

County signs on to broadband coalition

Details will come in later agreement

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Increased internet access in the John Day area took another step forward as the Grant County Court unanimously approved an ordinance ratifying the creation of the Grant County Digital Network Coalition at the Nov. 22 meeting.

Sixteen people addressed the court on the matter, with 13 in support and one opposed. The ordinance will come back for a second reading in December.

Ground rules describing how the coalition will be set up and each members' obligations and benefits — including how the county could quit the quasi-governmental organization — will be provided in an upcoming memorandum of understanding, Grant County Judge Scott Myers said.

John Morris asked the court about recent news regarding a proposal by Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai to dismantle Obama administration regulations protecting net neutrality. As owners of a broadband cable and distribution system, the coalition would be an internet service provider governed by net neutrality regulations.

Myers said answers to that question, as well as the cost and design of the new network, are not known at this time. The first step was to establish the coalition, which would become effective Jan. 1. Coalition members would develop plans for how the new broad-



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

From left, Commissioner Boyd Britton, County Judge Scott Myers and Commissioner Jim Hamscher at the Grant County Court meeting Nov. 22.

band network would be built and operated, he said.

Frances Preston, who said she supported the coalition, asked why the Forest Service and Blue Mountain Hospital — major benefactors of increased internet access — were not members of the coalition.

"I'm not sure why they aren't included," Myers said. "It might depend on their use."

Ryan Nehl, the Malheur National Forest deputy supervisor, said the Forest Service was very interested in the benefits a new fiber cable could bring to the John Day area. He also noted that the fiber cable to be run from Burns to John Day would cross Forest Service land.

Jim Sproul said he wanted to see the benefits of the new broadband network extended to rural areas outside of John Day and Seneca — two of the coalition's members. Prairie City and Canyon City had opted out of joining the coalition.

Several people described how family members had to take turns us-

ing internet at their homes, including for business or educational purposes, because of slow access speed.

Zach Williams said he ordinarily opposed the idea of government competing with private business, but in this case, he saw the need for government to step in as a way to retain business and grow the economy.

Ken Olson, the president and CEO of Old West Federal Credit Union and a member of the task force working on the proposed broadband network, described the tremendous internet access available at public schools in Pendleton.

"It blows your mind," he said.

He noted that streaming movies represented only 5 percent of the opportunities offered by broadband internet access.

"If there are things we're going to spend money on, this should be one," he said.

In other county court news, Myers and Commissioner Boyd Britton commented on their attendance at the Farm Bureau meeting at Grant Coun-

ty Regional Airport on Nov. 10.

Myers said he wasn't convinced that changes in state land-use regulations presented at the meeting would be good for Eastern Oregon. He said he was concerned that urban growth under the new regulations could remove valuable farm land from the economy.

Britton said he agreed, but he was also concerned about old farm families that had come on hard times and needed to sell portions of their farm land to make ends meet. He also said he was concerned the Freedom To Farm Act could be diluted by the new regulations. He called the matter another example of the "urban-rural divide."

The court unanimously approved a request by Grant County Justice of the Peace Kathy Stinnett to purchase software for a LEDS-certified terminal. This would eliminate the current practice of using sensitive hand-delivered hard copies of driving records that later must be shredded. The Oregon Law Enforcement Data System software would also provide information needed to reach a decision on a citation, Stinnett said. Sometimes she has taken a defendant's word on their past driving record, she said.

The court unanimously approved funding for mandatory training requested by Grant County Victim Assistance Director Andrea Officer and to offset a grant shortage.

The court also unanimously approved a lease agreement with the Oregon Department of Transportation for a county-owned radio tower on Fall Mountain.

The court's next meeting will be Dec. 13.

Defense asserts Fix can't stand trial

EO Media Group

Angela Marie Fix of Pilot Rock needs more time and help before she can stand trial for arson and second-degree manslaughter.

Fix, 41, appeared Monday morning via video from the Umatilla County Jail in the Pendleton courtroom of Circuit Judge Christopher Brauer for an update on her case.

