

Cities want financial numbers on broadband project

By **Richard Hanners**
Blue Mountain Eagle

Not so fast, two Grant County mayors are saying about their community's role in a proposal for a government-subsidized fiber optic network to the area.

Canyon City Mayor Steve Fisher and Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamscher told the Eagle that more information with better financial figures was needed before their city councils could approve an agreement to join the project and assume uncertain financial obligations.

In a Sept. 26 memo to the John Day City Council, City Manager Nick Green wrote, "John Day, Canyon City and Seneca are prepared to adopt the Grant County Digital Network Coalition agreement and ordinance. We are waiting for a decision from Prairie City and from the County Court. Once these parties have reviewed the draft agreement, the final agreement and ordinance for adoption will be submitted to each governing body for ratification."



Jim Hamscher

"That's not entirely accurate," Fisher told the Eagle. Fisher said the Canyon City City Council first saw a copy of the final agreement on Sept. 19, and it was sent on to their legal counsel for review. He said Green came to their city council meeting and was asked for more information.

"The agreement said Canyon City's financial responsibility would be 9 1/2 percent – but 9 1/2 percent of what?" Fisher asked.

Fisher said Green told the council the figures had not been formulated yet. He also said Green had told him in an email that if Prairie City opted out of the coalition, then Prairie City's share would be divided among other communities in the coalition.

Hamscher said Prairie City residents already benefit from an upgraded internet service provided

by Oregon Telephone Corporation, and he wasn't sure if they would want the city to be on the hook for another internet provider.

"Prairie City is in pretty good shape, with underground fiber optic cable," he said.

According to the coalition agreement, Prairie City's financial responsibility would be about 11 percent, Hamscher said, but he wanted to see a good estimate of the cost to run broadband service through Prairie City.

Hamscher said the Prairie City council had approved a survey of residents to gauge their interest in the proposed network. Due diligence for an investment of this kind should include some market analysis, he said.

Grant County Judge Scott Myers said he hadn't seen any solid figures on costs to the county.

"I won't bring it to the court until we have them," he told the Eagle.

Myers noted that he had no reason to believe the project was not above board.

The state legislature awarded

the city of John Day \$1.82 million in funding to run a fiber cable 75 miles from Burns to John Day. Green has said he wants to see internet connectivity in the area go from second worst to second best in the state.

Green responded to the cities' comments by noting that participation in the network coalition is voluntary.

"Each city and the county court has the option to connect, but their participation is not required for the project to move forward," he said. "They need to deliberate and make the decision that is best for their community and constituents."

He also noted that those cities that are prepared to adopt the agreement will have a seat on the board of directors and will participate in determining the network design, financing strategy and operating model.

"They will ultimately determine their respective costs by designing the network to meet their community's needs and projected revenue," he said.

OTEC plans \$4 rate increase

Blue Mountain Eagle

Local electricity bills will increase by \$4 for residential customers in November.

At its Sept. 26 meeting, the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative Board of Directors approved a rate increase of 4.62 percent to take effect Nov. 1, according to a company press release. The increase was approved after reviewing the final "Cost of Service" report to recover increased distribution costs and cost increases passed through OTEC's wholesale power supplier, the Bonneville Power Administration.

For the nonprofit's more than 23,000 residential members, the increase will be \$4 per month, raising the monthly delivery charge from \$25.50 to \$29.50. The residential energy rate per kilowatt hour will remain unchanged.

OTEC General Manager Les Penning said the increase moves closer to full recovery of the actual cost to provide electrical service to a location.

"The monthly delivery charge is designed to maintain the electrical infrastructure of the cooperative, so service is available when a member needs it," he said. "At the same time, the board felt it was very important to keep the energy rate as stable as possible to remain competitive and affordable for the membership. By not increasing the energy charge it ensures that when members must use more energy to heat or cool their homes, they pay nothing more for the increased usage per kilowatt hour than they have in the past."

