

Conservation District annual meeting on tap

Blue Mountain Eagle

MONUMENT — Water rights and toxic plants are among the topics at Monument Soil and Water Conservation District's 2016 land-owner seminars and meeting,

Wednesday, Jan. 27, at the Monument Senior Center.

The event will begin with a welcome and introductions at 10 a.m. Three seminars are scheduled:

- "Water Rights" from 10:15-11 a.m., led by Grant

County Watermaster Eric Julsrud.

- "Allocation of Conserved Water Program" from 11-12 p.m., led by Assistant Watermaster Hailey Boethin.
- "Toxic Plants in Your Fields and Around Your

House" from 1-2 p.m., led by

Mark Porter, Oregon Department of Agriculture noxious weed representative from the northeast Oregon Region.

From noon to 1 p.m., Monument FFA will serve a barbecue brisket lunch for \$8

a plate.

The seminars will be followed by the Monument SWCD annual meeting and election of officers at 2:15 p.m.

RSVP by Friday, Jan. 15, by calling 541-934-2141, or mswcd@centurytel.net.

Steele sentenced 25 months for drug charges

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Anthony Scott Steele was sentenced to more than two years in prison after pleading guilty to a number of drug-related charges.

At a plea hearing Thursday in Grant County Circuit Court, Steele pleaded guilty to one count of manufacture of methamphetamine, four counts of delivery of methamphetamine, six counts of possession of methamphetamine and one count of menacing. He entered an Alford plea — pleading guilty without admitting to committing the criminal act — on one count of felon in possession of a firearm.

The plea came after negotiation with District Attorney Jim Carpenter, whereby additional charges — three counts of manufacture of methamphetamine, four counts of delivery of methamphetamine, three counts of possession of methamphetamine and two counts of felon in possession of a restricted weapon — were dismissed. Per the plea agreement, the parties stipulated to a crime severity and criminal history level for a 25-month sentence for the manufacturing charge. Carpenter said Steele was also required to assign his \$2,500 bail security to the Grant County Sheriff/Drug Task Force.

Judge William D. Cramer Jr. sentenced Steele to the 25-month prison sentence, with a variety of lesser sentences for the other charges to be served concurrently. Cramer also imposed three years of post-prison supervision, with added recommendations of substance abuse treatment and no contact with Shelby Pickenpaugh, and a \$250 fine. Cramer said Steele could receive credit for time already served and was eligible for consideration for early release.



Eagle file photo

The Grant County Courthouse will be closed Jan. 15-18 for asbestos abatement.

Grant County Courthouse to close for asbestos abatement

Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Courthouse will be closed Friday, Jan. 15, through Monday, Jan. 18, for asbestos abatement.

The entire building will be closed, and no one will be allowed to enter, with no

exceptions. All other county departments will remain open on Jan. 15.

All county offices will be closed on Monday, Jan. 18, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Regular office hours will resume Tuesday, Jan. 19.

Armed group accesses government files at refuge

By Rick Bowmer
Associated Press

BURNS — The leader of a small, armed group occupying a national wildlife refuge in southeastern Oregon said Monday he and his followers are going through government documents stored inside refuge buildings.

Ammon Bundy told reporters the documents will be used to "expose" how the government has discriminated against local ranchers who use federal land for cattle grazing.

Bundy said the documents would also help secure the release of Steven and Dwight Hammond, two area ranchers convicted of arson who returned to prison last week to serve longer sentences. The Hammonds' case set off the occupation of the

Burns-area refuge on Jan. 2.

Bundy said his group is not accessing government computers at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, including personnel files.

After the news conference, the group drove in a convoy to a ranch near the refuge and tore down a stretch of government-erected fence. The goal, according to the armed men, was to give the rancher access to the range that had been blocked for years. It's not clear where the fence was located or which rancher sought the group's help.

The refuge is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Spokesman Jason Holm said because the documents and files at the refuge may have personally identifiable information, the agency "is taking necessary steps to ensure em-

ployee and family safety."

The agency strongly condemned the destruction of the fence and said the action undermines hard-earned conservation impacts achieved in the area.

"Removing fences, damaging any Refuge property, or unauthorized use of equipment would be additional unlawful actions by the illegal occupiers," Fish and Wildlife said in a statement. "Any movement of cattle onto the Refuge or other activities that are not specifically authorized by USFWS constitutes trespassing."

Sixteen full time employees and one part time employee usually work at the refuge, Holm said. Some who can't work away from the refuge have taken administrative leave, while others are working from home or another office.

