

Police train in defusing mental crisis situations

18 receive CIT training certificates

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Local officers and other emergency personnel are better equipped to handle situations when facing individuals experiencing mental crises.

After training for 40 hours over four weeks, 18 local law enforcement officers and other emergency first responders graduated in May with Crisis Intervention Team certification.

CIT certification training coordinator Rick Brunk from the Boardman branch of Community Counseling Solutions organized the classes, which mainly took place at the John Day Fire Department conference room.

The instruction provided a toolbox of techniques to calm tense situations, including



Contributed photo

Local law enforcement officers and other emergency first responders gather after completing a 40-hour crisis intervention team training with Rick Brunk, left, the CIT certification training coordinator of Community Counseling Solutions in Boardman.

collaboration with the Community Counseling Solutions mental health team.

"We help them recognize the symptoms of mental illness and help them look for ways to manage mental health crises," said Brunk.

One class he taught, called

"Crisis Cycle," gave insight into what may contribute to a person with a mental illness becoming upset, and what can help that person feel safe.

Brunk said they look for alternatives to arrest, if possible, when the person is presenting with indicators of a

mental health condition and arrest can be deferred.

Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer said dealing with people who have mental health issues in the community has been a concern for law enforcement, and the training offered some ways to handle those incidents.

"(The training) gave us some different techniques on how to talk to people who might be going through a mental health crisis, getting them the right resources," Palmer said. "If we can use our techniques to defuse the situation, and if we don't have to make an arrest — it may be a medical or a mental-health crisis — sometimes bringing them to jail may not be the best solution. It's not what we're looking for."

He added, "We're learning to handle this a little differently than we have in the past."

Linda Mills, a licensed social worker with Community Counseling Solutions who

helped coordinate the training, said research indicates officers who receive CIT training have fewer encounters which result in violence, injury and death — not only against themselves, but others.

The full-day classes were taught on Thursdays with final instruction on Friday, May 12.

Instructors included some local experts, including Grant County Undersheriff Zach Mobley, Oregon State Police Senior Trooper Erich Timko who is a drug recognition specialist, CCS counselor Laura Brunton, Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter and several others.

The classes wrapped up with scenario-based training held at Humboldt Elementary School where officers and other first responders could test their skills in common crisis situations with help from volunteer role players.

Seasoned instructors and mental health clinicians were

on hand to give immediate feedback.

John Day Police Officer Scott Moore said he found the training helpful.

He said they learned how to recognize symptoms of mental illness as well as psychosis from drug use.

"The tools we learned help de-escalate situations with ways to talk to them and approach them," he said.

They were also given phone numbers of people who specialize in mental health.

"The main goal is to get them the help they need," he said.

Agencies with individuals receiving training included John Day Police Department, John Day Emergency Communications Center, Grant County Sheriff's Office, Grant County Correctional Facility, Grant County Community Corrections, Grant County Parole and Probation, Community Counseling Solutions and Blue Mountain Hospital District.

City receives \$100,000 grant

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of John Day was awarded a \$100,000 Main Street Revitalization grant.

The city applied for the grant in March to purchase and revitalize the Weaver Complex on Main Street. The building, at 131 W. Main St., currently houses four businesses, Naturally Yours, Etc., Karen Barmish LTC and H & R Block, and six apartments upstairs, only one of which is occupied. The building is owned by Mary Weaver, according to etc. owner Sherrie Rininger.

John Day City Manager Nick Green said the city council has not yet determined whether the city will purchase the property.

"We have not decided yet to make an offer," Green said. "We are still doing our due diligence."

The city has 12 months to decide if they want to use the grant to purchase the property, according to Green, who said they may reach a decision during a June 13 city council meeting.

Green said he has been dealing with closing the Oregon Pine transaction and has moved this project to the back burner. The Oregon Pine property is a 53-acre property on the John Day river between Patterson Bridge Street and Seventh Street purchased for \$519,000 for future economic development.

The city is looking at purchasing the downtown building for \$247,750. The grant can only be used for this purchase and requires a \$147,000 match. The city would become the landlord and, at normal rental, see a return on their investment within six years, according to Green. Though the \$147,000 investment is in the upper limit of the city's financial exposure, Green said it was a safe investment.

