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Grant County Court approves medical marijuana dispensaries

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Court voted to pass Amended Ordinance 2015-01, which will allow patients to purchase medical marijuana at dispensaries in Grant County. The ordinance was passed as an emergency to take effect immediately. "In the interest of those who need medical marijuana, legal recipients of marijuana, I

feel that it's necessary to bring this forward in a timely fashion," County Judge Scott Myers said.

The amended ordinance would only allow medical marijuana, not recreational, dispensaries.

Myers said many Eastern Oregon counties that originally voted against medical marijuana are changing their minds and allowing it.

When opened up for comment, no one from the public spoke out against allowing medical marijuana into the county.

The issue of recreational marijuana was

brought up during the meeting by a community member. Antonio Roberts questioned the decisions of the court to continue to ban recreational marijuana when the county was missing out on large tax benefits that could be put into education and policing for the county.

Myers responded by saying that he believed allowing recreational marijuana shouldn't be seen as revenue issue but as an ethical issue. County Commissioner Chris Labhart said that they would revisit the issue of recreational marijuana in the future.

Peterson sentenced to jail, probation

By Sean Hart
and Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Roy Peterson was sentenced to 60 days in jail, 2 years probation, to pay \$8,998 in restitution to the Oregon Department of Forestry, a \$600 fine and 300 hours of community service not to be served in a firefighting or hunters education capacity.

Additionally, he is to have no contact with former board members of the Monument Rural Fire District, to not participate in any formal or developing firefighting organization, and to not manage grants through volunteering or employment.

Judge Paul Crowley described Peterson's actions as "plain old thievery," and told Peterson he had no one to blame but himself during the sentencing on Monday, Oct. 3.

A 12-person jury found Peterson guilty of first-degree theft, first-degree aggravated theft and possession of a stolen vehicle Aug. 26 in Grant County Circuit Court after a five-day trial. He was found not guilty of another count of first-degree aggravated theft.

In a Sept. 29 memo to the court, the state prosecutor, Senior Assistant Attorney General Daniel P. Wendel, recommended the judge impose a sentence of four years of probation for the first-degree theft charge and a total sentence of 18 months in prison for the first-degree aggravated theft and possession of a stolen vehicle charges.

Although Peterson had no prior convictions, the state argued Peterson committed the first-degree theft charge before the others and should be sentenced as having a prior felony record for the other two charges, which would support a longer sentence. The state also argues five enhancement facts — persistent involvement in similar offenses, violating public trust, multiple victims, lack of remorse and risk to public safety — apply to each count and support the recommended sentence.

Peterson's attorney, D. Zachary Hostetter, argues in a Sept. 28 memo to the court Peterson should face a presumptive probation period of two years and requests the court deny the state's request for longer sentencing due to the enhancement facts.

Hostetter asked the court to consider Peterson's background and personal history, which he detailed in the memo. Hostetter also included two affidavits with six letters from people who spoke highly of Peterson. The letter writers were his wife; Robert Watt, a John Day business owner; Ralph Gano Miller, who owns property near Peterson's; Gordon Foster, a former Oregon Department of Forestry employee in John Day;

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HIKING AND BIKING

A marathon of new trails planned

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

A city manager, a forest service employee and a bike shop owner walk into the woods. It's not the beginning of a bad joke, it's the beginning of a new trail system centered around Magone Lake.

The City of John Day is partnering with the Forest Service and private groups such as the Central Oregon Trail Alliance, or COTA, to help approve and build 26 miles of trails.

"The trails will be designed and maintained by local nonprofit organizations and will be for use by mountain bikers and hikers. Trails will have varying difficulties that will follow the International Mountain Bike Association," City Manager Nick Green wrote in an email.

The trails will be designed in three phases, starting around the lake and expanding outward. Fossil Shift Bike Shop owner, Russ Comer of Canyon City, was excited about the trails and eager to begin work in the spring.

The Forest Service plans on completing a NEPA approval in October for the portion of the trails

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THE TRAIL WOULD BE ANCHORED BY A BMX AND MOUNTAIN BIKE FLOW COURSE BUILT NORTH OF THE COMPLEX.



The Eagle/ Rylan Boggs
Forest Service recreation planner Eric Amstad, left, Dwayne Meadows and City Manager Nick Green survey a potential trail near Magone Lake.

Monument student broadens horizons — in Bulgaria

Sophia Pettit learns it's a 'small world'

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Monument School sophomore Sophia Pettit is stepping into a new cultural experience through a study abroad program to Sofia, Bulgaria.

She began her journey Aug. 29, traveling from a town with a population of about 100, to a city of 1.5 million — from

Sophia Pettit and others visit the U.S. Embassy in Sofia, Bulgaria. Pettit is in Bulgaria attending school through a Kennedy-Lugar YES Abroad Scholarship, awarded to her by the U.S. State Department.



Contributed photo

a public school of 60 to a private school of 900.

For the next several months, Pettit will immerse

herself in a new country and new language — Bulgarian — through the Kennedy-Lugar YES Abroad Scholarship

awarded to her by the U.S. State Department.

Each year, over 600 applicants, ages 15-18, vie for one of the 64 scholarships. Pettit was informed in April of this year that she was selected for the program.

"I heard about the program through my dad," she said. "I've always wanted to do a foreign exchange since junior high."

Pettit is the daughter of Earl and Nittaya Pettit.

The YES Abroad program was founded after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

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