

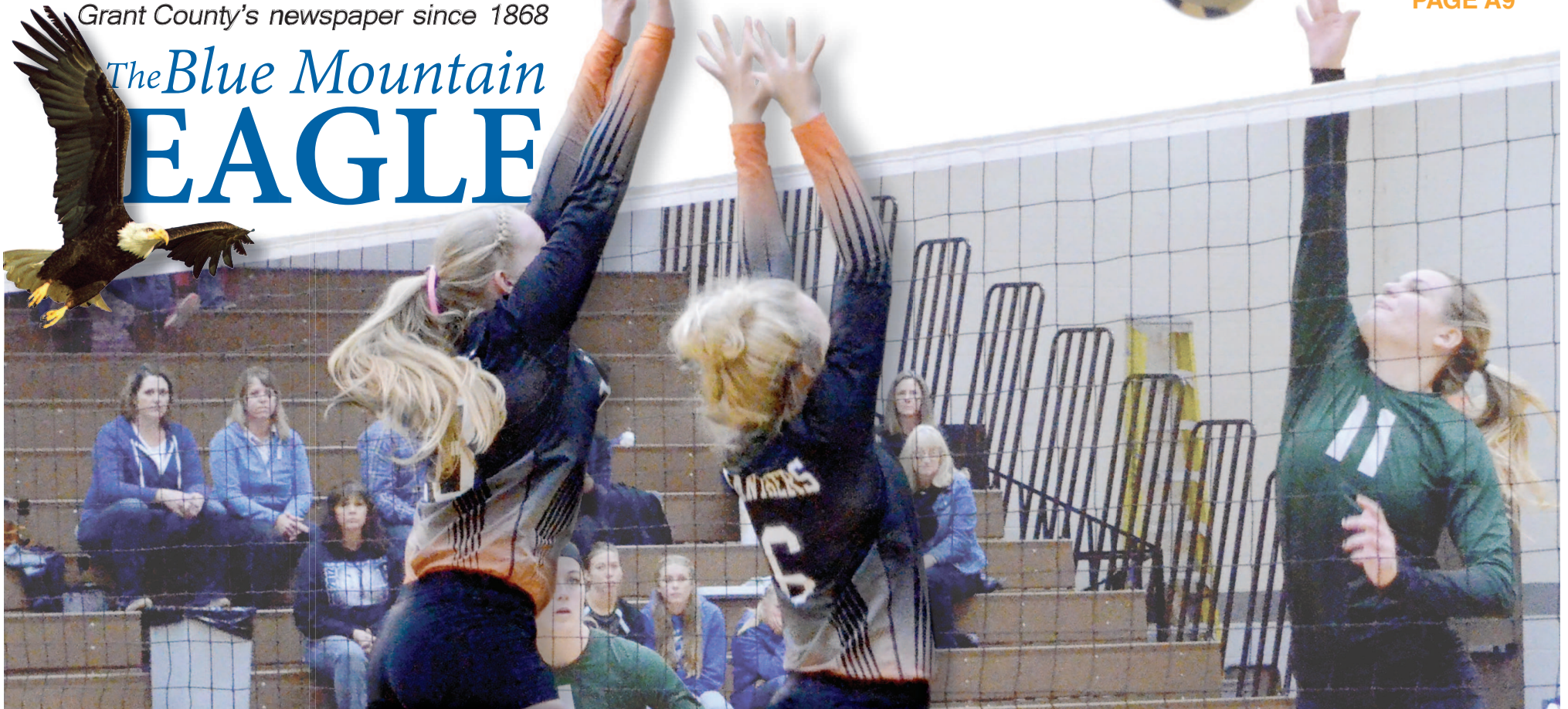
PRAIRIE CITY VOLLEYBALL

WINS DISTRICT TOURNAMENT

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Rapp charged with attempted murder



Kevin Rapp

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

A John Day man has been arrested and charged with attempted murder for an Oct. 16 shooting in Grant County.

Kevin J. Rapp, 32, was arrested Oct. 20, accused of shooting Kyler Weisenback, 27, Eugene, twice with a small-caliber firearm,

according to a press release from Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter. Rapp was charged with attempted murder, first-degree assault, unlawful use of a firearm and possession of methamphetamine.