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majority of whom he believes will vote to allow "making money and bringing jobs here" through marijuana businesses, despite the fact 65 percent of the county voted against Measure 91 in 2014, which legalized recreational marijuana.

reational marijuana.

"We believe that the county court will do what the people of Grant County expect and give them a voice in this process through a vote," he said. "... My clients and I are confident that the people of Grant County, if given a chance to vote on whether they want jobs and tax revenues from a legal activity in (the) State of Or-

regon or no jobs and no tax revenues, they will (choose) to reject the Measure 91 opt-out passed in Grant County Ordinance 15-01 and allow businessmen in Grant County access to the free market to bring jobs to our county suffering nearly 10 percent unemployment."

Although bills enacted by the Oregon Legislature in 2015 only allow taxes to be

collected from retail marijuana sales, county residents who argued against the ban on marijuana growers and expressed interest in growing — including Russell and Paul Cooper — volunteered to pay a 3-percent fee of their growing revenues to the county.

The complaint that was withdrawn alleged the Grant County Court improperly passed the ordinance as an

emergency, effective immediately, without a unanimous vote. The complaint further alleged that, although the commissioners discussed the ordinance at four consecutive weekly meetings in December, Myers' language stating the hearing was continued from one meeting to the next legally indicated the four dates were a single meeting.

COPS & COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Circuit Court

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Circuit Court reported the following fines and judgments:

- Brett Anson Nelson, 53, pleaded guilty to two counts of third-degree criminal mischief. For each, he was sentenced to supervised probation for 18 months and 10 hours community service. He was ordered to pay compensatory fines of \$100 each to the Grant County Sheriff's Office and to the victim. He was ordered to have no contact with the victim. He pleaded guilty to menacing and was sentenced to jail for five days, supervised probation for 18 months and 40 hours community service. He was fined \$350 and ordered to have no contact with the victim. He pleaded guilty to second-degree disorderly conduct and was sentenced to jail for two days, supervised probation for 18 months and 20 hours community service, and he was ordered to have no contact with the victim. The sentence is to be consecutive to

the previous ones. The court dismissed counts for attempt to commit second-degree assault, recklessly endangering another person, driving under the influence of intoxicants, third-degree criminal mischief, failure to perform the duties of a driver when property is damaged and third-degree theft.

- Jeanne Marie Moles, 29, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine. She was sentenced to jail for 120 hours, supervised probation for 18 months, 110 hours community service, ordered to report for a mental health evaluation and fined \$350. Her conditional discharge for Jan. 7, 2016, was revoked. The court dismissed one count of endangering the welfare of a minor.

Grant County Sheriff

CANYON CITY — The

Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of Jan. 1-7:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 6
- Average inmates: 15
- Bookings: 11
- Releases: 9
- Arrests: 1
- Citations: 2
- Fingerprints: 7
- Civil papers: 10
- Warrants processed: 4
- Asst./welfare check: 5
- Garrett Griffith, 27, Burns, was cited for driving while suspended-violation.

Justice Court

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Justice Court reported the following fines and judgments:

- Driving while suspended: Travis James Frieni, 29, John Day, fined \$435.
- Driving uninsured: Travis James Frieni, 29, John

Day, fined \$260.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 114 calls during the week of Jan. 4-10. Along with the various traffic warnings, trespassing, injured animals, noise complaints and juvenile complaints, these calls included:

John Day Police:

- Jan. 4: Cited a John Day man for two vehicles illegally parked.
- Jan. 5: Arrested on John Day man on a Grant County warrant; arrested a John Day woman on a Grant County warrant.
- Jan. 6: Report of an assault in the 100 block of North Canyon Boulevard.

Grant County Sheriff:

- Jan. 7: Report of forgery in Canyon City; report of contempt of court in Canyon City.
- Jan. 8: Fraud reported on North Humbolt; cited a John Day man for driving uninsured.
- Jan. 9: Criminal mischief reported in Mt. Vernon.
- Jan. 10: Hit-and-run reported at Canyon City Park.
- John Day ambulance: Jan. 7: Dispatched for an elderly man.

Jan. 8: Responded for a woman with chest pain, shortness of breath and dizziness.

Prairie City ambulance:

Jan. 4: Responded to an accident on State Route 7.

Long Creek ambulance:

Jan. 10: Responded for a 77-year-old woman.

Mt. Vernon Fire Department:

Jan. 10: Flue fire reported west of Mt. Vernon.

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Teresa Aasness ffedta@gmail.com or Katrina Randleas ffhvkat@gmail.com

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