

Fairgrounds hosts gun show and bazaar



Justin May shows potential customers a cartridge at the Strawberry Mountain Gun Show and It's Almost Spring Bazaar at the Grant County Fairgrounds March 18. May said the popularity of smaller pistols that are more easily concealed is on the rise.

Variety of sellers offer a little bit of everything

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Vendors selling everything from homemade chocolate to handguns gathered at the fairgrounds this weekend to peddle their wares.

The Strawberry Mountain Gun Show and the It's Almost Spring Bazaar had 21 gun vendors and 25 craft vendors, according to fairgrounds manager Mindy Winegar.

She said the show was smaller than usual because it was the same weekend as Wes Knodel's Rose City Gun and Knife Show at the Portland Expo Center.

While many of the vendors were from the area, they had sellers from La Grande, Burns and Baker, Winegar said.

Locals Justin May and Brandy Whitmore ran the Ace Hardware gun table at the show. While the table had a variety of firearms, May said people were purchasing more handguns than rifles, specifically the smaller, slimmer pistols designed for concealed carry. The stand operates under Ace's Federal Firearm License and was able to perform background checks on the spot.

Katherine J. Kuhl of KJ's Love Truffles had caramel, chocolate dipped spoons and a wide range of flavored chocolates for sale in the craft section of the bazaar. Kuhl and her husband own and run a ranch near Indian Creek, and she sells her treats at farmer's markets, bazaars and Etc. in John Day.

Another local craftsman selling his goods was Patrick Burns of Mt. Vernon. Burns hand-makes knives, arrowheads and jewelry from obsidian and other natural and synthetic materials. He said a knife takes roughly four to five hours minimum, and each piece comes with a polished juniper stand for display. He does the majority of his work during the winter and said it's a good way to pass the time.

Though incredibly sharp and perfectly serviceable, Burns said most of his knives are bought as display pieces.

Almost all of his materials are locally sourced, with the obsidian coming from Glass Buttes in Lake County. Burns enjoys the traditional arts, and has a goal to fill an archery tag with a handmade long bow and traditional arrows.



Alexander Bjornberg ties flies at the Strawberry Mountain Gun Show and It's Almost Spring Bazaar at the Grant County Fairgrounds March 18. Bjornberg is offering fly-fishing and fly-tying classes as well as guiding trips through his company Eastern Oregon Fly Fishing.



Patrick Burns' handmade jewelry, knives and arrowheads for sale at the Strawberry Mountain Gun Show and It's Almost Spring Bazaar at the Grant County Fairgrounds March 18. Burns said each piece takes a minimum of four to five hours.

John Day mountain bike park on track

Park would be largely built and maintained by volunteers

By Rylan Boggs
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Plans for the Seventh Street bike park are rolling forward.

The Grant County Economic Council, a nonprofit local group dedicated to improving the economic strength of the county, is working toward a viable plan for a series of mountain bike trails in an 11-acre site north of the Seventh Street Complex in John Day.

Mountain biking is the fastest growing sport in the nation for high schoolers, council Treasurer Mytchell Mead said. The park would also be open to runners and include workout stations. Mead said the park would help attract visitors and new residents to the city.

Seven acres of the land is owned by Grant County School District No. 3, and four acres is Parks and Recreation land.

Before moving forward, an interagency agreement would

New bike rule at Seventh Street path

Starting March 27, bicyclists will not be allowed on the Seventh Street Complex walking path.

John Day-Canyon City Parks and Recreation officials said the new restriction is due to safety concerns they've experienced from bike riders traveling too fast. There is an exception for children on bikes who are under adult supervision.

Signs will be posted along the Jimmy Allen Memorial Trail with notice of the new rule.

need to be reached between Parks and Recreation and school district. If signed, this would be followed by a standard land use review where the community would be able to comment on the project, according to John Day City Manager Nick Green.

The preliminary design carries a roughly \$146,000 price tag, much of which would be paid for with grants from the Autzen Foundation, Collins Foundation and Ford Family Foundation. The park would be largely built and maintained by volunteers.

The city of John Day voted to supply the economic council with \$6,000 in start-up money during a Feb. 28 city council meeting. These funds come from former City Manager Peggy Gray's life insurance fund, according to

Green. The funds were recently discovered and are not earmarked for any operations.

The bike park would also require community fundraising and in-kind contributions of donated materials and labor.

Councilor Lisa Weigum said the park would be "a great amenity for our community," and Councilor Steve Schuette said he was in favor of the park if it would help get kids off their electronics. A majority of city councilors supported the idea, and Green said it was in line with his economic development plan to increase recreational

opportunities for those in the area. He voiced his hope that projects like this would make John Day a more attractive place to live for young families.

The bike park would accommodate all skill levels and include two pump tracks, several boardwalk-style features and 2 miles of trails. All trails will adhere to guidelines established by the International Mountain Bicycling

Association. The preliminary plan for the park was designed by Sentieros Consulting, a firm specializing in such facilities, using a \$3,000 grant from the Grant County Chamber of Commerce.

GCEC is developing a funding strategy that will allow construction to begin in June with construction being completed prior to the solar eclipse in August, Mead said.

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