angling tag are required. ODFW will conduct random creel surveys through-

out the fishery area with check-in station near Spray or Service Creek. Anglers are asked to check in as they finish fishing.

Smith said opening the fishery below Kimberly should provide better angler harvest opportunities than reported in special fisheries in 2014 and 2012 on the upper mainstem. The river reach below Kimberly is popular with boating anglers and has more public access areas for bank anglers.

There are three salmon populations that migrate through this reach to spawning grounds in the upper mainstem, Middle Fork, and the North Fork. Smith noted that "more fish equals more harvest opportunity."

At the same time, officials say the fishery is compatible with the ongoing efforts to recover the salmon runs in the region.

Much of the recovery effort focuses on restoring rearing and spawning habitat, but that is still limited compared to historic standards. A large fish return means more competition for spawning grounds and for food. If conditions are too crowded in the available habitat, the survival rate suffers.

