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DIGGIN' PINK

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AT THE ROOT OF GOOD FOOD



Emma Field, 6, discusses pumpkin choices with Elaine Mezzo, far right, while Harrison family members, Scott (back, far left), Homer and Jeannette, work in the family's Harrison Ranch booth at the Farmers Market.

Family business provides fresh produce for the community

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

MT. VERNON – Providing good produce for the community – that's why Scott Harrison does what he does.

Harrison, who runs Harrison Ranch west of Mt. Vernon, not only enjoys his work, but he gets a great deal of satisfaction from bringing fresh, locally grown food to people.

Scott and his parents, Homer and Jeannette, are weekly vendors at the John Day Farmers Market where they sell their bounty of fresh produce. Scott has expanded the offerings recently to include packaged items such as spices, stew mixes and kale chips, and canned goods – jams, jellies, and a variety of pickled foods.

The Harrisons' array of fresh produce, depending on the seasonal availability, includes lettuce, zucchini, cauliflower, spinach, cantaloupe, cucumbers, onions, beets, and much more. Jeannette said some of the best sellers are green beans, pickling cucumbers, tomatoes, sugar pod peas, broccoli and winter squash.

A 30x72-foot "high tunnel" added at the ranch three years ago extends the growing season by about a month on both ends for some crops like tomatoes, bell peppers and eggplant.

Homer said, "It can be a challenge, in a way, to grow good food."

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Contributed photo

Riding on the job is part of a hard day's work for Scott, left, and Homer Harrison on the family's Harrison Ranch west of Mt. Vernon.



Contributed photo

Harrison Ranch offers a bounty of local, fresh produce, including several squash varieties.

Community considers flood plan

By Kyle Spurr
Blue Mountain Eagle

Residents along Canyon Creek in Canyon City and John Day have a chance to take flood protection into their own hands. More specifically, their own backyards.

At a community meeting in Grant Union High School's old gym last week, county engineer Doug Ferguson presented a short-term plan to reduce the increased flood risk caused by the 110,00-acre Canyon Complex Fire.



Doug Ferguson

Due to the destruction of vegetation from the fire, there is potential for a substantial increase in flooding along Canyon Creek. The short-term plan would protect against a flooding event similar to 2011, when waters damaged part of the high school.

The plan includes temporary measures such as dikes, sandbags and possibly jersey barriers to be placed as soon as possible. The work requires no permitting, and just approval by the landowners.

Ferguson, of Ferguson Surveying and Engineering in Mt. Vernon, said the project needs 100 percent participation from the landowners for it to work properly.

Notices have been sent out to landowners asking for permission. Ferguson has not heard much dissension about the project, known as the Canyon Creek Temporary Emergency Berm Project.

"The way the community pulls together sometimes is amazing," Ferguson said. "It's like we are a big family."

Kyle Wright, a hydrologist with the U.S. Forest Service, spoke at the community meeting Thursday and shared some figures that show how bad flooding can get in the next few years.

Before the fire, a 10-year flood would cause 700 cubic feet per second of water to flow. Now after the fire, a similar flood could cause up to 2,000 cfs, nearly three times the amount, according to Wright.

The increased threat of flooding will last at least five years until the vegetation grows back.

"The potential for damage is great," Wright said.

Ferguson's short-term project could protect from flows between 800 and 1,000 cfs.

The focus of the project is on a 2.5-mile portion of the creek that

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Juniper Ridge addresses concerns after escapes

By Kyle Spurr
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Court took a tour of the Juniper Ridge Acute Care Facility in John Day Monday afternoon to see how the facility is addressing the recent escape of a patient earlier this month.

The escape was the third known incident since the mental health facility opened in 2013.

Kimberly Lindsay, executive director of Community Counseling Solutions, the company that operates Juniper Ridge Acute Care Facility, showed the three commissioners how the current fence in the yard is



Eagle photos/Kyle Spurr

Grant County Commissioner Chris Labhart examines a part of the fence at Juniper Ridge Acute Care Facility that is flawed from being built on non-compacted ground.

flawed because it was built on non-compacted ground. In some spots, the fence is leaning and weakened.

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Man reports shooting wolf while hunting coyotes

By Eric Mortenson
For the Blue Mountain Eagle

A Grant County resident in Eastern Oregon reported to Oregon State Police Oct. 6 that he shot a wolf while hunting coyotes on private property south of Prairie City.

Wolves are protected throughout Oregon under the state endangered species law and under federal regulation in the western two-thirds of the state. Killing them is not allowed except in defense of human life and, for authorized livestock owners, when wolves are caught in the act of attacking livestock or herd dogs.

State police investigated, recovered the wolf's carcass and submitted a report

Online

Information about distinguishing wolves from coyotes is available at http://www.dfw.state.or.us/Wolves/docs/Wolf_Mngmt_Flyer_2011.pdf

to the Grant County district attorney's office for review, according to an OSP news release.

However, the Grant County DA's office said the case has been transferred to Harney County prosecutor's office. District Attorney Tim Colahan said his cohort in Grant County has a conflict of interest because he knows the hunter's family, and asked Colahan to handle the review

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