

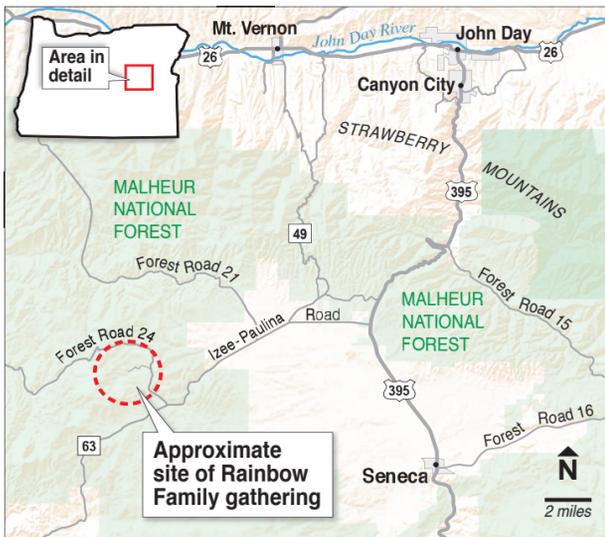


The Grant County's newspaper since 1868  
**The Blue Mountain EAGLE**

# RAINBOW GATHERING BREAKS GROUND

## Rainbow gathering

The annual Rainbow Family gathering, which could attract 10,000-30,000 people, is taking place in Flagtail Meadow on the Malheur National Forest off of Forest Road 24 west of Seneca.



Source: U.S. Forest Service Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

## 10,000 to 30,000 expected to attend event on Malheur National Forest

By Sean Hart and Rylan Boggs  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

**T**he Rainbow Family has started preparing its gathering site on the Malheur National Forest, where 10,000-30,000 people are expected to gather in the coming weeks.

In Flagtail Meadow off of Forest Road 24 south of John Day, vans and buses are starting to arrive for the Rainbow Gathering, held annually on public lands. The event, which began as a prayer for world peace in 1972, attracts “a cross section of America,” attendee Gary Stubbs said—from doctors and lawyers to hippies.

Stubbs said the non-denominational, non-discriminatory gathering was a healing place, which offers an open invitation to any who wish to participate with the group that is loosely organized without a hierarchical structure or leader.

A mile hike from the parking area at the main campsite, wood-fired kitchens are being set up to feed the roughly 500 attendees already at the site. Thousands more are expected to trickle in with the largest influx expected to begin the week of June 26.

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The Eagle/Rylan Boggs  
 Rainbow Gathering attendee Nathan Akre works on a “rocket stove” at the Rainbow Gathering’s camp on the Malheur National Forest Friday, June 16.

“The county is 7,500 people, and we’re expecting an influx of 20,000. The amount of burden on resources will be high.”

Ryan Nehl,  
 Forest Service administrator

# Senator discusses Russia, health care



The Eagle/Sean Hart  
 U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon.

## Merkley: Foreign election interference unprecedented

By Sean Hart  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Russian interference in the election and health care were two major topics U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon discussed during a town hall meeting in John Day Sunday.

Merkley told the audience of about 45 Russia attempted to un-

dermine “the foundation of democracy” by interfering in the 2016 presidential election, as reported by U.S. intelligence agencies. Merkley said, in an unprecedented cyberattack, Russia used internet trolls, people posing as Americans, and a botnet, computers that had been hacked, to create viral interest around certain

stories online. He said fake news stories — fabricated articles with the sole intention of misleading people — were distributed, and the country also attempted to hack election software.

Jim Bay of Mt. Vernon asked about an effort by Senate Republicans to complete a health care bill behind closed doors. Merkley said

open deliberations were important and the common understanding of the need for legislating had been lost. He said the plan would likely cut the Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act, which provided health care to 400,000 Oregonians. Merkley said an attempt to unveil and vote on the bill the same day without discussion or

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## Investigation continues in possible THC-food tampering case

By Sean Hart  
 Blue Mountain Eagle

Officers are waiting on lab results to determine whether takeout food from a local business was contaminated with THC, the psychoactive chemical in marijuana.

John Day Police Officer Mike Durr said he had frozen a sample of the food item to send to the Oregon State Police Crime Lab, but he was not able to send the item until Monday to ensure it did not thaw over the weekend when no one was available to receive the mail.

Until he receives the lab results back,

he said he would not know for certain whether the food item contained THC. He said no other incidents have been reported.

“While I think it’s probably an isolated incident, I want people to be aware,” he said. “If it looks like your food has been tampered with, don’t eat it.”

Durr said he has been working with the business, which has removed any items that may have been involved. He said he would not disclose the name of the business because he was not certain its food was contaminated. He said he believed food from the business was safe to consume.

“I’d go back to the establishment and I’d order the same thing that those people ate, and I would feel safe doing it,” he said.

Durr began investigating the incident after a 911 caller requested an ambulance for possible food poisoning at about 12:45 a.m. June 15. At least two patients were transported to Blue Mountain Hospital, where it was determined a THC substance was unknowingly ingested, Durr said.

The patients reported being dizzy and “not feeling right,” he said. Others who did not eat the food that was possibly contaminated did not get sick, he

said, which is why it was indicated as a possible source.

The patients were not affiliated with the Rainbow Family gathering, Durr said, and nothing indicates the incident was related to the gathering.

Durr said people should not panic but should inspect food before consuming it.

“If you see the label on your food has been tampered with, take it back to the store,” he said.

Anyone with information about the possible food tampering should call John Day Police Department, 541-575-0030.



## GRANT COUNTY SOFTBALL GIRLS SURVIVE THE HEAT

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