

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868

CLASS OF 2017

CONGRATS, DAYVILLE, LONG CREEK, MONUMENT AND PRAIRIE CITY 2017 GRADUATES! PAGE A7



Contributed photo/LindseyWyllie.com  
Grant Union Prospector Kaylee Wright clears the bar in the high jump event at Friday's district meet in Union.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2017 • No. 20

• 20 PAGES

• \$1.00

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## A LOT OF KIDS

### Mt. Vernon goat gives birth to five

Story and photos by Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

**M**t. Vernon residents Gregg and Betty Starr are retired and have grown children, but they also have 11 “kids” at home — baby goats, that is.

One of their adult female Boer goats, named Blondie, recently gave the Starrs a shock when she gave birth to five kids, though one was stillborn.

“She had them all by herself — one outside the barn, then she went in and had three more, plus a stillborn,” Betty said.

Knowing goats usually have one to three kids per pregnancy, the Starrs were amazed Blondie had five at once.

Betty called John Day veterinarian Colleen Robertson to see what she thought.

“She had heard of it, but had never seen it,” Betty said.

Betty immediately named the four living kids using a “Star Wars” theme: Darth Vader, Yoda, Obi-Wan and Leia.

Gregg said his wife names all the kids, usually with biblical names, such as Ruth and Naomi, or after musicians, like Simon and Garfunkel.

“I’m the goat herder. She’s the goat woman,” Gregg said. “Betty feeds them, and she’s the main one with bottle feeding.”

He said they’ve been watching Blondie to make sure she’s feeding her kids properly.

The Starrs started raising goats to help keep their pastures trimmed down. “We’ve had cows and horses, but they’re too big, and it hurts when they step on you,” Betty quipped.

Their goat herd started with three females and one male in 2013, and now they have 29 in all, including Boer and Kiko breeds.

They plan to trim the herd down by selling some this summer.

When asked why they enjoy raising goats, Betty said “They’re sweeter than any other animal.”

“They eat everything, and they have a personality that’s neat with them,” Gregg added. “To watch them jump and hop, they look like they’re little kids.” “They’re fun to watch,” Betty said.



One of 11 kids owned by Gregg and Betty Starr of Mt. Vernon.



Mt. Vernon resident Gregg Starr with his goat Blondie and her kids. The goat gave birth to four live kids and one stillborn in late April. TOP IMAGE: Mama goat Blondie has four kids that stick close by, including Darth Vader, Yoda, Obi Wan and Leia.



Betty Starr of Mt. Vernon holds one of her baby goats.

## Growing Scenic Bikeway tourism

By Sean Hart  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County’s Scenic Bikeway brings tourists to the area, but is the county receiving as much economic benefit as possible?

The Old West Scenic Bikeway — through John Day, Prairie City, Long Creek, Monument, Kimberly, Dayville and Mt. Vernon — is up for its first state review, where Scenic Bikeways Committee members will



Christy Rheu

evaluate past successes, explore challenges and opportunities to improve and promote bikeways and discuss bringing greater economic benefits to the county.

After the state review, from 11 a.m. to noon May 24 at the John Day Fire Hall on Canyon Boulevard, Old West Scenic Bikeway Lead Christy Rheu Waldner will facilitate a local session from noon to 3:30 p.m. The local session is a bi-annual cycle tourism meeting that will include introductions of new businesses, the Eastern Oregon Trail Alliance and the Chamber of Commerce’s new website, a discussion about a

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## Bill would mandate testing for lead, other hazards in schools

By Paris Achen  
Capital Bureau

Lawmakers have revived a bill that mandates testing for lead in water supplies and carbon dioxide monitors in public schools.

The bill also provides a special \$2.5 million fund to pay for the new obligations.

Administrative rules approved last year by the Oregon Board of Education already require school districts to have a plan for testing for lead and other environmental hazards and notifying the public of any results, but lead testing itself is not mandated.

The bill by Sen. Michael Dembrow and Rep. Alyssa Keny-Guyer codifies into law the existing requirements by the education board and adds the mandate to test for lead and install carbon dioxide monitors.

The bill received a public hearing in the Senate Rules Committee Wednesday, May 10, after almost perishing in Senate Education because unfinished amendments caused it to miss a deadline for passing bills out of committee. Only the Rules Committee can move late-breaking bills during the legislative session.

The bill could return to the rules committee for a possible vote in the next two weeks, after some minor amendments.

The Oregon Health Authority

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## Fossil Beds generate \$10M in economic benefits

Blue Mountain Eagle

A National Park Service report shows that 210,111 visitors to John Day Fossil Beds National Monument in 2016 spent \$9,995,400 in communities near the park. That spending supported 153 jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$11,801,900, according to a park service press release.

“John Day Fossil Beds welcomes visitors from across the country and around the world,” Superintendent Shelley Hall said in the release. “We are delighted to share the story of this place and the experiences it provides. We also feature

the park as a way to introduce our visitors to this part of the country and all that it offers.”

Hall noted that John Day Fossil Beds saw record visitation in 2016 and very large numbers of visitors are expected in Eastern Oregon to view the total solar eclipse in August of 2017.

“National park tourism is a significant driver in the national economy, returning more than \$10 for every \$1 invested in the National Park Service, and it’s a big factor in our local economy as well,” Hall said. “We appreciate the partnership and support of our neighbors

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EO Media Group file photo

A tourist sets up a shot of the Painted Hills, one unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument, near Mitchell. A National Park Service report shows that 210,111 visitors to John Day Fossil Beds National Monument in 2016 spent \$9,995,400 in communities near the park.

