



GRANT COUNTY MIRACLE OUT OF THE ASHES

Random acts of kindness rise from wildfire disaster

By Carl Sampson
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHAN DAY — The Grant County Fair had just ended, and manager Mary Weaver, secretary Mindy Winegar and groundskeeper Dusty Williams were taking a deep breath.

Fair week is always busy, and this year was no different. Plenty was left for them to do — clean up, reorganize and button up the fairgrounds for the season.

Then, three days later, disaster struck.

It was Aug. 12, and lightning exploded into the tinder-dry hillsides south of town, setting off wildfires that would incinerate more than 110,000 acres of forestland, including 17,081 privately owned acres and 93,000 acres managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management.

Even worse, in four weeks the fire marched up the canyon and into the Strawberry Mountain wilderness, leveling 43 homes and damaging or destroying many outbuildings, trucks, cars and equipment, leaving scores of people homeless, and worse, hopeless.

See ASHES, Page A7



Carl Sampson/The Eagle

Jason and Amanda Wright lost their home and all of their belongings to the Canyon Creek Complex fire last summer, but their fortunes changed because of the generosity of the community. Kathy Stewart of Redmond offered the Wrights the use of a fully furnished home, which they hope to purchase.

“People began bringing clothes, tools and supplies. People I didn't even know.”

Jason Wright

Christmas on the Prairie arrives

Building gingerbread houses — and fun — featured at PC festival

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — Anna Smith's oven is working overtime this week.

She's baking gingerbread house walls and roofs — enough for 150 houses.

It's all in preparation for the children's gingerbread house-building activity Smith will head up

If you go

What: Christmas on the Prairie
When: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 21
Where: Prairie City
Theme: “Candyland”

at this year's Christmas on the Prairie starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 21, at the Teen Center on Front Street in Prairie City.

This is the third year she has organized the free activity, which has grown each year, from 100 houses in 2013 and 125 last year.

Smith has also learned a few things along the way.

See FUN, Page A5



Cheryl Hoefler/Eagle photos

Eddie Maltass of John Day builds gingerbread houses during the 2014 Christmas on the Prairie. The free activity for children will again be at the Teen Center in Prairie City during this year's holiday event on Saturday, Nov. 21.

Hunter charged in wolf shooting

Man had notified authorities; both charges misdemeanors

By Eric Mortenson
EO Media Group

An Eastern Oregon man who told state police and wildlife officials that he'd shot a wolf while hunting coyotes on private property has been charged with killing an endangered species.

Brennon D. Witty, 25, also was charged with hunting with a centerfire rifle without a big game tag, Harney County Dis-



Ore. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

OR 22, a male wolf is pictured walking through a Northeast Oregon forest on Jan. 26. It was shot south of Prairie City by a man hunting coyotes.

trict Attorney Tim Colahan said Monday. Both charges are Class A misdemeanors, each punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$6,250 fine. Witty will be

See WOLF, Page A5

