

ECLIPSE

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viewing areas in Grant County, for example, to generate rough estimates of how many vehicles remain in the vicinity.

Strandberg also said the agency is beefing up its Trip Check website to show the pace of traffic through the rural highways.

“We’re trying to implement that before the eclipse, that’s the plan,” he said.

And the state is shutting down highway construction projects through the area starting the weekend before the eclipse through midnight Tuesday, Aug. 22, the day after.

ODOT’s motto for the event is “arrive early, stay put and leave late.”

“People coming the day of might be stuck in traffic jams,” Strandberg said, and a mass exodus the moment it ends will cause the same result.

He also said visitors need to come prepared.

“We expect gas stations to run out of gas, grocery stores to run out of food,” he said, and rest areas and restaurants to be full. “It’s quite an unusual situation, but we think it’s manageable.”

He warned drivers not to rely on GPS directions for rerouting around turtle-speed traffic. Strandberg said that would mean traveling over U.S. Forest Service roads and rough terrain. Not knowing those routes or having the right vehicle could mean trouble.

“People need to stay on the main highways,” he said. “That might be a long delay, but if you are on a forest road ... you might be stuck a lot longer.”

EMRY

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trailer in John Day and recovered a Browning M2 .50-caliber machine gun with an obliterated serial number. Emry told agents that the firearm was fully automatic and could fire 550-650 rounds per minute, that he had stolen it from a man in Idaho and that he had removed the serial number prior to bringing it to Oregon.

“I applaud federal and state law enforcement officers for their swift and decisive action in removing a very dangerous stolen weapon from the community,” United States Attorney Billy J. Williams said in the release. “Transporting stolen weapons is a serious crime and will be met with equally serious consequences.”

Prosecutors said Emry was in negotiations to sell the machine gun in Oregon to a person he had been told was a felon and the captain of a Texas militia group, who was actually an undercover law enforcement officer. They said Emry also possessed a belt of blank .50-caliber shells for the gun and the blasting cap, which is a detonator for a bomb.

According to an article on The Voice of Idaho News website, Emry was the proprietor of that organization, as well as The Voice of North Idaho and The Voice of Grant County, Oregon. The case was investigated by the FBI in collaboration with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and Oregon State Police, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney for the District of Oregon Nathan J. Lichvarcik.

“I appreciate the partnership with ATF and OSP in this investigation,” said Loren Cannon, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI in Oregon, in the release. “The people’s representatives pass laws to keep our communities safe. Mr. Emry broke those laws and as a consequence, he will spend time in federal prison.”

ARTIST

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After painting chemicals onto a sheet of metal, he will quickly rinse, dry and seal the piece with another chemical to preserve the reaction. However, if he decides he doesn’t like the piece, he can rework the metal again and again until he does.

The acids he works with can be volatile, and his clothes have the holes to prove it.

Recently, Mead had been studying with Zen artists working with ink and brush on rice paper.

“It ends up transferring in a very fascinating way to the steel,” Mead said.

For his pieces, he is drawn to wood most people would be afraid to pick up. He looks for “nasty” aged wood full of rusty nails to strip down and use for the backing of the piece.

For each piece, he custom welds a steel frame.

“It’s a complete piece with the frame,” Mead said. “Not just a painting where you fill in your canvas.”

While most of his pieces are sold outside the county, he has sold some locally.

Mead’s old neighbor, Maryann Blem, bought one of his pieces because the blend of golds, browns, rusts and textures also appealed to her.

“Mytchell had an early piece



Eagle photos/Rylan Boggs
Mytchell Mead paints acid onto a piece of steel outside his home in John Day. “I follow the piece,” Mead said. “The piece tells me where it wants to go.”



Local artist Mytchell Mead holds a piece of wet steel he just finished painting with acid.

that I was drawn to,” Blem said. “It was called ‘Swell’ and could be interpreted as the swell of a wave, a swell of wheat blowing in the field, or just plain ‘Gee, this is swell!’”

Mead currently sells from galleries in Bend, Sedona, Lake Tahoe and Jackson Hole. Different styles and colors sell better in different galleries. For example, more rustic pieces sell well in Jackson Hole, while buyers in Sedona are drawn a certain palette of colors that

don’t sell as well elsewhere.

While many of his pieces are abstract, he also has representational work. Landscapes with a focus on the horizon are some of his favorites. He draws inspiration from the horizon, a place where the material meets the immaterial.

Mead said he creates art from a place of clarity, something that helped his sales stay steady during the Great Recession.

“That’s what being an artist is about, tapping in and tuning out

the noise of the world, and what comes through is the clarity of the universe and the moment,” Mead said. “And that’s what people are seeking, they want clarity in this confusing, massive world, and when they find that seat of clarity, that seat of silence in a piece of artwork, they’re like, ‘I’ve got to have that.’”

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NETWORK

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The scope of the project is still being determined, but Green said every community, with the possible exception of Granite, could be serviced by the new network.

“Our goal is to address the entire county’s needs, but we will start with the urban corridor,” he said.

The city received \$1.82 million in state funding — enough to construct the 75-mile fiber line from Burns — and plans to form an inter-agency coalition to own and manage the cable. The Grant County Digital Coalition will consist of representatives from the county and other cities interested in accessing the fiber optic line.

The state funding will be used as matching funds for grants, including a United States Department of Agriculture rural development grant, to develop the infrastructure for residents to tap into the high-speed network, Green said. A hybrid network, which would provide a blanket of internet access without laying fiber optic line to every home, is being considered.

The coalition would have to determine whether to operate as a public utility company, providing internet access directly to customers, or to

lease access to the new network to other internet providers. Green said there were pros and cons to both, and the risks and rewards would be weighed in the coming months.

DeLinda Kluser, general manager at Oregon Telephone Corporation, said the company wants what is best for the people and businesses of Grant County. She said Oregon Telephone is willing to work with the city and lend its local expertise and experience with fiber optic technology. Kluser said she saw it as a win-win situation.

The Grant County Internet Task Force — a group of representatives from the private sector, city, county and Grant School District — has been working toward securing better internet for residents. The task force will be disbanded upon the creation of the coalition.

State Sen. Ted Ferrioli of John Day helped secure the funding through an amendment to a House appropriations bill. He said it would help erase the barrier of time and distance faced by those working in rural Oregon. Ferrioli said access to affordable high-speed internet is needed to transition communities like John Day into what he called “the new West.”

“It could turn out to be the key piece to attracting a few new employers and growing local businesses,” he said.

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