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School board votes to develop drug-testing policy

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant Union student athletes will likely be tested for drugs next school year.

The Grant School District board unanimously voted to develop a drug-testing policy at the regular meeting Wednesday, June 8. Once developed, the policy would still need to be approved in the fall.

Vice Chair Zach Williams made the motion to pursue the policy, calling for testing all high school athletes at the beginning of the season with random weekly tests following, after hearing from parents, a drug counselor and administration officials at the meeting.

Michael White said he wanted to be able to raise his children, rather than having

According to a U.S. Department of Education study, fewer substance abuse problems were reported in schools with random drug testing, and the testing did not affect sports participation rates.

the school board do so. He recommended allowing parents to have the option to have their children partake in the testing.

"I think it should be up to the parents," he said.

White said he would support the school board in its decision but also mentioned he has seen case studies from Washington where students turned to alcohol when drug testing was implemented.

Thad Labhart, from Community Counseling Solutions, said Burns has had a drug-testing program for years, and he

recommended testing for alcohol as well. He said allowing parents to opt in would have benefits but wouldn't reach as many people.

Labhart said, if students tested positive, they should be evaluated by CCS, and the district should then follow the recommendations stemming from the evaluation. He said not all students who tested positive would be in the same situation, and the treatment could vary.

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The Eagle/Sean Hart

Grant School District School Board Chair Chris Cronin, second from left, discusses a proposed drug-testing policy at the board meeting Wednesday, June 8, as Superintendent Curt Shelley, from left, and board members Tracie Unterwegner and Amy Stiner listen. The board unanimously voted to develop a policy to be voted on in the fall.

FUN IN THE SUN



The Eagle/Cheryl Hoefler

Cloudy, cool weather didn't deter several children from lingering at Gleason Pool late Monday afternoon for opening day. According to Kim Ward, pool manager and program coordinator for John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation, a good crowd had filled the pool earlier that afternoon. The pool is open 1-4:30 p.m. Mondays-Fridays.

Smorgasbord of summer programs includes sports, art and reading



Eagle file photo

Youths ages 8 to 18 can sign up for Grant County Youth Golf this summer, as well as several other youth programs.

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Area youth can take part in a variety of activities this summer.

The list includes swimming, summer lunches with a reading program, the Youth Arts Program, junior golf camp and Cinnabar Mountain Playdays youth rodeo series.

Swimming

Gleason Pool, 250 NW Canton St., opened Monday, June 13, with recreational swimming 1-4:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

Kimberly Ward, pool manager and program coordinator for John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation, said the schedule and costs for the pool are the same as last year (see box for schedule and costs).

Swim classes start Monday, June 20. Ward said swimming will be free during the Saturday, June 18, Family Fun Day event.

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The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Weston Hamilton of Monument has a little help from his dad in the Figure 8 event at Saturday's Cinnabar Mountain Playdays in John Day.

County pays settlement after sheriff's office arrest

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County paid a \$12,000 settlement to a man who was arrested after he called to report hearing gunshots in 2015.

County Judge Scott Myers said the county's insurance provider recommended settling the case out of court after an attorney for Jim Koitzsch, John Day, filed a complaint based on his arrest Jan. 26, 2015.

Grant County Sheriff's Office Deputy Zach Mobley, who has since been promoted to undersheriff, responded to a report of shots fired and eventually arrested Koitzsch for initiating a false report.

Koitzsch told Mobley the gunshots originated from the residence of his neighbors, Terry and Leann Coalwell. Mobley's wife is Leann Coalwell's sister. Koitzsch also told Mobley to confer with another neighbor, Dorothy Thexton.

Mobley had called his niece at the Coalwell residence who said only children were there and they did not hear shots. Mobley called Sheriff Glenn Palmer, who instructed him to arrest Koitzsch for a false report. Palmer said there was a history of disputes between the neighbors and he was unaware at the time there were other witnesses.

Thexton told Mobley she heard gunshots. Mobley then arrested Koitzsch.

Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter declined to prosecute Koitzsch and said investigations of relatives would be "reviewed with a skeptical eye."

The Eagle is investigating the incident. See the full story in next week's edition or online at MyEagleNews.com.

Just don't say, 'There's nothin' to do'

Busy weekend on tap

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

Anyone who says "There's nothin' to do around here" this weekend just isn't looking hard enough.

Year after year, the third weekend in June seems to be one of the busiest in Grant County. Most of the upcoming activities are in and around John Day, although a geocaching event on Saturday will take participants on a searching adventure to all points of the county, and an evening concert Sunday in Kimberly will satisfy those who've been craving live music.

When it comes to variety, however, this weekend's slate can't be beat, with something likely to suit all tastes and ages.



Eagle file photo

From left, Katherine Wood, JJ Collier, Becky Carey and Sarah Russ at the John Day Community Garden's prize drawing table during a John Day Farmers Market day last year.

So with that, here's the fun-filled schedule:

BMW Rally —

Friday-Sunday, June 17-19

BMW riders gather annually at the Grant County Fairgrounds in John Day, to enjoy

three days of exploring Grant County's roadways and scenery. For more information, call 541-525-5315. Visit www.bmwro.org/.

Farmers Market 'Spring Festival' — Saturday, June 18

The "Spring Festival" launches the seventh season of the successful John Day Farmers Market, located on Southwest Brent Street in John Day. Weekly features include vendors offering a variety of locally grown produce, homemade food and handmade crafts, plants, food and recipe samples and more. Opening day activities include a seed exchange, youth entertainment from Monument and drawings for prizes from the John Day Community Garden. The social event provides people throughout the county and the surrounding area with the opportunity to support one another and strive toward self-reliance. The markets continue every Saturday through mid-October. Call 831-596-0656, email johndayfarmersmarket@gmail.com or visit johndayfarmersmarket.com.

Stockgrowers Ranch Rodeo — Saturday, June 18

Held at the Grant County Fairgrounds, John Day, the ranch rodeo starts at 9 a.m. with such events as open calf branding, women's calf branding, team doctoring, 60-plus branding and team load and tie. The cost is \$25 per person per event. Pre-entry is appreciated, but not required. All proceeds benefit the Grant County Stockgrowers. Call 541-620-0945 or 541-477-3880.

Geocoin Challenge — Saturday, June 18

This event combines scavenger hunting, treasure seeking, hiking and a good dose of adventure. Participants will meet at 9 a.m. at the Grant County Chamber of Commerce office, 301 W. Main St., John Day, where they will be handed passports to begin their day of searching. The route starts in Canyon City and continues through

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