

Happy Thanksgiving

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Sagaser seeks to withdraw guilty pleas

By Carl Sampson
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — A Mt. Vernon man who previously pleaded guilty to six domestic violence and drug-related charges asked for a new attorney on Nov. 19 — and to withdraw his pleas.

Matthew Eric Sagaser, 31, told Circuit Judge William Cramer that he wants a new lawyer to replace his court-appointed lawyer, Robert Raschio. The judge set a Nov. 30 in-person meeting with them to discuss the motion in chambers.

The Nov. 19 hearing was held remotely with Cramer in Burns and the rest of the people in Canyon City. He is the only circuit court judge in Grant and Harney counties.

After Sagaser's motion for a new lawyer is settled, Cramer said he will take up the motion to withdraw his pleas.

Raschio would not comment on the motions.

The move is unusual because Sagaser already pleaded guilty on Nov. 5 to:

- One count of coercion.
- Three counts of fourth-degree assault.
- One count of strangulation.
- One count of possession of methamphetamine.

Sagaser was released from jail for a week after he entered the guilty pleas and was to be sentenced Nov. 19, according to Assistant Grant County District Attorney Matt Ipson.

Sagaser was initially indicted on 29 counts of

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County wants to opt out of pot law

By Carl Sampson
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — When it comes to Oregon's new law legalizing marijuana, count Grant County out.

The county court plans to pass an ordinance banning the growing, processing and sale of medical or recreational marijuana in Grant County.

"I believe our voters spoke clearly," County Judge Scott Myers said during a Nov. 18 meeting.

Oregon voters passed Measure 91 in November of 2014. It legalized the recreational use of marijuana in the state for people 21 or older.

The Oregon Legislature earlier this

year passed a law allowing counties to opt out if 55 percent or more of their voters rejected it.

In Grant County, about 64 percent of the 4,374 registered voters rejected the measure, Myers said. Statewide, 56 percent of voters approved the measure.

The county ordinance banning marijuana applies only to the unincorporated areas within the county, said Ron Yockim, legal counsel for the county.

The cities of John Day, Dayville, Canyon City, Mt. Vernon and Prairie City have already opted out, according to the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which oversees

the marijuana laws.

Other counties have also opted out of the law, including Umatilla, Harney, Malheur, Crook, Wheeler, Klamath, Morrow, Baker, Linn, Jefferson and Union. Douglas and Marion counties have put the issue up for a vote.

Grant County's proposed ordinance doesn't impact the personal growing and use of marijuana, Myers said.

"It still allows John Q. Citizen to grow and use marijuana," he said.

The county faces a Dec. 30 deadline to pass the ordinance, Myers said.

