



DEQ takes on vapor agency crews

Findings lead investigators to JD oil business

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – Federal and state officials have identified a possible source of the contamination that has sent noxious fumes into southwest John Day buildings.

In a community meeting last Thursday evening, officials said the information they've gathered points to Triangle Oil at 706 S. Canyon Blvd. as the "possible responsible party."

About 20 residents attended the meeting, held at the Grant County Regional Airport.

Richard Franklin, the on-scene coordinator with the Environmental Protection Agency, said crews have used drill rigs to punch about 27 holes in the areas where vapors have been detected, and the surrounding area.

He said the process was done objectively, boring holes in areas both north and south of the Soil and Water Conservation District building, where fumes were first reported in March.

Since then, residents and workers in the area from the SWCD building and north to around Fourth Street have reported vapor problems. There have been no vapor problems found south of the SWCD building.

Franklin said they also checked on both sides of the highway, and looked at historical records.

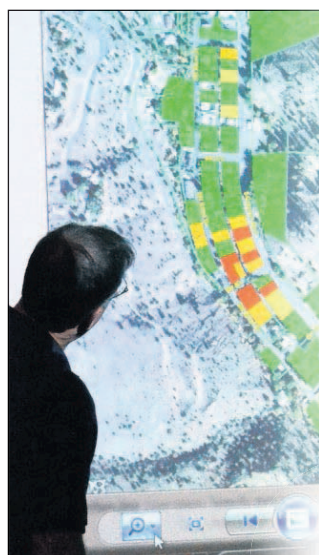
Among the findings:
• Two test pits on the east side of South Canyon Boulevard near Triangle Oil were excavated down to water level, and fresh gasoline on water was found on both; this is where the highest concentration of gasoline has been found.

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Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

Local resident Lamar Hill, front left, shares his knowledge of the history of the area affected by the underground contamination in John Day at the community meeting. About 20 residents attended, and about seven more were officials with the EPA and DEQ.



Richard Franklin, EPA on scene coordinator, shows where concentration levels of the noxious fumes in John Day were highest earlier in the investigation.

COUNTY'S PAST COMES TO LIFE

Cemetery sets a scenic backdrop for living history

Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY – Voices from the past carried on the gentle breeze at the cemetery on Marysville Road, on the hill above Canyon City, last Saturday.

The voices were conjured up by a collection of volunteer actors in a special program staged by the Friends of Grant County Historical Museum.

Some 50 people showed up to walk through the cemetery, enjoying the shady site and the well-researched presentations on figures from Grant County's past.

Their first stop was to listen to Blanche Clark Hicks, played by Julie Reynolds, as she described her early life, marriage to lawyer Erret Hicks, and later years, marked by her fondness for children: "I was Grandma Hicks to everyone."

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Julie Reynolds channels Blanche Hicks, an early Canyon City resident.



Eagle photos/Scotta Callister

Edie Komning recalls the life of Emma Dustin for the visitors who flocked to the cemetery high on the hill above Canyon City. Top photo: Dr. F.C. Horsley and John Long, played by Sam Bentz and Andrew Copenhagen, await their turn to tell their stories.



Characters sit amid the tombstones at the cemetery, waiting their turns to talk to visitors during the "Voices from the Past" event.

Frustrations in wolf country

Wallowa rancher says kills getting harder to confirm

By Scotta Callister
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY – Wallowa County cattleman Todd Nash says ranchers face an increasingly uphill battle to get an official confirmation of wolf depredation when a calf or cow is killed.

Nash was one of several speakers at the Oregon Cattlemen's Association mid-year conference, held at the Grant County Fairgrounds in John Day. As the OCA's wolf committee chair, he has been a vocal advocate for taking wolves off the state's endangered species list and for laws to aid ranchers who now live with wolves in their midst.

Nash said the process for confirming wolf depredation is marked by shifting standards and tests.

"We've seen the goalposts moved farther and farther down the field," he said. "I can't tell you how frustrated I am."

Nash described a May 13 incident on an Imnaha River ranch, where a calf was found gasping its last breath, its flesh laid open by predators.

He said downloads from a radio collar showed that a collared wolf was in the area at the time of the attack. There were tracks showing a chase, and signs that both wolves and coyotes had been at the scene.

The body had "classic" wolf bite marks, Nash said, adding, "I've never seen a coyote kill a 175-pound calf."

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The Eagle/Scotta Callister

Rancher Todd Nash talks about difficulties of confirming wolf depredation in cattle herds in Wallowa County, and political challenges ahead. Nash was one of several speakers addressing some 160 people attending the Oregon Cattlemen's Association mid-year meeting June 10-12 at the Grant County Fairgrounds in John Day.

Box T Ranch honored for healthy trees

Blue Mountain Eagle



Contributed photo

Roger and Meredith Ediger (center) are joined by, from left, daughters Vernita Ediger and Orissa Burghard, son and daughter-in-law Jon and Erica Ediger, and in front grandchildren Sydney and Jackson.

MT. VERNON – The Ediger family ranch has been honored as a 50-year Certified Tree Farm, recognizing their efforts to leave a healthy forest for future generations.

Roger and Meredith Ediger are the third generation of their family to operate the Box T Ranch west of Mt. Vernon. It has been in the family for 98 years.

The Box T had its beginnings as the Masson Place, purchased

and homesteaded by Scottish immigrants John and Margaret Masson. With additions over the years, the ranch has grown to 3,696 acres, with nearly 1,200 designated as forest lands.

Although he lived in John Day, Roger Ediger grew up working on the ranch with his grandfather and uncle, Jack Masson, who operated the ranch and enrolled the timber ground in the Tree Farm program.

Roger can recall planting trees every spring beginning in the late 1950s. Portions of the ranch were

logged during that era by Clyde Holliday.

In 1962, the ranch was certified as a Tree Farm by the Oregon Tree Farm System, a non-profit organization affiliated with the National Tree Farm System and American Forest Foundation.

Kirk Ausland, Oregon Department of Forestry stewardship forester, noted that over the years, the Edigers have been proactive in managing their forest lands

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