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Thomas Joseph Elliott

Elliott indicted for first-degree manslaughter

Bail set at \$750,000

Blue Mountain Eagle

A grand jury chose not to charge Thomas Joseph Elliott with murder.

An Aug. 29 indictment in Grant County Circuit Court accuses Elliott of first-degree manslaughter and unlawful use of a weapon for the death of Todd Alan Berry on Aug. 24 in the Dog Creek area east of John Day.

A court document signed by Grant County Chief Deputy District Attorney Mara Houck Aug. 25 originally accused Elliott of murder, first-degree manslaughter, first-degree assault and unlawful use of a weapon. First-degree manslaughter is a Class A felony with a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison. A murder charge carries a mandatory minimum of 25 years.

Elliott appeared in court for an arraignment hearing on Friday, Sept. 1, where Judge William D. Cramer Jr. set his bail at \$750,000. If he posts bail, he was ordered not to possess firearms or weapons, not possess or consume intoxicants, not to have contact with immediate members of the victim's family and not to have contact with his wife.

He waived his right to a trial within 60 days, and his plea hearing is set for Dec. 1.

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

Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter said he assigned the case to Colin Benson from the Oregon Department of Justice, who will prosecute the case.

Benson has not returned a call from the Eagle.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST



Eagle photos/Rylan Boggs

Professor Zhao Zhongzhen, left, and Eric Brand examine a book that is part of the Kam Wah Chung collection, while Parks Manager Dennis Bradley looks over their shoulders Aug. 8. TOP PHOTO: Oregon State Parks Parks Manager Dennis Bradley looks over artifacts in the Kam Wah Chung Museum with Mei Hu, left, and Hou Jun-Lingon, right, on Aug. 8. A group of experts in traditional Chinese medicine visited the museum to see the collection.

Chinese experts examine Kam Wah Chung collection

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

Experts in traditional Chinese medicine came all the way to America to view Ing Hay and Lung On's stock of traditional remedies and records dating back to the 1870s.

Half a dozen professors from other coun-

tries and a Ph.D. student toured the Kam Wah Chung Museum in John Day.

Professor Zhao Zhongzhen said it was his dream to come to the museum.

Zhongzhen referred to Hay as the "pioneer of development of herbal medicine in the United States."

Hay used Eastern and Western medicine in conjunction, Zhongzhen said. Much

of his supplies were imported from China, but the doctor also used local herbs and other ingredients, including rattlesnake venom.

The visit also served as a scouting excursion to explore the possibility of working with the museum and the Discovery Channel

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New agriculture director looks to next generation

Taylor has extensive knowledge at the federal level

By Rylan Boggs
Blue Mountain Eagle

The newly appointed director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture visited Grant County recently as part of a tour of all 36 Oregon counties.

Alexis Taylor was appointed by Gov. Kate Brown in December and came on the job at the end of January. So far, she said the job has been going well.

"It's great," Taylor said. "Katy Coba, my predecessor, spent 13 years in this job, and she wouldn't have done that if it wasn't a great job."

Taylor said she is passionate about agriculture and has a long family history of farming.

One of the biggest con-



The Eagle/Rylan Boggs

Oregon Department of Agriculture Director Alexis Taylor, left, Anne Livingston and Boyd Britton, right, talk about agriculture in Oregon at the Carter Rest Area near Long Creek Aug. 16.

cerns she has heard from farmers and ranchers in Oregon is who will take over the farm when the current farmers retire.

"I think it's something that is constantly on farmers' and ranchers' minds," she said.

As the average age of the American farmer grows, many fear they may not have

a family member to continue on their legacy.

It's an issue her family is concerned with on their farm in Iowa.

"It's something personally that we're dealing with, but it's also something that I hear whenever I'm traveling," she said.

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Transportation package provides extra funding locally

Brown celebrates bill with tour

By Paris Achen and Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Gov. Kate Brown toured the state last week to celebrate signing into law a \$5.3 billion transportation funding package. Local leaders said, while the package is a step in the right direction, more needs to be done to address failing infrastructure.

Oregon's 38th governor stopped in Ontario, Bend, Medford, Eugene and Portland to re-enact signing the bill and to highlight projects that will benefit those areas.

Her last stop was at Portland Community College's Southeast campus at 82nd Avenue and Division Street on Tuesday.

"The transportation package is truly a roadmap to Oregon's future," Brown told a crowd of about 200 at

the campus. "Not only will it improve the safety and condition of our roads and bridges, it will support thousands of family-wage jobs and help local businesses get their goods to market more efficiently."

The package increases fees and taxes to provide funding for a variety of special projects around the state, though none in Grant County, as well as other new programs.

With four increases in the state fuel tax planned, 10 cents total by 2024, the package provides more funding to each city and county each year than previously received.

John Day City Manager Nick Green said the city received \$91,000 in state fuel tax funding last year and

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