COPS AND COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of Oct. 19-25:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 8
- Average inmates: 14
- Bookings: 9
- Releases: 8
- Arrests: 1
- Citations: 0
- Fingerprints: 6
- Civil papers: 15
- Warrants processed: 3
- Asst./welfare check: 5
- Search and Rescue: 0

Justice Court

The Grant County Justice Court reported the following fines and judgments:

- Exceeding the speed limit: Jana L. Rhoden, 56, Prineville, Sept. 25, 81/65 zone, fined \$260; Corbin J. Murphy, 39, Salem, Sept. 25, 74/65 zone, fined \$160; George B. Winegar, 57, Prairie City, Oct. 9, 73/65 zone, fined \$135; Thomas G. Groesbeck, 60, Spokane, Washington, Oct. 6, 73/65 zone, fined \$160.
- Violation of speed limit: Daniel C. Day, 28, Salem, Oct. 1, 68/45 zone, fined \$220.

- Violation of basic rule: Moises Segoviano, 41, Redmond, Sept. 25, 71/55 zone, fined \$135; Craig A. Tuss, 64, Roseburg, Oct. 8, 68/55 zone, fined \$135.
- No operator's license: Moises Segoviano, 41, Redmond, Sept. 25, fined \$200.
- Following too closely: Chenise C. Mutchler, 22, John Day, Sept. 16, fined \$220.
- Hunting from or across a highway: Derek M. Forbes, 36, Salem, Sept. 23, fined \$110.

Oregon State Police

- Oct. 16: Report of a 20-year-old male resident of John Day attempting to illegally purchase a firearm at a hardware store in John Day.
- Oct. 16: Responded to a single-vehicle rollover crash on Highway 26 near Dayville where the vehicle ended up in the John Day River. John Day ambulance, Grant County Sheriff's Office and

Dayville fire also responded. Brian R. Terry, 28, La Pine, was arrested and charged with DUI with a 0.15 blood alcohol content.

Oct. 22: Advised of cattle on West Highway 26 in John Day.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 165 calls during the week of Oct. 16-22. Along with the various traffic warnings, trespassing, injured animals, noise complaints and juvenile complaints, these calls included:

• John Day Police Department

- Oct. 16: Responded to Main Street, John Day, for a possible suicidal subject.
- Oct. 16: Dispatched for a report of a stolen bicycle at a fast food restaurant in John Day.
- Oct. 16: Responded with sheriff's office for a possible burglary at a thrift store in John Day.

Oct. 16: Cited James M. Smith, 21, La Grande, on Highway 26 near Indian Creek Road for speeding.

Oct. 17: A caller in Prairie City reported being harassed by a neighbor.

Oct. 18: Responded with sheriff's office to Blue Mountain Hospital for a report of a suicidal person with a possible bomb. John Day fire was on standby.

Oct. 19: Advised of a theft on Main Street in John Day.

Oct. 19: Responded to a report of trespassing at a vacant house in Prairie City.

• Grant County Sheriff's Office

Oct. 16: Responded to a report of a calf on West Highway 26 in John Day. The calf was back on the highway the next day.

Oct. 22: Advised of a theft in Canyon City.

• John Day ambulance

Oct. 16: Responded to Dixie Campground for a 28-year-old man.

Oct. 16: Responded to Monument with Monument ambulance and Monument fire for a woman.

Oct. 16: Responded to Long Creek with Long Creek ambulance for an elderly woman with chest pains.

Oct. 17: Responded for a man with blood pressure is-

sues in John Day.

Oct. 18: Responded to Prairie City for an elderly woman.

Oct. 20: Responded for an elderly woman in John Day with difficulty breathing.

Oct. 20: Dispatched for an elderly woman in John Day who fell.

Oct. 20: Responded for a woman who fell from six feet in Mt. Vernon.

Oct. 22: Responded for an 85-year-old man in John Day.

Oct. 22: Responded with Monument ambulance and Monument fire for a 22-year-old woman in Monument.

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Harvest Festival

**SW Brent St. in John Day
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Celebrate the arrival of fall with us! The annual Harvest Festival is a fun-filled end to the Farmer's Market season. Produce and pumpkins, crafts and games: locally produced artisan goods galore. Bring your apples and containers; we will have an apple cider press!

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Facebook: John Day Farmer's Market

Email: johndayfarmersmarket@gmail.com

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