

ON THE TOWN

CANYON CITY

‘Golden’ community is the Grant County seat



Eagle photos/Cheryl Hoefler

The “1862” on the hill beneath Canyon Mountain proclaims the start of Canyon City’s golden history. Bottom photo: Whiskey Gulch Gang members fire away during the ‘62 Days Celebration parade. The event, held every June since 1922, commemorates the discovery of gold in 1862 in Canyon City.

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — People were roaming the Grant County area — hunting, trapping, tending sheep and cattle — long before 1862. But it was the discovery of gold near Canyon City that summer that really drew the crowds.

In fact, once upon a time, Canyon City, with a population of about 10,000 people in those early days, was bigger than Portland.

Life has settled down somewhat for Canyon City since then, though it is no less a vibrant and attractive community.

The second largest town in Grant County, with a population of 705, Canyon City is the county seat and home to



Canyon City Mayor Steve Fischer

the Grant County Courthouse and Correctional Facility.

Among Canyon City’s attractions are several businesses, Grantville Theater, Canyon City Community Hall and the Grant County Historical Museum, which houses a wealth of artifacts, documents and photographs telling the history of Grant County.

Canyon City is nestled at the base of Canyon Mountain, which offers a network of hiking trails leading to scenic views up and down the canyon.

Sprout Park, in the center of town, features a playground, covered band stage, picnic areas and restrooms across the street, and is frequently the charming site of summer concerts in the park and other community events.

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“It’s a great place to work, with a great council and great people.”

City Recorder Corry Rider



**Sheriffs’ association
asked to investigate
Palmer’s conduct**

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association has been asked to investigate the conduct of Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer.

Association President Brian Wolfe, the sheriff of Malheur County, said, at the request of citizens, an executive board would be looking into Palmer’s conduct regarding the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge to determine whether to launch an official investigation.

“What the association will do is look at all the facts: We’ll gather evidence and information, and then if we think there is a violation of the state sheriffs’ (association) bylaws or ethics, then we would take whatever would be the appropriate action,” he said. “We would just want to make sure, first of all, that sheriffs in Oregon are following the law and following their oath.”

All sheriffs in Oregon, he said, vow to uphold both the state and federal Constitution. He said the association has bylaws in effect that allow the expulsion of a member for misconduct, though he is not aware of any members being

removed in the past. Currently, he said, all 36 Oregon sheriffs are members.

Expulsion is the most severe punishment available to the association, Wolfe said. If a criminal investigation was warranted, he said, it would be handled by a law enforcement agency, not the association.

Wolfe said he has not seen evidence indicating misconduct by Palmer and that he would need to see hard facts before commenting further.

“Each sheriff has their unique personalities and interests,” he said. “We always support the First Amendment, the freedom of speech and all that, as long as it doesn’t violate the ethics or laws.”

In John Day Jan. 12, Palmer met with three people who participated in the occupation of the refuge, including Ryan Payne and Jon Ritzheimer, according to Dave Traylor and Jim Sproul who were also at the meeting. Palmer said he was unaware the occupiers would be at the lunch meeting, but he followed them and others to another location to continue the meeting after leaving the restaurant.

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Sheriff Glenn Palmer



The Eagle/Sean Hart

Kenny Delano, left, and other attendees at a vigil Saturday in John Day mourn the loss of LaVoy Finicum, who was shot by police after a short high-speed chase on Highway 395 north of Burns Jan. 26. Authorities say Finicum reached at least twice toward a jacket pocket that contained a handgun. Finicum and others who had been occupying the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge were en route to a planned community meeting in John Day.

**Vigil attendees mourn
death of LaVoy Finicum**

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Candlelight cast a soft glow on the protest signs and American flags at the vigil for LaVoy Finicum Saturday in John Day.

The 54-year-old rancher from Arizona, who participated in the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, was shot by police Jan. 26 en route to a planned community meeting in John Day. After leading police on a short, high-speed chase, Finicum exited his vehicle after driving into a snowbank. Authorities say he reached at least twice toward a jacket pocket containing a loaded handgun before police shot and killed him.

At Saturday’s vigil, one man carried a sign stating Finicum had been murdered by police. Another sign said he died standing up for constitutional rights. Several people waved American flags, and another — upside down and at half-staff — was placed on

the hood of a pickup where people signed guest books and a tarp to be sent to Finicum’s family.

Kenny Delano, Mt. Vernon, was one of several who spoke to the crowd.

“We’re all free men, but they’re taking that away,” he said. “It’s time for us to make that stand. Everyone should stand for their freedom and their neighbor’s rights, and that’s what LaVoy was doing.”

Delano urged people to contact their governmental representatives — from city council members to national legislators — to make their voices heard.

Several of the attendees said they were traveling to Burns Sunday and invited others to join to help rebuild a roadside memorial erected for Finicum that had been destroyed — before it was announced the memorial had already been rebuilt by others.

Attendees were also invited to another meeting Feb. 12 in Burns.

County unveils new mass alert system

Flood mitigation work underway

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

As the county prepares for the increased possibility of flooding following last year’s fire, officials urged people to take certain steps to prepare themselves.

At a flood preparedness fair Saturday, Emergency Management Coordinator Ted Williams unveiled the county’s new mass alert system, which is now operational. People can sign up for free online at public.alertsense.com/signup/?regionID=1170.



The Eagle/Sean Hart

Attendees at the flood preparedness fair Saturday peruse pamphlets and information from a variety of organizations following a presentation about the county’s efforts to mitigate flooding following the Canyon Creek Complex fire. People can now sign up for the county’s new mass alert system for free online.

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