



Shannon Moulton of Richland, Washington, holds a photo of her daughter, Alexyss, as traffic passes by on Highway 395 in Pendleton. Moulton lost her daughter after she collided with a vehicle while driving from Long Creek on Highway 395 and using her smartphone in February.

EO Media Group/E.J. Harris

DISTRACTED TO DEATH

Mother on quest to end 'epidemic' of distracted driving

By Phil Wright
EO Media Group

Alexyss Therwhanger was 18 when she got her first tattoo: "I love you, Mom."
Her mother, Shannon Moulton, a tattoo enthusiast, said she replied in ink as well with "I love you more."
Alexyss the afternoon of Feb. 19 left a friend's place in Long Creek, a small town in remote Grant County,

"This is my new project. I don't want any other family to have to go through this."

— Shannon Moulton

and headed north on Highway 395 in a 1998 Buick Century to return to Hermiston. She lived in Hermiston most of her life and was staying there again. South of Pilot Rock she drifted into the other lane and crashed head-on into a Lincoln Continental.

The two occupants of that car, Frank Wimberley and Donnetta Kulis of Prairie City, were injured. Alexyss died. She was 19.
Oregon State Police investigated and determined Alexyss was using her smartphone throughout her trip.

Shannon, 42, now is raising awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.
"This is my new project," she said. "I don't want any other family to have to go through this."
Oregon State Police used Alexyss's phone records to determine a time line leading up to the fatal crash. Lt. Mike Turner, commander of the Pendleton office, said based on the records and driving time, Alexyss never stopped the car

when she handled the phone.
"Everywhere she had coverage, she was texting, sending and receiving texts, taking calls, sharing and reviewing Facebook pages," Turner said.
The Oregon Department of Transportation defines distractions as "anything that diverts your attention away from focusing on your primary task — operating your vehicle — and

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Unity slate divides state GOP convention

By Paris Achen
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A slate of candidates seeking positions as Oregon delegates to the Republican National Convention ran on a platform that they would help unify the party. Instead, the slate and a conflict over ballot rules caused division in the party during the statewide convention in Salem Saturday.
The slate included 48 candidates — mostly political insiders — to fill every position in the delegation. Among them were state Reps. Bill Post, R-Keizer, and Greg Barreto, R-Cove, Sen. Kim Thatcher, R-Keizer, and Ourania Yue, the wife of Republican National Committeeman Solomon Yue Jr.
The slate came to the convention with campaign materials, set out on attendees' chairs, and endorsements from 13 organizations, including the Ted Cruz and Donald Trump campaigns, Oregon Right to Life and Oregon Small Business Association.
When some party members saw the ballot for at-large delegates, they stopped

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PREPARING FOR DISASTER

Agencies work together for success

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Emergency responders flocked to the scene of an apparent crash and fire Thursday, June 2, but there was no need to panic — it was only a drill.
On the side of the highway, about 4 miles east of John Day, the scene included an overturned vehicle and a school bus with 21 teen "patients" with various injuries.
The mock emergency also involved a fire which "spread" to the nearby hill.
While operations were ongoing at the crash scene, a call came in to John Day 911 dispatch for five residents of Valley View Assisted Living Facility who had symptoms of the norovirus — all a part of the drill.
"It's a county emergency management and hospital emergency preparedness event," said Kara Kohfield, who was the mass-casualty incident director of operations. "For the hospital, this drill is meeting state and federal requirements to prove that we have the resources to help our communities."

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The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Emergency responders work to remove "patients" from a Grant School District bus during a disaster drill held on Thursday morning on Highway 26 east of John Day, including firefighters William Reffett, left, and Dylan Brandsma. The "patient" being removed from the back bus window is Grant Union student Brett Copenhaver.

Celebrate the good old '62 Days

Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Missing the good old days? Celebrate them with a good old time at the '62 Days Celebration Friday and Saturday, June 10 and 11, in Canyon City.
The festivities kick off Friday evening with highlights from the documentary concert "Romancing the West," presented by the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, at 6 p.m. at the Canyon City Community Center. Tickets to the show cost \$15, or two for \$25.
Saturday's schedule starts bright and early with breakfast at 6 a.m., and the Gold Rush Walk/Run at 7 a.m.
The parade begins at 11 a.m. with this year's theme,



Eagle file photo

The Whiskey Gulch Gang, organizers of the annual '62 Days Celebration, have a rootin' shootin' time during the parade in 2015. This year's event will be Friday and Saturday, June 10 and 11, in Canyon City.

"Tell me About the Good Old Days." Lifelong Grant County resident Mary Ellen Brooks will be riding and waving in style as the parade grand marshal.

Afternoon activities include a barbecue and ice cream social from noon to 3 p.m., the mock

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Meet the grand marshal: Mary Ellen Brooks

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Reigning over the '62 Days parade this Saturday will be Grant County native Mary Ellen Brooks.
Brooks has lived in Mt. Vernon since high school, but she was born in Canyon City and spent her early years there, including attending first- and second-grade at the Rebel Hill school.
Her family's roots in Canyon City date back even further.
Her great-grandfather, Martin Lucas, settled in the town in the mid-1860s and helped build St. Thomas Episcopal Church a few years later. One of his

children, Etta (Lucas) Clark, Brooks' grandmother, was born in 1878. During the Bannock uprising between the U.S. military and Paiute and Bannock tribes that year, while her grandmother was just a baby, the family hid in a cave for several days until the conflict subsided.
Clark reigned as Pioneer queen during the '62 Days Celebration of 1957. From the event's early years through the 1960s, a full "pioneer program" was part of the festivities which included a pioneer queen, musical programs, pageants, historical and patriotic presentations, and a multitude of competitions

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