

Search and Rescue group becoming more active

By **Ramy Jisha**

To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Since the search for the missing boy July 22, there has been increased interest in our local Search and Rescue group. We have recently been making some changes to develop a group that is more active. We are now meeting and training every second and fourth Saturday morning. For the location, please contact either the Grant County Sheriff's Office (in person or at 541-575-1131), or Ramy Jisha at 541-575-0212.

In the last few months, we have participated in several trainings. We had a swift water rescue class with Wilderness Rescue International, and then we had trainers from Emergency Response International come and give a three-day course where we learned about the newest scientific methods for search management and search techniques.

It was a great class that covered a large variety of information and gave a kick-start to the current direction we are taking.

Our goal is to develop an active, effective Search and Rescue team that can be quickly and efficiently deployed in a variety of settings. Our goal is the incorporation and effective coordination of many resources. Some of the areas, in addition to traditional ground search, that we are working on developing are: swift water rescue, search dogs, mounted searchers, snow-mobiles and person-tracking.

Even if you are not capable of participating in such active endeavors, please don't think there is no place for you in Search and Rescue.

Any time there is a search going on, there is a need for support personnel.

If you want to be involved but are not physically capable of hiking long distances through rough country, we are working on organizing the team so that there is an auxiliary level of participation. Auxiliary members perform such important support services as assisting with communication, organization and resource procurement (food, water and shelter for searchers, etc.) in addition to anything else needed to make it possible for the team to perform to the best of its abilities.

In order to become a member of our Search and Rescue team, please drop by either the sheriff's office in Canyon City or you can talk to Jisha at Canyon Creek Veterinary Clinic, 813 S. Canyon Blvd. in John Day.

At either place, you can pick up a form to let us know you are interested and get on the contact list so you will be kept up to date regarding the team's activities.

After you have attended a few meetings, if you decide you want to officially join our team, there is an application to fill out. A background check is required before membership will be granted. If you have questions about the process, please contact the sheriff's office.

The office is located next to the courthouse in Canyon City.

In addition to the full group meetings, we are going to begin meeting separately for anyone interested in trailing dogs.

If you have a dog and would like to learn about training for trailing, or you would simply be interested in helping us train dogs, please contact Jisha.

We can always use volunteers who are willing to lay trails or act as flankers, the support person who goes with the dog handler on a search.

HEALTH

From Pittsburgh to John Day

Experienced FNP is new face at health department

By **Angel Carpenter**
Blue Mountain Eagle

Family nurse practitioner Jess Furka is a new face at the Grant County Health Department in John Day.

She settled in a few weeks ago and said she's enjoying the small community, which is a big change from her urban background.

Her most recent experience as a family nurse practitioner includes four years at the Children's Hospital Pittsburgh of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and, previously, two years at a walk-in clinic. She also worked as a nurse for four years at the children's hospital.

She replaces Karen Triplett, who retired in June and will return in the fall to work at the school-based health clinic at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School.

Furka and her fiancé, Nate Wilson, made the cross-country trek to John Day in June.

Before moving, Furka said she hadn't been any farther west than Kansas.

"So far, I really like it," she said. "All the people I've met have been very friendly, and I like the small-town feel."

Furka said she and her fiancé enjoy hiking, biking and kayaking. Their excursions have included a hike through the Painted Hills.

Wilson works remotely from home as an international integrator for SAP Ariba, a software and information technology services company.

Furka said she enjoys helping patients of all ages, covering everything from well-child exams to women's health to general medicine.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

Family nurse practitioner Jess Furka examines a patient Thursday at the Grant County Health Department.



Joann Moles greets patients at the front desk at the Grant County Health Department in John Day.

"I like meeting new people and learning new things," she said. "It's nice to see different aspects of medicine. I've seen little kids all the way up through elderly. It challenges me, and I like challenges."

She added she especially likes to assist patients with de-

pression and anxiety issues.

"I think it's not talked about enough," she said.

Health department manager Jessica Winegar said she's heard positive feedback from patients about the new family nurse practitioner.

"She's a wonderful addition



The Grant County Health Department at 528 E. Main Ste. E in John Day is open with new hours of 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1-6 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays. Fridays, the health department is open 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. with a nurse available.

to the health clinic," Winegar said. "She has a calmness and patience, with energy and youth to meet the needs of our community."

Nurse Nancy Jimenez said Furka is thorough, efficient and takes the time to listen to patients.

"The patients love her," office support specialist Joanne Moles added, "and she's wonderful to work with."

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