To complete the roughly



The Eagle Rylan Boggs

John Day is looking into purchasing the building, at 131 W. Main St., which currently houses four businesses, Naturally Yours, Etc., Karen Barmish LTC and H & R Block, and six apartments upstairs, only one of which is occupied. After being approached by and meeting with business owners, John Day City Manager Nick Green submitted an application for the \$100,000 Oregon Main Street Revitalization Grant.

\$2 million restoration, the city would need to seek funding from state, federal and non-profit sources, he said.

The project would offer improved housing for residents, increase the property tax base and beautify Main Street, he said.

A proposed design for the building would result in four 1,200-square foot commercial spaces with improved storage, restrooms and energy efficiency as well as a mountain chic look. The second floor would be converted into condos with improved lighting, energy efficiency and affordable prices for landlords and renters.

The grant is intended to "acquire, rehabilitate and construct buildings on properties in designated downtown areas statewide and facilitate community revitalization that will lead to private investment, job creation or retention, establishing or expanding viable business or creating a stronger tax base," according to Oregon Parks and Recreation.

The department awarded 27 matching grants worth \$2,355,700 in amounts ranging from \$17,500 to \$100,000.

Local agencies host Kids Fishing Derby

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Youth reeled in fun during Saturday's Kids Fishing Derby at McHaley Pond in Prairie City.

The event drew 63 kids and about as many parents, grandparents and older siblings.

Wayne and Rhonda Bernard of Prairie City, along with their Yorkshire Terrier named Tuffy, watched their young grandchildren fish from camp chairs.

"It's fun," Wayne said. "I used to fish out here when I was a kid."

"It's one of the best things to happen in Grant County for the kids," Rhonda added. "It is so much fun watching the little kids — it's absolutely fantastic. It's a great family affair."

Five-year-old Oreaun Maurer of John Day fished with his sister, Evangeline, age 3, with help from their mom, Alexandria.

"I felt a tug!" he exclaimed.

On the other side of the pond, 9-year-old Kayden Moles of John Day caught a small trout, which he released, then a couple minutes later reeled in a keeper.

His biggest catch of the day, at that point, was 15 inches long.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife had fishing gear on hand for those who needed a pole or bait. Kids also had the option of



Five-year-old Oreaun Maurer and his sister, Evangeline, 3, were among 63 children casting their lines Saturday at McHaley Pond in Prairie City during the Kids Fishing Derby. Their mother, Alexandria, and baby brother, Freidrick, watch nearby.



Nine-year-old Kayden Moles of John Day catches another trout at Saturday's Kids Fishing Derby held at McHaley Pond in Prairie City.

filling out a Free Fishing Day Passport Book, adding stickers as they completed a list of activities.

Eight-year-old Erin Donathan of Prairie City made a colorful fish print, and 9-year-old Keilon Watson of John Day completed a Chinook salmon puzzle.

Other stations included salmon life cycle bracelet-making and a spin-the-wheel question-and-answer game.

The Malheur National Forest had a booth about fire prevention, which included a visit from Smokey Bear.

"We really want people to know that the pond is open to the public," said Confederated Tribes biologist Emily Davis.

She said they welcome visitors to fish anytime.

"We're glad people now know where it is and have the opportunity," she said.

McHaley Pond is located a half mile east of Prairie City; turn right at the Forrest Conservation Area sign (a sign reads "office") and follow a dirt road to the pond.



Eight-year-old Erin Donathan of Prairie City makes a fish print with help from Alexandria Reinwald of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

The event was sponsored by the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Malheur National Forest.

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Thank You

I want to express my sincere appreciation to everyone that attended my Open House Retirement Party at City Hall. I was truly blessed by the many friends that came by to wish me well on my retirement as the City Clerk for the City of Prairie City. Thank you so much for the many cards, gifts, flowers, and well wishes. A special thank you to the City Council and staff for the fond farewell and the thoughtful, very generous gifts. I am going to miss all of you.

Lyn McDonald