

## TRUMP

Continued from Page A1

The new budget would eliminate the Water and Wastewater loan and grant program, which would save \$498 million, according to the blueprint.

“Rural communities can be served by private sector financing or other Federal investments in rural water infrastructure, such as the Environmental Protection Agency’s State Revolving Funds,” the blueprint states.

The budget also calls for



a \$2.6 billion reduction in EPA funding.

A roughly \$3 billion development block grant program used to revitalize rural communities would be eliminated. These funds are used to improve housing, water mains and sewers, streets and sidewalks and provide public services like senior and youth programs. Oregon received \$31,670,366

in federal block grant funding in 2016, according to the Democratic Party.

John Day is currently not eligible for block grants but, after a pending a local income survey, would likely become eligible, according to John Day City Manager Nick Green. If the program were to be cut, as much as \$2 million in potential funding for a new wastewater treat-

ment plant could be lost. Other communities in Grant County have benefited from the program in the past. In 2016, Seneca was awarded \$2.5 million and Mt. Vernon was awarded \$1.8 million, both for wastewater treatment plants.

Merkley is also concerned about potential cuts to Payment in Lieu of Taxes payments.

“The Trump budget guts Payment in Lieu of Taxes — funding for counties that have large tracts of federal lands that don’t generate property taxes — by \$100 million this year

alone, stripping from Oregon counties critical funding for public safety, social services transportation and housing,” he said. “... Donald Trump ran as a champion of rural America, but now, he is punching rural Americans in the gut.”

Grant County uses PILT funds for everything from building maintenance to purchasing new equipment for the road department, according to Grant County Judge Scott Myers. After Congress failed to renew Secure Rural Schools funding, the county relies on PILT funds even more.

## FUNDS

Continued from Page A1

help pay for good schools, safe roads and reliable law enforcement,” Wyden said. “While I am glad the 25-percent payments came through, these reduced funds highlight the importance of restoring the robust support that SRS has long provided. I will keep working on a long-term solution to give rural counties in Oregon and across the country certainty to plan their budgets and provide crucial resources to their citizens.”

Grant County Judge Scott Myers said the reduction in funds was a blow to the county, but he didn’t expect cutting any positions as long as Payment In Lieu of Taxes funding from

the federal government continued.

“If our SRS and our PILT fund were to go away, we would be facing cuts,” Myers said. “It’s not likely that we will have any cuts at all this coming fiscal year.”

Approximately 75 percent of SRS monies go into roads while 25 percent goes into schools. In the coming year, the road department is expected to receive roughly \$175,000, while the schools will get roughly \$50,000, Myers said.

Last year, the county gave \$600,000 to schools, a feat they will not be able to perform this year, according to Myers.

Grant School District No. 3 is hoping to avoid cutting programs and faculty, but it’s still too early in the budgeting process to be sure, Super-

intendent Curt Shelley said. In 2015-16, the district received a little over \$300,000. This year, they received about \$260,000, according to Shelley.

He said they’ve known this has been coming and have been able to plan for it. The district has roughly 10 percent of its budget set aside for times like this, Shelley said, but this cushion will likely deflate.

“We will do everything we can to offer the same opportunities and programs we currently have,” Shelley said.

The reductions mean the county can no longer put money in the road reserve for future road projects, and regular donations to the school districts from the county will cease.

The road department is

dealing with the loss of SRS funds by prioritizing maintenance and carefully selecting only necessary projects for which to apply for funding. The department anticipated the loss of funds and plans to fund future projects through the Federal Lands Access Program. The department will not lay off any of its 17 employees, though if they are unable to find additional funding sources, county road conditions may suffer in the future.

In 2014-15, the road department received roughly \$3 million, and in 2015-16, they received roughly \$2.5 million.

This year they will receive \$150,000. In the past, these funds have been used for road improvement projects like chip and fog sealing on the county’s almost 500

miles of paved and gravel roads.

“Without the SRS funds, we will be in maintenance mode,” Grant County Roadmaster Alan Hickerson said.

Wyden co-authored the original SRS legislation in 2000. The program began as a way to help counties offset the loss of timber harvest.

While the SRS funds helped, Myers said they didn’t replace the tens of millions of dollars that Grant County once received in the form of timber receipts.

“No question we need to get back into the woods and get something done more than stewardship,” Myers said. “Stewardship is great for the forest, great for the Forest Service, not good for cities and schools.”

## BUFFER

Continued from Page A1

“With Senate Bill 1017’s proposal of an annual tax credit tied to certification, ODF would expect a substantial increase in program administration costs and personnel costs as we move from a five-year certification to an annual certification,” Grafe stated in his written testimony.

Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Commit-

tee added the appetite for tax credits is “going to be tough,” considering the state’s budget shortfall.

Sen. Bill Hansell (R-Athena) was not as familiar with Ferrioli’s proposal, but said their districts share the Blue Mountains and some of the same forests. At first glance, Hansell said he would support the bill moving forward.

“I trust (Ferrioli’s) judgment,” Hansell said. “We’re both trying to find solutions to the same problem.”



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Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

### Grant County Circuit Court

David Shane Thompson was convicted of harassment and sentenced to 12 months probation and five days in jail, and fined \$200.

### Oregon State Police

• Cited a 17-year-old female for careless driving after she rolled her car into Rock Creek near the junction of Highway 26 and SR 19. The driver was transported to Blue Mountain Hospital as a precaution, and the vehicle was removed from the creek.

### Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff’s Office reported the following for the week of March 23-29:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 6
- Average inmates: 12
- Bookings: 12
- Releases: 11
- Citations: 3
- Fingerprints: 4
- Civil papers: 36
- Warrants processed: 2
- Asst./welfare check: 3

Issued three minor in possession charges and one furnishing alcohol to a minor charge.

