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## Planning for a public broadband network

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

A new high-speed internet option is moving forward for parts of Grant County. The John Day City Council unanimously approved an ordinance Nov. 15 ratifying creation of the Grant County Digital Network Coalition, an intergovernmental agency to manage a new publicly owned broadband network in Grant County. "This is great," Mayor Ron Lundbom said. "It's been a long time coming."

Upon approval by the Oregon Secretary of State, the coalition will become active Jan. 1, John Day City Manager Nick Green said.

Green expected the Seneca City Council to adopt a similar ordinance that night and for the Grant County Court to do so on Nov. 22. Each party to the agreement will appoint a member to represent their jurisdiction on the coalition's board of directors.

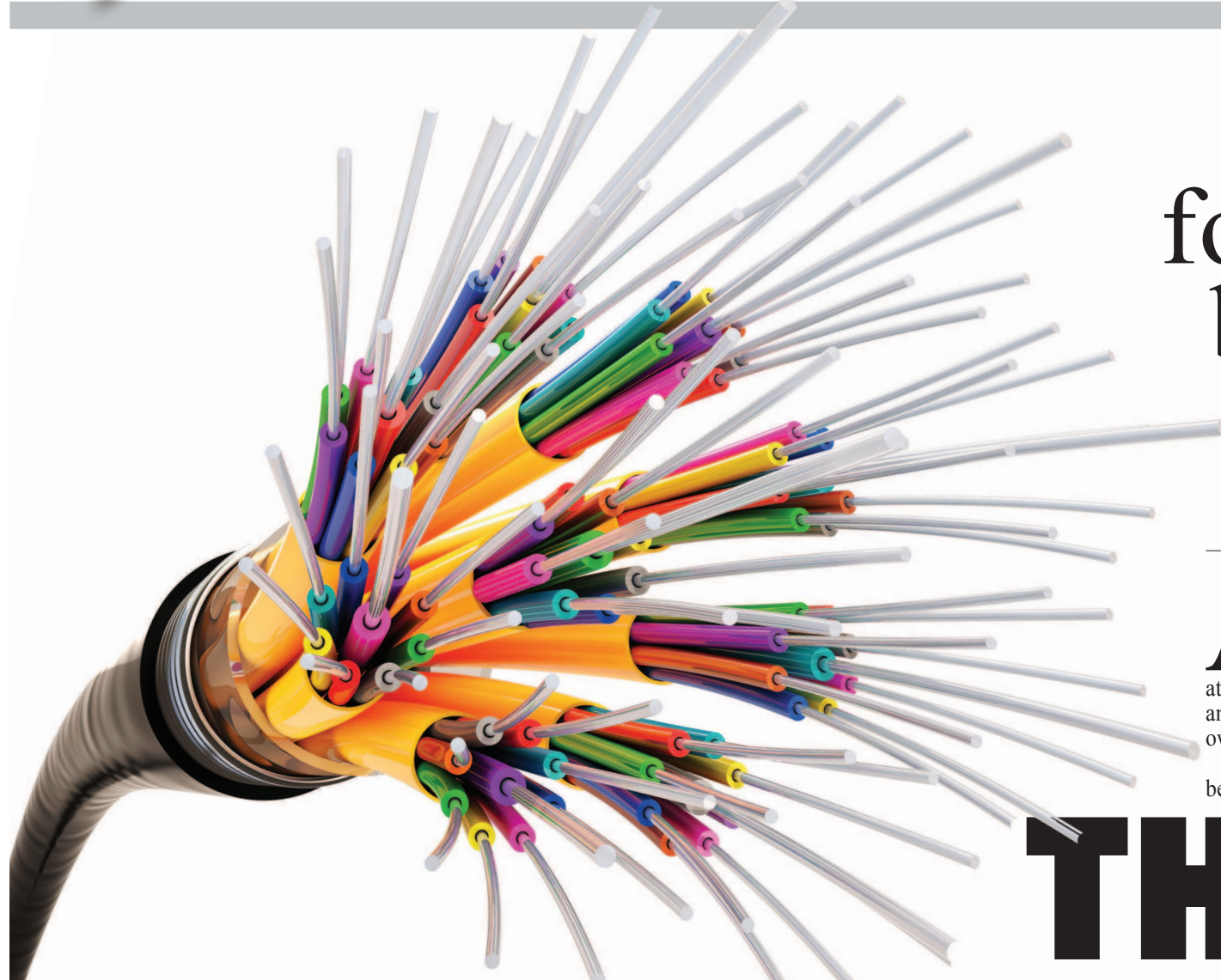
Prairie City and Canyon City opted to not join the coalition, Green said.

