



# BACK

The Eagle/Angel Carpenter  
Students walk to class after PE on Monday, on their first day back at Humbolt Elementary School.

# TO THE BOOKS

## Grant County schools open doors Monday

New teachers join local districts

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Students are hitting the books this week as the doors to seven Grant County public schools opened Monday for the 2017-18 school year.

From new students and staff to new programs, here is an update on each local district as the school year begins.

### Dayville School District

Kathryn Hedrick, in her third year as superintendent/principal, said they are moving "full-speed ahead" at Dayville School District.

Enrollment is at 48 students, and includes four foreign exchange students this year. Additionally, there are 9 preschool students.

At the beginning of last school year, enrollment was at 48 students.

The teaching staff is the same as last year, and Lonnie Dickens is the new maintenance coordinator.

See SCHOOL, Page A18



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter  
Fifth-grade students in Georgia Boethin's class draw as she reads from a book on the first day of class.

## John Day man charged with murder

Rylan Boggs  
Blue Mountain Eagle

A John Day man has been arrested and charged with murder after an incident Thursday evening in the Dog Creek area.

Thomas Joseph Elliott, who was born in 1962 and resides on Marysville Lane east of John Day, was charged with murder, first-degree manslaughter, first-degree assault and unlawful use of a weapon on Aug. 25 in Grant County Circuit Court, according to court documents.



Thomas Joseph Elliott

The charging document signed by Grant County Chief Deputy District Attorney Mara Houck accuses Elliott of discharging a firearm and intentionally killing Todd Alan Berry on Thursday in Grant County.

Elliott made his first appearance in Grant County Circuit Court in front of Judge William D. Cramer Jr. Friday afternoon. He is being held without bail.

Houck said she believed Elliott and Berry were related through a family member's marriage. She declined to discuss the details of the case.

Officers were dispatched to the Dog Creek/Marysville area just east of John Day just before 8 p.m., according to dispatch logs.

Oregon State Police and Grant County Sheriff's Office are leading the investigation, according to John Day Police Chief Richard Gray. He said OSP brought in a team to investigate.

Elliott is next scheduled to appear in court for a status check Sept. 1.

# Eclipse profitable for local businesses

Eclipse viewers test out their glasses before totality at the John Day Industrial Park Aug. 21.

The Eagle  
Rylan Boggs



## City makes thousands from campers

By Rylan Boggs  
Blue Mountain Eagle

In the wake of thousands of visitors to view the total solar eclipse in Grant County, locals are enjoying the fruits of their labor.

John Day City Manager Nick Green estimated the city had seen roughly

10,000 visitors and made about \$75,000 during the event. This came from the city's 157 tent sites and 161 RV sites rented to visitors.

"I talked to locals who have lived here their whole lives who said they had never seen anything like this," Green said.

The farthest visitor to John Day came from Australia, according to Green.

He said no damage had been done to the Industrial Park or Oregon Pine Property and described John Day Public

Works Director Monte Legg as a "saint" for all his and his department's hard work during the event.

Local businesses also made a pretty penny.

Jessica Turner, who works at the Shell Station in Canyon City, said they sold roughly 12,000 gallons of fuel from Aug. 19-22. They sell an average of 600 gallons a day normally, she said.

See ECLIPSE, Page A18

# Collaborative membership denial causes dispute

BMFP denies claims of discrimination

By Sean Hart  
Blue Mountain Eagle



A collection of people who tried to join the local forest collaborative will not be allowed full membership — for now.

County residents recently denied voting member status in the Blue Mountains Forest Partners Collaborative claim they were discriminated against, but officials from the organization maintain they were following the intent and guidelines of the group despite its open membership.

Formally organized in 2006, the collaborative is a nonprofit organization comprised of a "diverse group"

of people, including members of the timber industry and environmentalists, who work together to develop "zones of agreement" about forest projects based on science, Executive Director Mark Webb said.

He said membership in the group is open to individuals who meet participation requirements, sign a declaration of commitment and abide by the organization's guidelines.

At the July meeting, about nine Grant County residents said they met the requirements and requested to become voting members, but the re-

quest was denied during the meeting. Webb said membership was not on the agenda, and most people interested in membership contact him or the board to discuss it.

The people interested in joining stayed after the meeting to discuss membership further, and eventually most were invited to individual interviews with several collaborative board members. After the interviews, Webb said all but one person — Howard Gieger, who could not be reached for comment — were denied voting member status for now but were invited to continue participating in the meetings as nonvoting members, and were told they may be granted voting status later.

Webb said most of the people requesting to join had previously spoken out against the collaborative and

the mission and scope of its work. He said social media posts indicated a group opposed to the collaborative hoped to infiltrate it to undermine its efforts.

"You had people opposed to BMFP who wanted membership," he said.

However, those requesting membership said they wanted to join to be a part of the process, not to destroy it.

After being denied membership, Frances Preston said she believed it was discrimination.

"I was very surprised," she said. "I thought I met all the requirements. I was sure I was going to be a voting member."

Preston admitted she wrote critical letters to the editor and a letter

See DISPUTE, Page A18

