

### WASTEWATER

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reclaimed water at an agreed upon price. Or, the city could petition the state for financing and create a similar facility by paying the cost upfront and owning its own

wastewater facility. Green said the city is evaluating both courses of action. A new plant is estimated to cost between 8-12 million dollars. Sustainable Water would require a water purchase agreement to build a plant — “a financing vehicle that allows Sustainable Water to fully con-

struct and operate water reclamation systems at no capital expense or development risk to the end user,” Sustainable Water’s website states. The current plant processes roughly 200,000 gallons of waste a day and is outdated. Fluid leaks from the sides of old concrete tanks, and em-

ployees must remove solid garbage manually by using rakes. “When people ask, ‘Why are we making this investment?’ I want to bring them out here with rakes and have them pull garbage out of the headworks,” he said. “Because that’s what these (city public works) guys are doing.”

Oren Wyss is the treatment plant operator and one of the people charged with using the rakes. Wyss said the biggest problem with the facility is the quality of the treatment. “It doesn’t take out nitrites. It doesn’t take out nitrates. Phosphorous removal is pretty much none and those are

the three main things why we can’t discharge into the river,” Wyss said. “This is World War II-era technology, that is Vietnam-era technology,” Green said, gesturing around to various parts of the plant. “We’re wanting next-gen technology.”

### LEAD

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She said she has removed some of the fountains and replaced them with one that is filtered and can fill bottles in the hallway by the elementary restrooms. Of the other Grant County schools tested, only Monument School District had high levels, .0188 mg/L, but a handwritten note on the results states it is a custodial sink with no drinking fountain. The next highest result was .0117 in the weight room. In Long Creek’s two tests, the kitchen sink tested highest at .00198 mg/L. The highest level in Dayville was .00374 mg/L. For Grant Union, the highest level detected at the junior-senior high school was .00242 mg/L; Seneca, .00126 mg/L; and Humbolt Elementary, .011 mg/L. Gurezynski said she has not received any complaints about high lead levels in students. The EPA reports high levels of lead can cause brain, red blood cell and kidney damage in children. She said the district also tested for copper on the second test, but all were below the EPA action level of 1.3 mg/L.

### PC

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hitter. “Taci is a good addition to our team. We all get along and that’s what makes it fun.” Jones, who is a middle hitter, said she’s impressed with the incoming freshmen. “They’re a really good addition to the team,” she said. “I think that once we have more practice, we’re going to do really well. We work really well together with no drama. That’s really helpful for our dynamic as a team.” Perrenoud is a libero, or defensive specialist, for the team. Her family moved to Prairie City this summer from Wyoming. She said

Gurezynski said student safety is a top priority but also noted the testing was expensive, \$60 per fountain, which quickly adds up even for a small school. All school districts will soon have to develop a plan to regularly test for lead and radon as well, after the Oregon Board of Education recently adopted a new rule. The board in June agreed to fast-track adoption of the rule at the request of Gov. Kate Brown, after widespread media coverage of a scandal in Portland Public Schools over lead in drinking water that went unreported. The rule requires school districts to submit a preliminary plan for testing for both lead and radon by Oct. 1, with a final plan due by Jan. 1. While the rule gives no specific deadline for testing for lead, it does require districts to report results to the public within five business days and to send out an annual report. “What we like about this plan is that part of what we saw in Portland was the community didn’t have access to information, and in fact, when you have large institutions information can get lost over the years,” said Emily Nazarov, operations policy analyst with the Oregon Department of Edu-

cation, who headed up the rulemaking. “By creating a plan you have one place that community members and parents can look to find out how does the school district address radon, how does the school district plan to address water.” The Board of Education pushed ahead with the rule despite protests from school advocates who said the timeline was too tight and expressed worry about where to find money to address the cost of testing and mitigation. “You are setting up a framework by which we have assurances at the state level that our schools are taking action in a comprehensive way toward health and safety,” said Oregon Chief Education Officer Lindsey Capps. “It’s an imperative that every student should be entitled to.” The requirement will entail hundreds of millions of dollars in additional costs to schools in the form of testing, supplying bottle water, mitigation and testing individuals who might have been exposed to high levels of lead, according to the Oregon School Boards Association. *Capital Bureau reporter Paris Achen contributed to this report.*

### GUILTY

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property or had a right to acquire or dispose of it as he did, which would have been a valid defense under Oregon law. The first-degree aggravated theft and possession of a stolen vehicle charges were for withholding fire vehicles and equipment in excess of \$10,000 from the Monument Rural Fire District on or about Feb. 21, 2013. The charges stem from an investigation by the Oregon State Police and the Oregon Department of Justice that began in May 2013. Police served a search warrant in October 2013 at a property in the Monument area and seized fire vehicles and evidence for the case. The indictment count for possession of a stolen vehicle lists “a 1970 Ford, a 1974 Freightliner, a 1983 Ford L9M, a 1993 Ford F350, a second 1993 Ford F350, a 1965 Western States, a 1966 Ford 900, a 1974 Western States, a 1986 Ford Econoline, and a 1988 International.” For about a decade, Peterson was a vocal advocate for establishing a rural fire protection district in the Monument area. He was chief of Monument’s city department at one time and also acted as chief of the rural district that was yet to be formalized. After the rural district was formed by voters in November 2012, the newly installed board and Peterson differed on its management and operation. Noting challenges with meeting procedures, operations, equipment and leadership, all of the board members resigned in December 2012. The board was re-established in January 2013 when the Grant County Court appointed new members. The new chief of the district asked Peterson to return the equipment to the district, but he did not. Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer deputized Peterson March 1 of this year to assist with a search and rescue operation. Palmer’s official deputy appointment of Peterson mentions “Search &

Rescue” and “Radio Tech/Communications,” though the document also says Peterson is appointed “to do and perform any act which (Palmer) might perform as Sheriff, this appointment to be and remain (sic) in full force and effect during my pleasure.” Palmer did not respond to an email Friday evening asking if Peterson was still an active deputy. Palmer originally investigated the complaint against Peterson. In an April 25, 2013, letter, Palmer told Oregon Department of Forestry State Forester Doug Decker he started investigating “an alleged criminal case” in 2010 between the city of Monument and the rural fire district over equipment obtained “legally and lawfully through ODF” by Peterson. Palmer said “there was a dispute as to who lawfully owned what equipment and how some of the funding was channeled through the City’s Federal Tax ID number and their (Dun & Bradstreet number).” He said Ryan Joslin, the district attorney at the time, informed the parties the issue was a civil matter. Palmer’s letter indicated the fire district board believed it rightly owned the equipment, because it was procured with grants in the name of “Monument Rural Fire District.” However, Palmer said “the grantee” — Peterson — obtained the equipment legally and still possessed it. Palmer also said the equipment was on private property, and there was no probable cause a crime was committed, nor justification for a search warrant. “As it stands right now ... I do not have enough evidence, nor do I believe I have the authority to intervene in this dispute,” he wrote. When Palmer deputized Peterson, he joined a long list of Grant County deputies. The sheriff has deputized 69 people in a variety of categories, including deputy, corrections, reserve, search and rescue, chaplain, special deputy, public lands patrol, public lands deputy and natural resource committee. Oregon law says sheriffs are responsible for the conduct of their deputies.

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