

Longtime music director receives prestigious award

Vidourek recognized statewide for exemplary service

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Recently retired music director Mary Ann Vidourek has traveled far and wide with her students — oftentimes behind the wheel of a Grant School District No. 3 bus.

She was recognized by the Oregon Music Education Association for her Exemplary Service to Music Education at a Dec. 14 awards banquet in Eugene, held during the All-State conference. Only one such award is given to a music educator each year in Oregon.

Vidourek taught junior high and high school band and choir at Grant Union and also led the music program at Humbolt Elementary with choir and a sixth-grade band.

Grant School District No. 3 Superintendent Curt Shelley said Vidourek is deserving of the association award.

“Our district has been fortunate to have a music director of her caliber,” he said.



The Eagle/Ryland Boggs

Mary Ann Vidourek stands for a photo with a plaque for Exemplary Service to Music Education she received from the Oregon Music Education Association in recognition for her service as a music teacher. Only one such award is given to a music educator each year in Oregon.

“Personally, I need to thank her publicly for assisting us in keeping our music program intact while we searched for her replacement.”

Vidourek retired last school year after 25 years with the district, but stayed on as director until Lori Hart

was hired for the position in December.

The award recognizes individuals who significantly contribute to their students’ music education through service, leadership and advocacy.

Comments from col-



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Grant Union freshman Samantha Floyd, left, participated in an All-State symphonic wind band in Eugene at the Hult Center, playing trombone. She was selected for the opportunity through audition. The new Grant Union music director Lori Hart poses for a photo Jan. 20 with Floyd at the school.

leagues who nominated Vidourek were shared during the award ceremony.

The accolades for Vidourek included her organizational skills, hard work and professionalism, behind-the-scenes work at the All-State conferences and enabling hundreds of students to

smoothly transition to honor groups.

One person said she single-handedly kept the music program alive through budget cuts and the difficulties of a small school population.

“Her music students have enjoyed all the advantages of larger schools in more popu-

lated areas — participating in All-State band and choir, performing at the State Band and Choir Championships, honor groups, solo and ensemble contests — usually because she drove them there. And made them believe they could be successful,” one colleague was noted as saying.

Vidourek said one colleague told her she never used belonging to a smaller school district as an excuse to do less.

Although she is now retired and living in Redmond, Vidourek isn’t slowing down. She’ll continue as the music education association housing chair, and in March she will direct the MidColumbia junior high honor band in The Dalles. This summer, she will travel to Europe as a chaperone with Grant Union student Nikki Jones, a soprano, who will sing with the Ambassadors of Music choir. At the end of summer, Vidourek will assist with a band camp in Redmond.

“I’m just totally honored that my colleagues would recognize me in this way with this award, because there are so many amazing music educators in our state,” Vidourek said. “I’ve thoroughly enjoyed everything I’ve done (with the students) — I usually drove them, too.”

New drug take-back box available in John Day

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

A new drug take-back box is available to the public outside the John Day Dispatch Center.

A former Blue Mountain Eagle newspaper box, retrofitted and painted by John Day Police Sgt. Damon Rand, sits outside the door by the dispatch center, 450 E. Main St., John Day. The box is secure and monitored day and night by security cameras at the center.



John Day Police Sgt. Damon Rand

The effort, sponsored by the police department and Grant County Safe Communities Coalition, is aimed at keeping dangerous, addictive drugs out of the wrong hands, reducing the drug diversion and abuse.

“The ease of access for the community is a huge benefit,” Safe Communities Coalition Director Russ Comer said.

Collected drugs are sent to the DEA for incineration as part of a national program. Incineration is a better way to dispose of medications because throwing them in the trash or down the toilet can eventually pollute the water supply, according to Comer.

Nationally, over the life

of the program, 7.1 million pounds of prescription drugs have been removed from medicine cabinets, kitchen drawers and nightstands by citizens around the country, according to the Drug Enforcement Agency.

“Take back programs offer a safe, simple, and anonymous way to keep dangerous prescription drugs out of the wrong hands and prevent substance abuse,” said Chuck Rosenberg, acting DEA administrator.

REDNECK HOT TUB



Contributed photo/Amy Stiner

From left, Nick Stiner Jr., Nick Stiner Sr. and Matt Jones enjoy a dip in their redneck hot tub. “We had a ton of fun building this,” Amy Stiner said. “The water was too hot to touch so we had to add chunks of ice from the trough in the background.”

Grants will upgrade Mt. Vernon, Seneca wastewater facilities

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Both Seneca and Mt. Vernon have received sizable Community Development Block Grants from the federal government.

Seneca received \$2.5 million, and Mt. Vernon received just over \$1.8 million. The two cities will be using their grants to upgrade their wastewater treatment facilities.

Mt. Vernon’s current treatment facility consists of four pond lagoons adjacent to the John Day River. The facility, constructed in 1979, was under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit, which expired Nov. 30, 2016. The current treatment plant is not up to code, according to Business Oregon, the state’s economic development agency.

Leakage from the lagoons has been detected and deemed to be worsening since 2005, according to Business Oregon, and there may be subsurface flow to the John Day River, despite the city not indicating discharge is happening. A myriad of upgrades are needed for the plant including reduction of infiltration and

inflow, replacement of control valves and the influent flow meter device and upgrading the lagoon system to prevent impacts to groundwater and meet the water quality standards, according to Business Oregon.

Seneca’s current wastewater plant was built in 1974 and is in close proximity to the Silvies River. The project hopes to combat concerns that the outdated plant may contaminate the river.

The \$3.5 million dollar project will be paid for with

the \$2.5 million block grant, a \$500,000 grant and \$500,000 loan from the Infrastructure Finance Authority.

The new plant has been in the works since 2012 and was delayed because the city lost, and later regained, eligibility for the grant.

“The proposed project will include design and construction of the collection system improvements along with the construction of a treatment facility that will include new two-cell facultative wastewater treatment lagoons and

class D recycled water reuse effluent disposal improvements west of the Silvies River,” according to Business Oregon.

The city will be working with regulatory bodies and accepting bids for the contract this year. Work is scheduled to be completed by 2018, according to Seneca City Manager Josh Walker.

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Jeff Wilcox

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