

John Day Motel under new management

Updated facilities in the works

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs
Nicki and Ken Mayhead stand for a photo in front of the John Day Motel.

Instead of selling the John Day Motel, Ken and Nicki Mayhead are putting money back into it to recuperate from past losses.

To revamp the motel, the couple are adding new carpets, fridges, TVs, mattresses, heaters and air conditioners, as well as roughly \$6,500 worth of new bedding and towels. Additionally, they plan to repaint the motel and add a new sign.

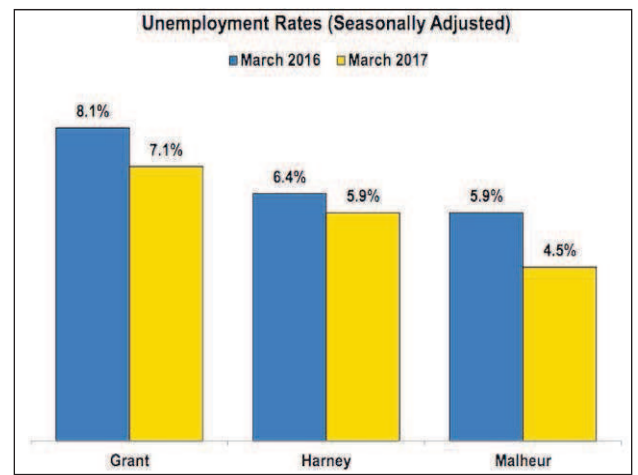
"I don't take a loss on anything," Ken said.

The motel, located at 250 E. Main St., still has rooms open for the eclipse, and Ken said he is incentivizing people to book with free T-shirts and glasses.

He's proud of his low prices and said they would be key to the motel's success.

The couple owns a motel in Elgin and the Rockin Route 66 Ranch in Arizona and are looking at other businesses in the area. Ken expressed interest in opening a bar and grill as well.

However, it wasn't just the motel that drew them to John Day. They also plan on raising a granddaughter who lives in the area.



Contributed image
Grant County's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since comparable statistics began in 1990 in March. At 7.1 percent, the rate is still the highest in the state.

Unemployment hits lowest rate since 1990

Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County's unemployment rate dropped to its lowest level since 1990 in March.

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped from 8.1 percent in March 2016 to 7.1 percent in March 2017, according to the Oregon Employment Department. The county tied for 23rd among Oregon's 36 counties for over-the-year improvement.

The county gained an estimated 20 jobs during

the year. The private sector added 10 jobs, with gains in retail trade offsetting losses in manufacturing. The public sector also added 10 jobs in local government.

At 7.1 percent, Grant County still has the highest unemployment rate in the state. Crook and Curry counties are tied for the next highest rate at 6 percent. Benton County has the lowest rate at 2.9 percent.

The statewide rate is 3.8 percent, and the nationwide rate is 4.5 percent.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

Ken Gronwald of Grumpy's Graphics stands outside his Prairie City business which he owns with his wife Myrna.

Grumpy's Graphics gears up for total solar eclipse

Prairie City business is 'Eclipse Central'

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Ken and Myrna Gronwald, owners of Grumpy's Graphics in Prairie City, are gearing up for what could be one of Grant County's biggest events in history, the Monday, Aug. 21, total solar eclipse.

In honor of the upcoming eclipse celebration, the Gronwalds have added to their business name, calling it "Grumpy's Eclipse Central."

Anticipating a significant increase in visitors to the area, they are ramping up production, creating custom-designed eclipse souvenirs, including T-shirts, travel mugs, coffee mugs, patches, plates, coins, pins and fine art.

With their equipment, the Gronwalds can also print banners, signs, posters and bumper stickers. All the print jobs are made at their Prairie City home, then sold at their shop at 152 Front St.

"We have screen printers and a white format printer, which prints up to 52 inches wide, and as long as you want," Ken said, adding they also have big vinyl sign cutters.

There are stacks of colorful T-shirts with various solar eclipse designs in the shop with other items lining the shelves.

The Gronwalds have also delivered eclipse T-shirts to businesses in John Day and Dayville, as well as 150 shirts for the Grant County Chamber of Commerce in John Day.



Patches, pins and coins with a solar eclipse theme are available at Grumpy's Graphics in Prairie City.

Grant County officials expect as many as 35,000 visitors traveling through and staying in the area.

"It's going to be a lot for our community, if they come in droves like they expect," Ken said. "It could be overwhelming, but exciting at the same time."

He said he has family visiting during the eclipse, but said he may not see much of them since he'll be tied up at the business. He plans to hire workers to set up souvenir vending booths in nearby towns during the weekend of the eclipse.

Myrna said she enjoys working with her husband. They've owned the Grumpy's business for nearly 20 years now, evolving from an embroidery shop to a print shop, and they've lived in Prairie City for nine years.

"He does the designing. I do the editing," she said.

She anticipates they'll have more styles and items to add to the store.

"We're looking at another coin design



Solar Eclipse T-shirts of all sizes line the walls of Grumpy's Graphics, including one hanging up that reads: "Total Solar Eclipse, Stay Wild Moon Child."

and more shirts," she said. "We're hoping we can accommodate everyone's wants and needs."

Currently, store hours are 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, depending on how busy it is, and they plan to add more hours and days as summer approaches.

Ken said it's expected that 50 percent of visitors will be from out of the country.

"You cannot buy an airplane ticket now, or a rent-a-car," he said. "I like to socialize, so I'm looking forward to having different people from different areas to talk to."

For more information about Grumpy's Graphics, call 541-820-4484.

BEO Bancorp one of three in state named to top 200 bank list

Blue Mountain Eagle

Bank of Eastern Oregon's holding company was named among the top 200 community banks in the country with less than \$2 billion in assets by American Banker magazine.

With an average return on shareholder equity of 10.9 percent between 2014 and 2016, BEO Bancorp ranked 77th on the list.

"We are extremely pleased with the recognition in American Banker magazine. We find ourselves in the compa-

ny of some of the best run and most admired banks in the nation," said Jeff Bailey, president and CEO of Bank of Eastern Oregon. "This is testimony to the dedication of our employees and the tremendous support of our customer base. We are proud

of our track record serving eastern Oregon communities for over 72 years and are delighted to be the one of only three banks located in Oregon that can make the claim of being in the top 200 community banks in the country."

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FIGARO'S OWNER AWARDS GRANTS



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Four Humbolt Elementary School teachers received a total of \$725 in grants through the John Day Figaro's Pizza to purchase classroom supplies, including iPad minis and fidget tools. From left: kindergarten teacher Adriane Ineck, first-grade teacher Elsa Spence, Figaro's owner Pete Teague, special education teacher Eva Vaughan and fifth-grade teacher Georgia Boethin. The grants are made available twice a year through the company's charitable program called "HELP," Helping Education with Love & Pizza. Nonprofit organizations such as church youth groups, bands and athletic teams can also apply for the grants. "It's a win-win," Teague said. "People get to buy pizza and eat it, and a portion goes back to the schools."

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