### Justice Court

The Grant County Justice Court reported the following fines and judgments:

- Failure to carry traction tires/chains: Alberto Ferrer Romero, 29, Miami, Florida, March 6, fined \$160.
- Impeding Traffic: Alberto Ferrer Romero, 29, Miami, Florida, March 6, fined \$110.
- Exceeding the speed limit: Susan Badger Jones, 66, La Grande, 51/30 zone, March 10, fined \$220.
- Driving while license suspended or revoked: Rodney Raymond Cowger, Kimberly, sentenced to seven days in jail, 18 months probation and 30 hours community service, and fined \$850.

### Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked

## COPS AND COURTS

133 calls during the week of March 27 through April 2. Along with the various traffic warnings, trespassing, injured animals, noise complaints and juvenile complaints, these calls included:

### John Day Police Department

March 28: Received a report of suspicious subjects in Prairie City. Received a report of possible child abuse.

March 29: Responded to a report of a man walking down the middle of Main Street.

April 2: Responded to a report of a possible drunk driver near the Grubsteak.

### Grant County Sheriff’s Office

March 27: Responded to a dispute in Mt. Vernon. Took a report of an email

fraud in Dayville.

March 28: Advised of a report of a trespass in Granite. A caller reported she hit and knocked down a stop sign in Prairie City. Cited three minors for minor in possession of alcohol in Canyon City Park.

March 29: Responded to an unattended death in Mt. Vernon.

March 30: Received a report of a lost dog; the caller found the dog while still on the line. Responded to a report of harassment in Dayville.

March 31: Responded to a dispute in Mt. Vernon and warned both parties for disorderly conduct.

April 1: Received a report of juveniles riding ATVs on city streets.

### John Day ambulance

March 30: Responded to a vehicle that had rolled into the creek at the junction of Highway 26 and SR 19. Dispatched with the Seneca ambulance for a patient who was feverish, trembling and unable to communicate.

### Oregon State Police

April 1: Advised of a vehicle that crashed into the Silves River.

### Grant County Parole and Probation

March 31: Arrested a 26-year-old Grant County resident for a probation violation.

### John Day Public Works

March 27: Advised that someone had hit a fire hydrant in John Day.

**ELTRUM** HISTORIC THEATER  
 1809 First Street • Baker City • (541) 523-5430  
 BARGAIN MATINEE IN ( ) Adults \$7  
 ALL FILMS \$6 ON TIGHTWAD TUESDAY  
 MOVIE SCHEDULE APRIL 7-13

**GOING IN STYLE** PG-13  
 Desperate to pay the bills, three lifelong pals decide to knock off the very bank that absconded with their money.  
 FRI & SAT (4:00) 7:00 9:20  
 SUNDAY (4:00) 7:00  
 MON-THURS 7:00

**SMURFS: THE LOST VILLAGE** PG  
 A mysterious map leads Smurfette and her friends to the discovery of the biggest secret in Smurf history.  
 FRI & SAT (4:20) 7:20 9:30  
 SUNDAY (4:20) 7:20  
 MON-THURS 7:20

**THE BOSS BABY** PG  
 A suit-wearing, briefcase-carrying baby pairs up with his brother to stop the dastardly plot of the CEO of Puppy Co.  
 FRI & SAT (4:10) 7:10 9:25  
 SUNDAY (4:10) 7:10  
 MON-THURS 7:10

\$9 Adult, \$7 Senior (60+), Youth

## ‘62 Days Meetings

The Whiskey Gulch gang will have weekly meetings starting on Friday, April 8, 2017. Meetings will be held at 7:00 pm at Sel’s Brewery. Any vendor or persons interested in being involved are welcome to attend. ‘62 Days this year will be June 9th and 10th.

Any questions, contact Hugh Farrell 541-575-0329.

# NATIONAL Sexual Assault AWARENESS & PREVENTION MONTH

Help is available for victims of sexual assault in Grant County. If you or someone you know has been a victim of sexual assault, please call:

Heart of Grant County  
 541-620-1342

Grant County Victim Assistance Program  
 541-575-4026

Remember: sex without consent = sexual assault

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Designed by the Blue Mountain Eagle

# City prepares for eclipse campers

## Old city hall may be torn down

By Rylan Boggs  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of John Day is rolling forward with preparations for the solar eclipse in August.

So far 93 reservations, 52 tents and 41 RV spots have been made by visitors, according to City Manager Nick Green.

This equates to roughly \$16,000 in revenue for the city, according to Green, who attributed at least a portion of the success to an online marketing campaign promoting the city as a destination.

The city is planning on creating 100 RV spaces and 100 tent spaces in the industrial park by the airport.

Tent sites will have water and facilities available for \$150 a week, and RV sites will have water and sewer for a weekly rate of \$450 or a daily rate of \$100 with a minimum two-night stay. The city is working toward developing the industrial park to supply campers with running water and minimize fire danger.

One potential concern is having enough restroom facilities for campers. During a March 28 city council meeting, Councilman Gregg Haberly said rates for portable toilets could be as high as \$60 a unit. He attributed the cost to high demand in the summer, especially if there was a wildfire at the time.

Public safety is also a concern during the event. Police Chief Richard Gray said he would not be granting any time-off requests during the week of the eclipse, would be looking for additional resources from other departments and was considering switching officers to 12-hour shifts during the week.

Despite all of the work of preparing for the event, Green was confident it would be beneficial for the city.

“We’re going to be very tired and very stressed out, but we’re not going to lose money,” he said.

During the meeting, they also talked about tearing down the old city hall to allow Oregon Trail Electric Co-op access to a substation. The city would save money on utilities and insurance costs by removing the building, and the property could be converted into a parking lot for the downtown area.

The council also met in executive session to discuss a potential property transaction.

