

Educators share priorities for school year

Three new admins
take on positions

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY – School is back in session this week for students of Grant School District No. 3 where there have been a few changes in administration.

Curt Shelley is the new district superintendent, replacing Mark Witty who took on Baker School District’s superintendent position.

Ryan Gerry has taken the helm as Grant Union’s new principal, and Kim Smith is the new principal of Humbolt Elementary.

Andrea Combs is in her third year as Seneca School’s head teacher.

She’s been teaching at Seneca School since 1998 — she also attended the school as a child — and taught for one year prior to that at Mt. Vernon Middle School.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Gathering to share their thoughts about the new school year recently are Grant School District No. 3 administrators, including head teacher Andrea Combs, left, of Seneca School, Principal Kim Smith of Humbolt Elementary, Principal Ryan Gerry of Grant Union and Superintendent Curt Shelley gather at the district office.

Seneca’s kindergarten through sixth grade school has two teachers, Combs and Kris Metcalf, along with three support staff.

“The small staff makes it a tight community,” Combs said. “Our parents are a major part of that caring community.”

She said they are focused on targeting instruction to improve

state test scores, and moving forward, learning from the strengths and weaknesses from last year’s data.

Combs said they also provide learning experiences, such as trips to Fossil and the Hancock Field Station, to “broaden the horizons of our students.”

“We want to help them see where they can be in the post-K-through-12 education,” she said.

Combs and her husband, John, have a son and daughter who attend Grant Union.

Kim Smith has worked for the district for 17 years.

She started teaching at Mt. Vernon Middle School and has filled a variety of roles over the years, including district diagnostician, district testing coordinator and director of special education.

She said she enjoyed working in the different positions with those who assist students in reaching their potential.

“Our team’s already worked on a shared vision,” she said. “We want to increase student academic growth, strengthen social skills and boost overall school morale. We’re looking forward to working with families. We realize their assistance at home makes the biggest impact with the students’ overall success at school.”

She and her husband, Brent, have two daughters who attend Grant Union.

Ryan Gerry spent his education career at Prairie City

School District 4, his alma mater, teaching elementary through junior high students, serving as athletic director, and three years as superintendent-principal.

He said he’s looking forward to getting to know the students and parents at Grant Union.

“It’s important for parents to know our door is always open,” he said. “If they have any questions or concerns, they can feel free to stop by.”

He added, “We have a solid, dedicated staff to assist their students.”

He said he’s looking forward to helping the students progress to graduation, “prepared for the next step in life.”

Gerry’s wife, Samantha, teaches physical education and kindergarten through first grade music at Humbolt.

They have three children; two attend Grant Union and one attends Humbolt.

Shelley is in his 24th year in the education field.

He spent the past eight years at Grant Union, the last five as principal, before becoming superintendent.

Prior to that, he was principal at Culver High School for five years, and with that district for nine. He also taught at Summit High School in Bend for six years.

“I’m excited for the next chapter of my life,” he said.

He and his wife, Elizabeth, who is a Grant Union teacher and career coordinator, have two children, a son and daughter who attend Grant Union.

“We have a successful district and want to continue to offer a quality education with as many programs as the school budget will allow,” he said.

He said one goal of the district is to regain and prioritize programs such as career and tech, and welding, computer, metal and agriculture.

He said art and music also need to have a higher priority.

“We love kids,” he said. “I like to see kids grow and mature physically, socially, emotionally and academically.”

He added he enjoys seeing what the students have become when they complete school.

“It’s nice to have kids come back and share the experiences they’ve had related to their education here,” he said.

WHAT’S HAPPENING

The deadline for What’s Happening items is 5 p.m. Friday. Call Cheryl at the Eagle, 541-575-0710.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 3

Library Foundation public meeting

• 6-7:30 p.m., Grant County Library front lawn, John Day
The Grant County Library Foundation will hold a public meeting regarding the new library building plans. Foundation board members will be at the meeting, and architect David Straus will discuss ideas for the structure. Input from the community is welcome. Refreshments will be provided. The library is at 507 S. Canyon Blvd.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 6

Auto tour of the John Day Fossil Beds

• 1 p.m., Sheep Rock Unit
Drive your own vehicle in a free tour group led by National Park Service staff. The three-hour, 12-mile tour will start at the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center nine miles west of Dayville, and travel through the Sheep Rock Unit, with several stops to discuss geology and fossil sites. Good tires are recommended. Call 541-987-2333.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 9

