

## ECLIPSE

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In Grant County, Prairie City will be at the epicenter, experiencing the longest totality, 2 minutes, 6 seconds, at 10:22:50 a.m.

Prairie City City Recorder Taci Philbrook said the town is “on board,” and residents and businesses are planning to capitalize on the event.

Some ranchers will open up land for campsites with fire-prevention and emergency plans — and 50 porta-potties are on reserve.

Activities for visitors, including movies at the community center and a swap meet, are in the works, and solar eclipse T-shirts have been ordered.

Grant County Chamber of Commerce President Jerry Franklin said he’s glad to see the interest in planning for the eclipse. The chamber has been holding monthly planning sessions. The next is at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at the Canyon City Community Hall.

The chamber also invited Bender and two scientists from the Multiverse program at the University of California Berkeley, director and space scientist Dr. Laura Peticolas and program coordinator Darlene Yan, to present information about the eclipse in Grant County earlier this month.

“We’ve been trying to stay on top of this from the very get go,” he said at the presentation, adding many members of the community have been participating. “We see the magnitude of what could happen in Grant County, and we appreciate you coming. It reinforces what we’re feeling, and we’re going to try to be as prepared as we can be.”

Bender and Yan both agreed it will be hard to guess how many visitors will travel to Grant County.

“There is no real way to know how many people may come. You can get an idea by how many hotels are booked, if campgrounds are booked,” Yan said, adding, with a smile, “and if your third cousin twice removed that you haven’t talked to in 20 years all the sudden wants to come and stay and visit you.”

She said there are stories of cities going bust, so crowded they had to turn visitors away. She said it is best to prepare as best you can.

Bender said the biggest difference between the solar eclipses in developing countries and in the United States will be people traveling with cars and trucks.

“The road situation will probably be the most complex thing for the whole event,” he said. “Focus on setting up campsites and working on traffic (control). Generally people coming to look at eclipses are not a particularly rowdy bunch because we’re here to see an astronomical event, and we have a great respect for it.”

Grant County Emergency Management Coordinator Ted Williams is also preparing. He said there will be coordination between state agencies in the planning process.

“We’ve got our work cut out for us, and it’s going to get a lot busier as we get up to crunch time,” he said.

His biggest concern is fire prevention, and he said he has been meeting monthly with the Oregon Department of Forestry and other emergency personnel. Other concerns include trespassing, traffic control and garbage.

He said they’ve heard there could be as many as 10,000 to 50,000 visitors over a large geographical area.

“We may not get all those big numbers, but we’re still going to get some big numbers,” he said. “No matter if it’s just a third of what they’ve said, it’s going to press us to handle that kind of crowd.”

Cowboy Chapel Hour

KJDY,  
Sunday, 7 a.m.

“The Spirit Is Holy”





The Eagle/Angel Carpenter  
**John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation program manager Kim Ward serves summer lunches Aug. 10 at the John Day City Park.**

## Summer food for area kids a success

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Local youth of all ages enjoyed free lunches this summer through the USDA Summer Food Program.

Meals were offered June 13 through Aug. 12 in John Day, Prairie City and Long Creek.

Adults, 19 and up, were also invited to buy a meal for \$2.

The program was coordinated by Kim Ward of John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation, and Jeanie Moulton was the cook.

Ward said they fed an average of 100 kids at the John Day City Park.

Gleason Pool lifeguards helped serve the lunches.

“During summer school, we were almost at 200,” she said.

Sabrina Howard of Prai-

rie City and other volunteers helped deliver the meals to Prairie City Tuesday through Thursday, with about 30 lunches handed out.

Volunteers from Long Creek’s North Fork Watershed Council helped bring meals to an average of 10 kids on Tuesdays.

“It’s been a great summer for summer food,” Ward said.

## BEO elects Koffler as board chair

Blue Mountain Eagle

BEO Bancorp and its subsidiary, Bank of Eastern Oregon, upon completion of the annual shareholders meeting in Heppner, elected E. George Koffler as chairman of the board and Joel Peterson as vice chairman.

Koffler joined the Board in 1993. He retired from employment with Bank of Eastern Oregon in 2012 after a distinguished career that spanned 32 years. He and his wife, Debbie, live in Hermiston.

Peterson joined the board in 1993. He is president of Daily Bread Farms, a fam-

ily-owned farm near Ione. He and his wife, Lea, a high school teacher, have three children.

“We are excited to have George and Joel lead the board of directors for the next year,” said President and CEO Jeff Bailey. “Both of these gentlemen are active and engaged board members. George continues his service on the funds management and loan committees. Joel chairs the funds management committee and sits on the compensation and loan committees. The vast experience and leadership qualities of these two men will serve our shareholders well.”



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## Eastern Oregon credit unions announce merger

By Rylan Boggs  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Two Eastern Oregon credit unions have announced their intent to merge.

Under the intended merger, Union Wallowa Baker Federal Credit Union would merge into Old West Federal Credit Union. This would create a membership of over 12,000 that would have access to seven branches throughout Eastern Oregon.

“Both credit unions share a common heritage and great reputations,” Old West President and CEO Ken Olson said in a press release. “I was impressed by Union Wallowa Baker board’s commitment to their members and employees. I’m humbled that they would choose Old West as a potential merger partner.”

Carol Kroll, Board Chair of Union Wallowa Baker, was enthusiastic about the potential merger.

“Being able to offer the products and services that

members want while maintaining a local, personalized presence is an expensive proposition for any credit union,” Kroll stated in a press release, “and combining our assets with Old West will help ensure that a local, accountable cooperative is here to serve our members.”

The combined credit union would have assets of over \$160,000,000 and serve eight Oregon counties. Pending regulatory and member approval, the merger could be completed as early as December.

“It’s not been an easy time for small credit unions in this regulatory economic environment,” Olson said in a follow-up interview. “I think they wanted to ensure that their members in that area would continue to be serviced by a local financial institution.”

Olson added that he didn’t anticipate any jobs being lost in the merger and that they may even add a few people to the La Grande office.

## Community health worker program to be offered in La Grande

Blue Mountain Eagle

The Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization will begin a seven-week community health worker training program Friday, Sept. 23 in La Grande.

The program is provided by Oregon State University College of Public Health and Human Sciences. The course is for employees of

hospitals, physician offices and health departments or agencies who want to take on a community health worker role.

The course is flexible, online-based and only requires attendance at two on-site events. It costs \$1,100.

For more information and to register for the training please visit: <https://pace.oregonstate.edu/CHW>.

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