



The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868



WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2016

• No. 15

• 18 PAGES

• \$1.00

www.MyEagleNews.com

Sheriff intends to sue John Day

Allegations related to refuge occupation response

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Sheriff Glenn Palmer has given notice he intends to sue the city of John Day and its employees for a list of allegations stemming from actions related to the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Palmer's attorney, Benjamin Boyd from Hostetter Law Group in Enterprise, sent a tort claim notice received by the city April 4 that states Palmer will assert claims for damages against the city, John Day dispatch employees, City Manager Peggy Gray and Police Chief Richard Gray. The notice is required before filing a lawsuit against a public body.



Sheriff Glenn Palmer

In the notice, Boyd said, as Palmer was traveling to a roadblock near Seneca after the law enforcement action Jan. 26 that led to the arrest of most of the occupation leaders and the death of one, city dispatchers falsely determined a passenger with Palmer was a militia member. He said the passenger was actually Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter.

Boyd said Palmer asked an unidentified dispatcher for an update, who "knowingly and/or recklessly" withheld information from Palmer that had been relayed previously to a variety of other law enforcement agencies. Palmer and Carpenter's lives were in danger, Boyd said, as they proceeded to the police roadblock with officers believing Palmer was traveling with a militia member.

Boyd also alleges the dispatchers breached the contract to "provide appropriate information to authorized personnel" between the city and the sheriff's office.

The notice goes on to list complaints against John Day's dispatch manager, police chief and city manager.

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Jury: County did not discriminate against lesbian job applicant

Myers: County will add sexual orientation discrimination to policy manual

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County and its former community corrections director did not illegally deny a job applicant on the basis of sexual orientation, a federal jury ruled April 6.

A jury in U.S. District Court in Pendleton unanimously agreed former county parole and probation manager Dean Hoodenpyl did not fail to hire applicant Terry Hanson because of her sexual orientation in violation of her constitutional rights. Further, the jury ruled sexual orientation was not the sole reason, a motivating factor or a substantial factor in the county's decision not to hire Hanson.



Terry Hanson

County Judge Scott Myers said he was satisfied with the result and pleased the case was over.

"After all of the witnesses were heard, the jury of eight found us not guilty of the allegations of discrimination because of sexual orientation," he said. "... The reason she did not get an interview had nothing to do with her sexual orientation."

Hanson's attorney, Matthew C. Ellis, said he and his client still believe she experienced discrimination because of her sexual orientation, which has been illegal under state law for more than eight years.

"There was no question that, when discussing Ms. Hanson's job application, Grant County referred to her in highly inappropriate terms that have no place in a (sic) either a civilized society or a family newspaper," he said in an email. "Likewise, there was no serious question as to whether the decisionmakers (sic), Grant County and Mr. Hoodenpyl, have a negative attitude toward gays and lesbians. This attitude is consistent with the official Grant County employment policies that were in effect as of the time of the employment decision — and possibly still to this day — which purport to proscribe all forms of discrimination, except for sexual orientation discrimination."

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help

ANSWERING THE CALL

By Cheryl Hoeffer
Blue Mountain Eagle

"My baby stopped breathing."

"The neighbor's house is on fire."

"We just saw three horses running down the highway."

When an emergency dispatcher picks up the phone, they never know what the person on the other end of the line is going to say.

Being prepared for anything and everything is part of the around-the-clock job these front-line first responders face, whether that voice is reporting a crisis or relaying valuable information.

Cammie Haney, a dispatcher at the John Day Emergency Communications Center, said every day is different.

"You never know what's going to happen," she said.

Multi-tasking and staying calm are vital qualities toward having that level of preparedness, Haney said.

"How you react to a call will affect how the caller responds," she said. "It sets the tone for the situation."

Haney has been with John Day Dispatch for 10 years. Her training included two weeks at the police academy and 6-8 weeks "in-house" at the John Day office.

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Around the clock, dispatchers are prepared for the unexpected



The Eagle/Cheryl Hoeffer

Cammie Haney, who has been a dispatcher for almost 10 years, works at the John Day Emergency Communications Center. This week is National Public Safety Telecommunications Appreciation Week.

How you react to a call will affect how the caller responds.

It sets the tone for the situation." — Cammie Haney

Commercial flights could happen for Grant County

Sen. Ferrioli gives stamp of approval

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A new funding source may make flights to and from Grant County a reality.

A meeting in John Day April 6 conducted by the State Department of Aviation to discuss the possibility of establishing commercial air service in rural communities drew 16 people from John Day, Baker and La Grande.

House Bill 2075, passed in 2015, raised the jet fuel tax from 1 cent to 3 cents



The Eagle/Sean Hart

Grant County Regional Airport, pictured here, may host commercial air service, in the future. Interested parties met last week to discuss the possibility.

a gallon, with a portion of proceeds earmarked to help smaller airports set up commercial service. It could

lead to service here in the next year or so.

"It's going to be a huge benefit to rural airports like

John Day would not be traditional.

Airport security would have a reverse screening process. Instead of having TSA screen passengers before boarding locally, passengers would be screened at their destinations.

Flights would likely not be available every day, but have slots open on certain days, or a book of tickets could be used.

"There are many different options that we're looking at," Bentz said.

There are a few questions that Bentz and the Grant County Airport Commission have for the public to help guide decisions in the matter.

Bentz said the service in

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