

# Sheriff OK following hazmat incident



The Eagle/Dave Fisher

FBI and state police head up what has now become a statewide investigation

By Dave Fisher  
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY – Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer was back on the job Tuesday morning following a harrowing incident that took place less than 24 hours earlier in the same office.

It was about 11:30 a.m. Monday morning when, after opening an envelope the department received

by mail, Palmer suddenly noticed a burning sensation on his arms and forehead.

"I had a metallic taste in my mouth and my lips were numb," Palmer told the Blue Mountain Eagle.

The letter, he said, appeared to be nothing more than political ramblings and, judging from the envelope, appeared to be regular mail. There was nothing particu-

larly suspicious about it. However, Palmer didn't take the time to read it, instead sealing it in an evidence bag, washing his hands and having his wife drive him to Blue Mountain Hospital in John Day. Later that afternoon, he would learn as others did this was not a local isolated event. Other counties throughout Oregon, including several Eastern Oregon counties, reported receiving similar mysterious envelopes through the mail addressed to Oregon sheriffs or their offices, according to the FBI.

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Sheriff Glenn Palmer was at his desk Tuesday morning after a harrowing incident involving mail that took place at the Sheriff's Office less than 24 hours earlier.



# SHOWTIME!

For the Andersons of Izee, the county fair is an animal – and family – affair

By Cheryl Hoefler  
Blue Mountain Eagle

IZEE — What would the Grant County Fair be without the sights, sounds and – yes, the smells – of animals?

For some families the fair revolves around animals, with the Heritage Barn their home for the duration of the fair.

However, long before that animal ever gets to the show ring, there is much work and preparation involved.

The Eagle asked siblings Cinch, 13, and Raney, 10, Anderson of Izee to talk about some of those preparations and share their experiences with showing animals at the county fair.

Q. How long have you been showing animals?

Cinch: I've been showing for seven years.



Contributed photos/Cori Anderson

Top: Raney, 10, left, and Cinch, 13, Anderson show off two of the cattle entries they are planning to show at this year's county fair. Above: Cinch Anderson, 13, of Izee, gives his steer a daily grooming in the weeks prior to the county fair.

Raney: I started showing when I was 7, when I had my first heifer.

Q. What animals are you

showing this year?

Cinch: Beef – a market steer, a heifer, and a cow and calf.

Raney: A market steer and a breeding heifer. My heifer is bred from one of the cows I owned and showed a couple of years ago.

Q. Where do you get your animals and how did you get interested in doing this?

Both Cinch and Raney said they buy their animals from their parents, and said their mom grew up showing cattle and her parents did it, too.

Cinch: My mom's taught me everything I need to know.

Raney: I had quite a bit of help from my mom.

Q. How long does it take you to prepare for the county fair?

A: Cinch: In October we start them on feed and halter-break them. Then we take them to a few jackpots and

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# Peterson plea hearing delayed

By Dave Fisher  
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY – The plea hearing for Roy Richard Peterson of Monument, originally scheduled July 23 at Grant County Courthouse, was rescheduled for Thursday, Aug. 6, at 2:30 p.m. by Judge William D. Cramer Jr.

Peterson, once the central figure in a drive to bring rural fire protection to the Monument area, was previously indicted on 10 felony charges stemming from the acquisition of equipment for a fire district.

As proceedings got underway in the courtroom July 23, it was evident that something was amiss. Peterson sat by himself as defense attorney Benjamin Boyd of the Enterprise-based firm of Hostetter Law Group LLP, spoke to the court by telephone. At issue was whether or not a court document that in-

cluded motions against the indictment had been filed by the defense.

"It's unclear an actual order was signed and entered into the record," said Cramer, noting he had nothing in his file to support the defense's claim.

Boyd replied that it had been emailed to the court in a timely manner.

The state's attorney, Senior Assistant Attorney General Daniel P. Wendel, informed the court that, for his part, he had not seen the documentation and questioned whether it had been submitted by the defense.

Frustrated by the back-and-forth wrangling between prosecution and defense that stems from Peterson's first appearance before the court in early February over a missing signature on the indictment, Cramer reminded Wendel and Boyd that he, as presiding judge, controlled the

court docket.

"I am not impressed by what's going on," he said, adding that an emailed version of motions against the indictment from the defendant's legal counsel didn't suffice.

"You (Boyd) have five days to get the order to me," said Cramer, who set a new date – Aug. 6 at 2:30 p.m. – for Peterson's plea hearing. "I expect that (hard copy) order to be in early next week."

In setting a new date for the hearing, Cramer reminded counsel, "Once I take a plea, negotiations are over."

Asked if the state had any inclination to refer the case back to the grand jury, Wendel said it was his intent to proceed with the original indictment.

"We (the state) don't intend to refer back to the grand jury. We understood today was to enter a plea."

# Long Creek rancher questions new Clean Water Act rule

A leading voice of the cattle industry, Sharon Livingston hopes WOTUS gets derailed

By Dave Fisher  
Blue Mountain Eagle

LONG CREEK – Add the name Sharon Livingston to the list of critics who say the EPA and Corps of Engineers rely on trust that doesn't exist.

A long-time Long Creek area cattle rancher, Livingston is gravely concerned that a new rule defining the waters of the U.S. protected under the Clean Water Act, commonly referred to as WOTUS for short, is one more instance of the federal government butting in where it doesn't belong.

"WOTUS scares the heck out of me. The federal government I don't think is operating in our best interest and is taking away state rights to manage their water."

Livingston is not alone. The new rule has generated a flood of criticism and a growing number of legal challenges from farmers, ranchers and irrigators across the country.

They claim that the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which wrote the rule, are participating in a "land grab" to "regulate every farmer, every ditch and every irrigated pasture," and that enforcement of the rule is open to interpretation by government officials.

EPA officials say the new rule includes exemptions for agricultural activities and that nothing will change for farmers and ranchers, but Livingston isn't buying in.

"Water is our lifeline," said Livingston, who, like other area ranchers, uses the resource on her property to

water her herd and irrigate to raise hay to feed her cattle. "If you can't use the water, you're in trouble... water is essential."

The Clean Water Act makes it illegal to discharge any pollutant from a single source into navigable water without a permit. Permits are costly and fines are hefty. Until recently, agriculture has operated for nearly 40 years under a definition of navigable waters and exemptions for normal practices.

The new rule, critics maintain, expands that regulatory jurisdiction to any water with even a remote connection to those navigable waters and doesn't clearly define protected waters, leaving determinations up to the agency.

EPA officials disagree. They say the new rule is intended to clarify which waters are protected in response to Supreme Court decisions and the public's demand for greater clarity, consistency and predictability in jurisdictional determinations.

The agencies' new rule – which was published in the federal register on June 29 and becomes effective at the end of August – has already generated 11 lawsuits against EPA and the Corps from 28 states, agricultural organizations, other land-use industries and private landowners. And it has spurred legislation in both the U.S. House and Senate that would require the agencies to withdraw the rule and start over.

Livingston wants Oregon to be added to the list of states opposed to WOTUS and, at a recent meeting of the Grant County Court, lobbied Judge Scott Myers to contact Governor Kate Brown on the matter.

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The Eagle/Dave Fisher

Ranching is in Sharon Livingston's blood. She accompanied her parents to the Long Creek area when she was six years old and has lived on the multi-generational family-owned ranch ever since.

