



PROSPECTORS CLINCH LEAGUE TITLE

For complete game coverage see Page A9

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Sheriff Palmer cleared by DOJ

Investigation limited to potentially criminal matters

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle



Sheriff Glenn Palmer

The Oregon Department of Justice announced its investigation into complaints about Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer revealed no evidence of criminal conduct.

At least eight people sent formal complaints about Palmer to Oregon's police licensing agency after he met with people who participated in the 41-day occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in 2016. The agency forwarded the complaints to the Department of Justice, recommending an investigation.

Most of the complaints focused on Palmer's involvement with the refuge occupiers, after Palmer met with three

occupiers and the president of a militia group in John Day in January 2016. A complaint from John Day Police Chief Richard Gray also accused Palmer of destroying a public record, and an anonymous complaint accused Palmer of issuing concealed handgun licenses to out-of-state residents.

Department of Justice Chief Counsel Michael Slauson said in an Oct. 10 letter to Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter the department had reviewed all complaints submitted but limited the scope of its investigation to allegations involving potentially criminal conduct, specifically whether Palmer destroyed public records or issued concealed handgun licenses unlawfully.

See PALMER, Page A8



Eagle file photo

Chief Dispatcher Valerie Maynard keeps track of numerous computer monitors at the John Day Emergency Communications Center. Ballot measure 12-69 would create a local option tax to keep the local dispatch center open.

Officials support 911 ballot measure

Dispatch costs exceed state funding

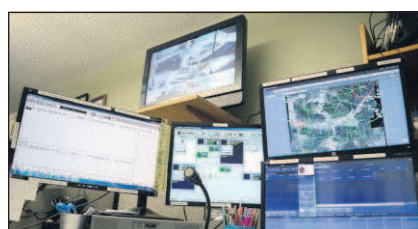
By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Many local public safety officials are in favor of retaining local 911 dispatch services.

The John Day City Council discussed the upcoming 911 dispatch ballot measure at their Oct. 10 meeting. City manager Nick Green reminded the council that the 911 dispatch funding issue has been "a long time coming."

The 911 dispatch center operated by the city of John Day services all of Grant County, but the state 911 tax allocated to the city does not cover the cost of its operation. Ballot measure 12-69 would create a short-term local option tax throughout the county to fund the deficit to keep the local dispatch center open.

"The topic has been raised at every city budget meeting in the past sev-



Eagle file photo

A desk in the John Day Dispatch Center includes a map monitor, a radio monitor, a multi-use monitor, a keyboard, a radio, a telephone and a monitor displaying cameras on the premises. Ballot measure 12-69 would create a local option tax to keep the local dispatch center open.

en years," Green said, describing it as "creeping normalcy" and an "unsustainable situation."

If allowed to continue, funding for 911 dispatch would take the city's entire property tax revenue, he said. The city had managed to keep some personnel costs down, but others such as retirement that were beyond the city's control

were driving dispatch costs higher. "Just about every city in Oregon is facing this same issue," he said.

Green noted that it was unusual to see one city pay for another city's dispatch services.

"I'm not sure residents are aware of this," he said.

The \$420,000 appropriation from the Oregon Legislature to bridge the city's funding gap for the next two years was "fantastic," Green said, "but it has to be a bridge to somewhere."

If it passes, the impact of the local option tax would be \$38 for a home with an assessed value of \$100,000, and the tax could run from 2019 through 2023.

Green noted, if the ballot measure fails, the city would likely be forced to outsource dispatch services to Frontier Dispatch, a regional dispatch center in Condon that benefits from economies of scale by consolidating four counties.

Councilor Gregg Haberly expressed concern that emergency dispatchers

See 911, Page A8

OSP investigating Dixie Campground shooting

Injured party transported by air ambulance

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

A person was injured during a shooting incident at the Dixie Campground around 6:30 a.m. on Monday, Oct. 16.

The Oregon State Police are heading up an active shooting investigation.

The injured person was flown by air ambulance to a hospital in Bend, according

to Lt. Mark Duncan at the Oregon State Police office in Ontario.

The investigation continues, Duncan said on Monday, with officers interviewing involved parties.

Dixie Campground is in the Malheur National Forest east of Dixie Summit and north of Highway 26.

Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer confirmed on Tuesday that the investigation was still ongoing and he couldn't comment. He said a major crimes team with investigators and forensics experts was working on the case.

Prairie City seeks new site for cell tower

Water workshop to be held at 6 p.m. Oct. 18

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

It was standing room only at Prairie City's Oct. 11 city council meeting, where a proposal to consider a conditional use permit for a U.S. Cellular cellphone tower was turned down.

A total of 33 people filled the council room, including Mayor Jim Hamsher and six council members. The meeting started with an hour-long hearing to address the cell tower.



Joe Phippen

Loren Bebb sought a permit to place a 195-foot cellphone tower on his Prairie City property at 10th Street and Hall Avenue.

Tracey Malone, a zoning specialist for Faulk & Foster, made a presentation about the benefits of placing the tower in that area, which happens to be next to the school.

Cellphone providers currently available in Prairie City are Verizon and AT&T. Malone said the nearest U.S. Cellular tower is in John Day. "It's a challenging terrain,"

she said, noting surveyors studied the area for two years, looking for the most constructible and feasible area, which is also zoneable.

Malone said the benefits of a cell tower would include more choice and competitive pricing.

Council members Carole Garrison, Dottie Miller, Les Church, Frank Primozic, Joe Phippen and Georgia Patterson voted unanimously against the proposed site. Some council members said they heard from constituents who didn't like the location.

Joe Phippen said some residents told him the proposed

See TOWER, Page A8



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

The Prairie City City Council votes against the proposed cellphone tower plan. Later, the council voted unanimously to approve the cellphone tower if it is placed in the industrial park, away from the residential and school zones. Clockwise, from left, Frank Primozic, Joe Phippen, Georgia Patterson, Mayor Jim Hamsher, Carole Garrison, Dottie Miller, Les Church and, standing, Faulk & Foster representative Tracey Malone.