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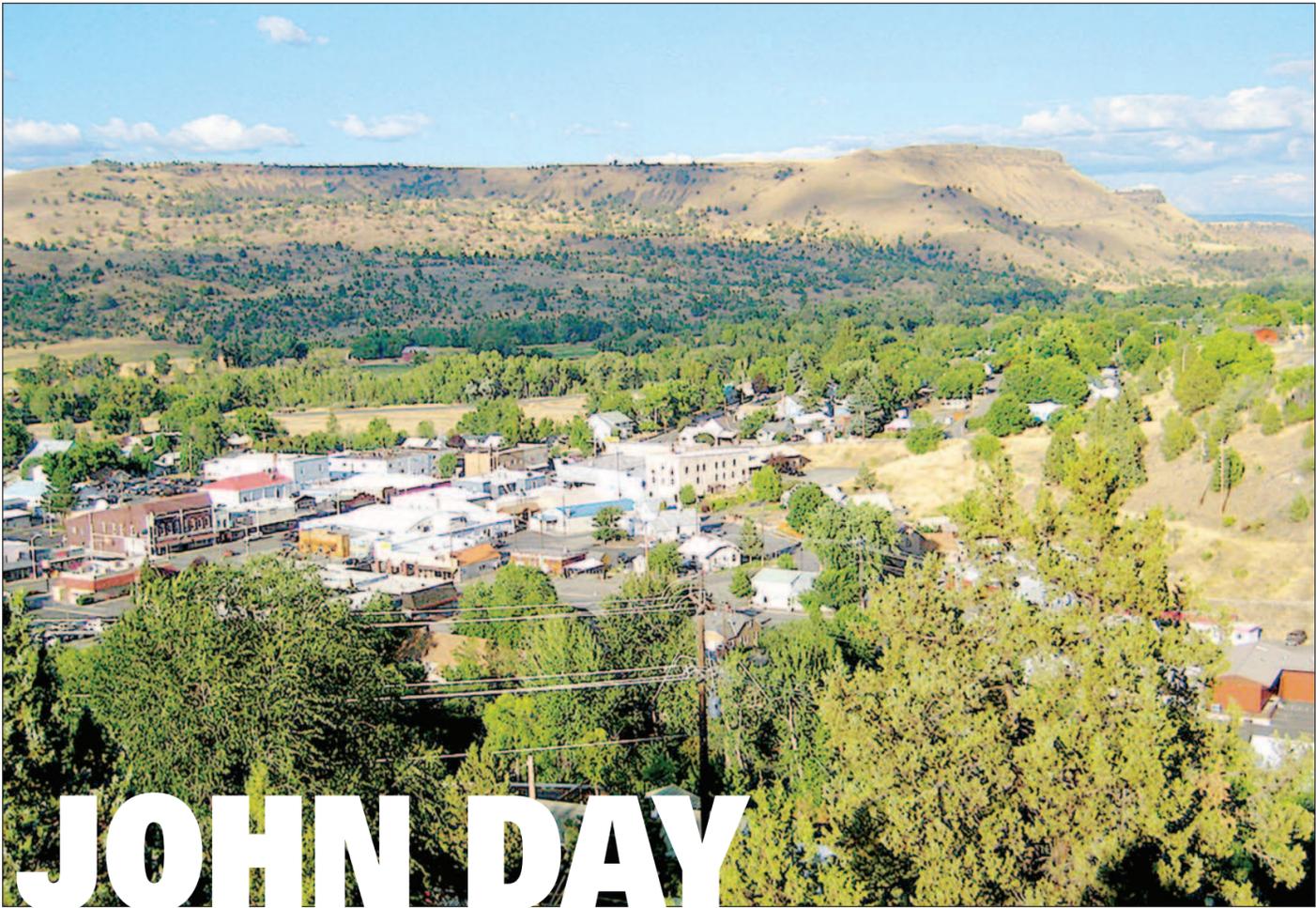


Carl Sampson/The Eagle

Grant County Judge Scott Myers, left, and Commissioner Boyd Britton discuss a draft ordinance that would ban growing, processing or selling marijuana in the county.

ON THE TOWN

'HUB' TOWN



JOHN DAY

Home to airport, hospital and fairgrounds

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

Eventually, almost everyone—even in the most far-flung corners of Grant County—ends up in John Day for one reason or another.

The "hub" town, population 1,735, is home to such facilities as Blue Mountain Hospital and Hospice, Grant County Regional Airport and Industrial Park, the Grant County Fairgrounds and Rodeo Arena, and state and federal forest agencies, as well as an array of businesses and community services.

John Day is home to an active Elks Lodge, American Legion and Auxiliary, a spacious senior center and two museums—Kam Wah Chung, and Ranch and Rodeo.

The Grant County Chamber of Commerce and Grant County Library are also based in John Day.

And residents don't have to venture far to enjoy the great outdoors, thanks to the John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation Department. John Day City Park and Gleason Public Pool are in the heart of town, along the banks



Eagle file photos

The historic John Day Bank building is a stately feature in the downtown John Day business district.

TOP PHOTO: John Day, with a population of about 1,700, is the largest city in Grant County.

of Canyon Creek. Seventh Street Complex at the north side of town offers several recreational opportunities—baseball and softball fields, basketball and tennis courts, skate park, a pond, picnic areas, playground and a trail. The trail is being repaired and extended, memory benches installed along the path and new restrooms yet to be added near the basketball courts and skate park.

Just to the west of town is John Day Golf Course, offering nine holes of putting and driving fun.

Seasonal activities in John Day include the John Day Farmers' Market, held Saturdays from mid-June to mid-October, and the John Day Community Garden, which has taken root on the Third Street Extension across from the rodeo arena. Both were established in 2010.

Downtown John Day has been getting a major facelift during the past year.

Phase one of the John Day Beautification Project included improvements such as reconstructed sidewalks, and new light fixtures and poles with hanging basket planters on Main

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