Chamber installation, dinner

• 5 p.m., John Day Golf Clubhouse
The Grant County Chamber of Commerce will hold its annual installation and volunteer appreciation. Food will be provided. Happy hour will be from 5-6 p.m. Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario) is the guest speaker.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 10

Shinyribs in concert at the ranch

• 7 p.m., Diamond Hitch Mule Ranch, Kimberly
Shinyribs brings its high-energy music to the Diamond Hitch Ranch. Tickets are \$20 a person, and camping at the ranch is \$15. Monument High School’s Flying Tigers will provide a Texas-style meal of pork ribs, coleslaw and baked beans. The Diamond Hitch Ranch is on State Route 19 between mileposts 107 and 108. Call 541-934-2140 for more information. Visit Shinyribs at <http://shinyribs.org/>.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 12

Star program

• 7:30-9:30 p.m., Thomas Condon Paleontology Center
Enjoy an free viewing of the planets, stars and galaxies with a telescope, presented by John Fiedor, National Park Service volunteer, and preceded by an astronomy program. Clear or cloudy skies, a program will be presented. The center’s fossil museum will be open for touring at 7 p.m. Call 541-987-2333.

MONDAY, SEPT. 14

Airport master plan meeting

• 5 p.m., Grant County Regional Airport, John Day
All are welcome to a kick-off meeting of the Grant County Regional Airport Master Plan project, which will help ensure an effective and optimal development of the airport. Community participation is welcome and appreciated in the master planning process.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 15

George Winston in concert

• 7 p.m., Prairie City Community Center
George Winston returns to Prairie City, bringing his melodic folk, New Orleans R&B and stride piano styles in concert. Winston’s upcoming album, “Spring Carousel – A Cancer Research Benefit,” is scheduled for release in 2015. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the performance at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 a person, with all proceeds going to disaster relief and emergency preparedness upgrades at the community center. Support the local food bank by bringing a canned food donation.

Please join us for the annual
Grant County Chamber of
Commerce Installation of Board
Members and Volunteer
Appreciation
Wednesday, September 9th
5:00 PM
John Day Golf Club
Happy Hour - 5:00 - 6:00 PM
Hors d’oeuvres will be provided
Guest Speaker will be
Representative Cliff Bentz
Please RSVP as soon as possible.

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VB

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The Prospectors squeaked by with a 25-21 win.

“We had too many errors in all aspects of the game,” she said. “By the time we played Crane, we worked a lot of that out and started to take care of the ball much better.”

The home team defeated Crane 25-17 and Baker 25-16, in pool play.

Grant Union soundly defeated Jordan Valley in bracket play, 25-8 and 25-7, and also kept a lid on Powder Valley, 25-6 and 25-3.

The Prospectors’ momentum continued going into the championship game against the Tigerscots.

“The team was determined



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Grant Union's Kenzie Wilson prepares to pound the ball in the Prospectors home invitational Saturday.

to reclaim our home tournament title after losing it last year to Weston-McEwen,” Speth said. “During bracket play, we minimized our errors that we saw earlier in the day and were able to side out at a high percentage. I was pleased with our mental toughness and focus, as well as converting offensively and

serving tough.”

Prospector senior Kenzie Wilson said the team is excited to begin its league games in a week.

“It’s a good thing we came out on top, so we can make a statement,” she said.

When asked about a memorable part of the game, she said “It definitely feels great whenever the ball hits the floor on a kill.”

The Prospectors will play on the road at the Heppner Tournament at 9 a.m. Saturday.

The stats
Grant Union vs. Weston-McEwen 25-13, 25-11
Whitney McClellan: 1 dig
Mariah Moulton: 21 kills, 14 aces (team high), 100 percent serving, 32 digs (team high)
Sam Brock: 12 kills, 9 aces, 20 digs, 1 solo block, 4 block assists
Kenzie Wilson: 16 kills, 4 aces, 6 digs, 3 block assists
Kori Pentzer: 43 kills (team high), 12 aces, 24 digs, 2 block assists
Rheanna Cartner: 5 kills, 92 set assists, 2 aces, 14 digs, 2 block assists
Heather Mosley: 18 kills, 7 digs, 3 solo blocks, 5 block assists
Joelynn Smith: 2 digs
Taylor McCluskey: 4 set assists, 1 dig
Chelsie Kodesh: 5 aces, 26 digs

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