Weisenback was camping at the Dixie Creek Campground, near Dixie Summit east of Prairie City, and was awoken in the early morning hours and shot, Carpenter

said. Weisenback was flown to St. Charles Medical Center in Bend and then to Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland for medical treatment.

Oregon State Police Sgt. Javier Marquez said last week Weisenback is still alive. Investigative work at the campground has been completed, and it has been re-opened to the public.

Rapp is lodged in the Grant County Jail, both for the new charges and for violation of a conditional release agreement from an earlier case in which he is accused of attempting to elude law enforcement. Bail is set at \$145,000.

Oregon State Police and Grant County Sheriff's Office continue to investigate the shooting.

Bentz: Form a committee to address major state reforms

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

Tackling spending, revenue and public retirement reform at the state level will be difficult, but Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, believes it can be done.

After a bipartisan committee ushered in a state transportation package this year, Bentz said a similar committee should be established and tasked with addressing what he described as the three biggest issues in the state. This year, state lawmakers struggled to overcome a \$1.4 billion shortfall to balance the two-year budget, and no long-term solutions were reached.

Bentz, one of four co-chairs on the 14-person transportation committee, said the



Rep. Cliff Bentz

new spending, revenue and retirement committee should begin working now on legislation to be introduced at the next full legislative session in 2019.

"Let's put together a committee," Bentz told the Eagle. "We should be doing this right now."

Although the transportation package was one of the last items to come out of the legislative session this year, Bentz said committee members had hundreds of conversations with constituents and interested groups before the

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Forest Service wants more public engagement



Russ Comer helps build a mountain bike trail near Magone Lake in May.

Eagle file photo

Prairie City looks at water options

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Call it a perfect storm. Prairie City was taking steps to improve water production for its residents

when a lightning strike in June knocked out the electrical controls for its wells and slow-sand filtration system.

"We were in the process of TV scanning our No. 2 well when the lightning struck a pole," Public Works Director Chris Camarena told the city council during a workshop at city hall Oct. 18. "It could have been catastrophic," he added, referring to the workers near the site.

Crews scrambled to restore service, but the water level in the city's million-gallon reservoir dropped to four feet through the summer. It's up to 23 feet now, Camarena said. The council imposed water restrictions on Prairie City's roughly 450 water customers this past summer, but restrictions should be lifted this week, he said.

The city has experienced water supply problems in the past, and the council considered options that could be taken to avoid raising water rates. Customers pay \$90.50 per month for water and sewer service.

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Public trust and turning the battleship

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Improving public engagement will increase support for forest projects, Malheur National Forest officials say. But developing public trust and improving agency relationships could take time.

About 50 people attended a workshop at the Grant County Regional Airport on Oct. 16 to learn about public engagement opportunities. Vernita Ediger, the facilitator who led the meeting for the Forest Service, explained that it was best for the public to build a relationship with the agency – even on a face-to-face basis.

"We're in this together, people working with people," she said. "We need to bring our best people skills to the table."

But some in the audience had dealt with the Forest Service in the past and had trust issues. One man said he wanted feedback from the Forest Service to be in writing, considering all the turnover at area offices.

"Five years in the future, a decision might be forgotten," he said.

"I need to hear people, and you need to know I'm listening, but there is a process I need to follow."

Dave Halemeier

Blue Mountain District ranger

One man said he was concerned about forest health and economic conditions in Grant County.

"Those are pretty big targets," Ediger noted.

It takes a lot of energy and time for agency staff to engage with the

public, she said.

"It's hard to turn a battleship," she said.

Ediger noted that if the Forest Service uses public input in making decisions, that will lead to more support for a project and public trust in the agency. But one man said it can't be a "one-way street."

"Sometimes I feel like I'm not being heard," he said.

A woman in the audience said she felt like the Forest Service didn't care about her.

"I have deep feelings about the land," she said.

Ediger noted that a lot of people probably felt that way and recalled how the area's timber economy rapidly declined in past years, leaving many in the community "feeling powerless." The goal was to improve the

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