

ROAD

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Commissioner Chris Labhart acknowledged the process had led to confusion about the road closures listed for the two projects, noting the vast majority are old closures, not proposed. He said the total includes roads from the Phoenix timber sales that were closed long ago. He cited a stack of NEPA documents dating back to the 1990s for the roads.

"They were already closed, under this particular timber sale," Labhart said.

Brooks Smith, a Grant County Public Forest Commission member and former Forest Service employee, questioned how open that process was, saying the NEPA has to be specific about the roads and the public must be involved.

"There's an appearance that it wasn't an open process," he said. "It needs to be more visible, more transparent."

He said the issue has been infused with tension, and it didn't need to be that way.

Others noted the agency

must list all roads – closed or open – for analysis in the project documents because they remain part of the transportation system unless decommissioned.

Court and audience members took issue with plans to physically decommission some roads, saying the cost would be exorbitant. They also said those roads could be needed in the future for firefighting or harvest hauling.

But access for community uses – recreation, hunting, wood cutting and more – was a big sore spot.

Palmer said he could understand if there are concerns about ruts and four-wheeler damage, but he said the roads are important.

"Cutting off access – it's killing this community," he said.

Members of the public also questioned whether the agency's road density goals were driving the process.

Road advocates, however, said they don't want to hamper the timber work proposed in the projects.

"The access people do not want to harm the vegetative management at all," said Jim Sproul. He said they need to

separate the roads and timber issues.

Court members agreed on a stand against decommissioning of roads.

Britton said while he felt roads already closed in the Phoenix sale should remain closed, he'd like to see a better explanation of the rationale for proposed closures.

Myers read a letter he'd submitted personally, and Court members agreed it could be used as a framework for their letter. Several in the audience said they approved of Myers' approach.

Contacted this week, Malheur Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin said the next steps are in the hands of the Forest Service Regional Office, which will determine who among the objectors has standing. In general, an individual or entity must submit comments during the official comment period to have standing in the objection phase.

Once standing is determined, the regional staff will set up meetings to try to resolve the concerns.

Aside from that process, Beverlin said he appreciates the public's active engagement in the process.

"Even if people don't have standing, we'll take their thoughts into account," he said.

Asked about the Court's request to delay road changes, Beverlin didn't address the two projects specifically. However, he noted that projects generally follow a sequence of events, "and any access changes generally happen toward the latter stages."



Contributed photo/Holly Bentz

The Grant Union Junior-Senior High School senior band with director Mary Ann Vidourek pose on performance day at the State Band/Orchestra Championships.

GU band takes 5th at state

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

CORVALLIS – The Grant Union band placed fifth at the OSAA 2015 Band/Orchestra State Championships held May 13-16 at Oregon State University in Corvallis.

"We received the best scores at state and ended the year with a marked improvement over the last two years," said Grant Union music director Mary Ann Vidourek. "One of my teaching goals this year was for the students to all improve reading rhythms and this paid off in the sight reading portion of the championships."

The annual District Concert was held Tuesday evening at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School, past press time. Performing were the Grant Union senior band, junior band, combined choir, and the Humboldt choir and sixth-grade band, all directed by Vidourek.

Seven members of Grant



The Grant Union Junior-Senior High School senior band performs at the state competition last weekend at Oregon State University.

Union's band and choir have been chosen by Vidourek to participate in the Music in May Festival, this Thursday-Saturday in Forest Grove. Selected were band members Marta Faulkner, Annie Wall, Ricky Weickum and Sam Bentz, and choir members Kelsey Long,

James Mabe and Serena Pace.

About 400 student musicians from Oregon, Washington and Idaho will participate in the event at Pacific University, with rehearsals and lessons on challenging selections. It wraps up with concert at 3 p.m. Saturday at the Stoller Center.

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DEQ

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Last weekend's rain didn't seem to alleviate the problem. Chief Gray said a new

report came in to John Day Dispatch on Monday.

So far the problem has been documented at about a dozen houses, the Grant County Library, the Canyon Creek Apartments and the SWCD building.

Gray said the city also received an odor report at the Canyon City Community Hall, well south of the area of focus, last week. However, he said it did not appear

to be connected to the others.

Officials said the substance causing the odor seems to be migrating downhill toward the river.

As it moves, the odor has been emerging from the ground, into basements and crawl spaces, and in the case of the library, through cracks in foundation slabs.

People who notice fumes seeping into their homes or offices in southwest John

Day are asked to contact John Day Dispatch if they have not already talked to city officials.

Nadermann said new reports will help officials map the problem.

He said his tests indicate the odor is caused by some lightweight compounds commonly used in solvents. He said the problem is not gasoline or a petroleum-based fuel.

Nadermann theorizes that the substance causing the fumes could be moving through the groundwater, which flows toward the river. It also could travel through utility conduits.

Where the substance was released into the ground is not known, but a solvent dumped anywhere in that general area would sink easily through loose soils and mine tailings to the groundwater, and then move from there, he said.

Nadermann said he plans to return to John Day this week, and groundwater testing is the likely next step.

Meanwhile, he and Gray advised residents to air out their homes if they detect the odor.

"Don't sit inside and let the fumes build up," Gray said.

Nadermann said these types of odors tend to dissipate quickly with enough ventilation.

To report any new incidences of the problem, call John Day Dispatch office, 541-575-0030.

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Elisa, Kathleen, Tina, Mandy and Larissa

We will be closed Monday, May 25 in honor of Memorial Day

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The Seneca Oyster Feed Committee would like to give a big **"THANK YOU"** to everyone who helped make the **24th Annual Seneca Oyster Feed** such a Big Success. All the **donations, hard work, donated time and salads** were greatly appreciated. This year was wonderful because of you.

Thank you, City of Seneca

Celebrate Our Freedom

Memorial Day is Monday, May 25.

We want to acknowledge and thank all veterans, past and present, for protecting our American way of life with its promise of liberty and justice for all.

MICHAEL RUSHTON, DPM | 866-315-FEET
Podiatric Physician and Surgeon | 170 Ford Rd, John Day