"We won't extend service to those two communities," he said, adding that the communities joining the coalition will have a greater share of the system's revenue but also take on more risk.

The backbone of the network in Grant County will be a high-capacity fiber cable installed from Burns to the John Day Valley. The state legislature provided \$1.8 million for the project, which according to an estimate by OFS Optics was sufficient to run the line from Burns to John Day, Green told the Eagle.

One of the route's hurdles involves obtaining rights-of-way through Forest Service land. The task force working on the proposal has negotiated with Oregon

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# THE FIBER-OPTIC CONNECTION

**“Fiber is more expensive on the capital side but much lower cost on operations and maintenance.”**

Nick Green  
John Day city manager



## Police committee votes to close Palmer investigation

Licensing agency staff recommended no further action

By Sean Hart  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Oregon's police licensing agency is closing an investigation into citizen complaints about Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer.

The Police Policy Committee of the licensing agency, the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training, voted unanimously Nov. 16 to



Sheriff Glenn Palmer

affirm the recommendation of DPSST staff that no further action be taken on the complaints against Palmer. Malheur County Sheriff Brian Wolfe and another voting member recused themselves.

DPSST Professional Standards Coordinator/Investigator Katrina Robson told the committee DPSST received "numerous citizen complaints alleging misconduct" by Palmer. The agency forwarded the complaints to the Oregon Department of Justice, which concluded its criminal investigation in October with no charges filed, stating the "investigation simply has not revealed concrete evidence of criminal conduct."

Robson said the DPSST waited to review the com-

plaints until the criminal investigation was completed. She said the committee needed to determine the next steps and that DPSST staff recommended taking no further action because, without criminal conduct, there was no "objectively reasonable" basis to initiate proceedings to suspend or revoke Palmer's police licenses.

"A majority of the allegations contained in the complaints are related to Sheriff Palmer's management operation of the Grant County Sheriff's Office, matters that are outside of the board's and the DPSST's jurisdiction," Robson said. "After reviewing the remaining allegations and considering the findings of the DOJ's criminal investigation, staff does not believe that an independent investigation would uncover any additional information related to Sheriff Palmer's conduct."

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## Council mulls 911 dispatch options

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The John Day City Council at its Nov. 14 meeting unanimously voted to accept \$420,000 in state funding to keep its local 911 dispatch center operating for two more years.

It also unanimously authorized City Manager Nick Green to organize an inter-agency task force to dissolve the current dispatch center and to negotiate a transition plan for a new 911 jurisdictional plan to become operational by 2020.

During discussion about the failure of the local option tax election, Green said the county didn't have the best taxing tools to address the 911 funding deficit, and the special option tax appeared to violate a basic principle of tax fairness.

"It was hard to explain that to voters on social me-



John Day City Councilman Paul Smith



John Day City Councilwoman Shannon Adair

dia," he said.

Voters also didn't understand that John Day paid about \$200,000 per year to make up the annual funding deficit for the countywide dispatch center, Green said. The city gradually took over responsibility of the local

dispatch center as members stopped coming to User Board meetings and the technical oversight group "atrophied," he said.

Chief Dispatcher Valerie Maynard, who researched

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