The state accused Fix of setting the fire that killed Larry Castro, 77, in July at his Pilot Rock home.

Attorney Jill Weygandt handled the defense duties. She told Brauer that clinical psychologist Terry Templeman found Fix was not competent to stand trial. Reading from Templeman's report, Weygandt said Fix could not make relevant decisions or sort through relevant information on her own.

District Attorney Dan Primus said he would review the report and anticipated sending Fix to the state's mental hospital in Salem for an evaluation. Brauer set the status check on the case for the morning of Dec. 13.



Angela Marie Fix

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 Circuit Court

Jeffrey D. Porter, 52, Canyon City, was convicted Nov. 21 of probation violation for a second time. He had pleaded guilty Aug. 12, 2016, to misdemeanor counts of driving under the influence of intoxicants and furnishing liquor to a minor. He was sentenced to five days in jail consecutive to his sentence for misdemeanor or fourth-degree assault. He was also ordered to 20 hours of additional community service and fined \$50. As of Nov. 22, Porter owed \$2,120 in fines and fees.

Justice Court

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

Violating the basic rule: Andrew S. Yeaple, 34, Baker City, Nov. 5, 70/55 zone, fined \$135; Jordan J. Powell, 24, Salem, Nov. 11, 87/55 zone, fined \$435; Claire K. Dickey, 32, Oct. 29, 71/55 zone, fined \$135; Tanya M. Cloutier, 52, Madras, Oct. 28, 73/55 zone, fined \$160.

Violation of speed lim-

it: Baldemar Riojas III, 28, Ontario, Oct. 28, 50/30 zone, fined \$160.

Careless driving: Christine G. Cleaver, 63, Nyssa, Oct. 29, fined \$435.

Failure to obey a traffic control device: James J. Jaynes, 67, John Day, July 18, fined \$220.

Oregon State Police

Shawn C. Kite, 49, Prairie City, was cited in Prairie City for driving with a suspended or revoked driver's license Nov. 21.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 142 calls during the week of Nov. 20-26. Along with the traffic warnings, trespassing, injured animals, noise complaints and juvenile complaints, these calls included:

John Day Police Department

Nov. 20: Report of a domestic dispute on Second Street in John Day.

Nov. 20: Responded to a report of a dispute and suicidal person in Prairie City.

Nov. 21: Dispatched to a laundromat in John Day for an unwanted subject.

Nov. 21: Report of harassment on Main Street in John Day.

Nov. 22: Report of a theft in Prairie City.

Nov. 22: Report of an unwanted subject on South Fork

Road.

Nov. 23: Responded to a report of a stolen vehicle on South Canyon Boulevard. Alexander Ringe, 27, Hermiston, was arrested and charged with unlawful use of a motor vehicle and an outstanding Umatilla County warrant.

Nov. 23: Responded to a report of a domestic dispute at the Strawberry Apartments in Prairie City. Gregory Devore, 28, Prairie City, was arrested and charged with harassment.

Nov. 26: Followed up on an investigation at the Stalker Alley Apartments in Prairie City.

Nov. 26: Following a traffic stop on Highway 26 near Pine Creek Road, Ryan Sullivan, 37, Baker City, was cited for speeding.

Grant County Sheriff's Office

Nov. 20: Responded to a report of a broken window at

a business in Mt. Vernon.

Nov. 20: Report of a suicidal person on Indian Creek Road.

Nov. 21: Report of a juvenile problem in Dayville.

Nov. 21: Responded with John Day and Prairie City ambulances to Dixie Creek Road for an accident.

Nov. 21: Report of shots fired in the Monument area.

Nov. 22: Responded to a report of overdue hunters in the Beulah hunting unit. The hunters were located.

Nov. 24: Following a traffic stop on Nugget Street in Canyon City, Christine Daum, 28, Canyon City, was cited for driving with a suspended license and no insurance.

Nov. 25: Following a traffic stop on Highway 26 west of Mt. Vernon, Molly Brennan, 23, Prineville, was cited for speeding.

Nov. 26: Dispatched to Council Drive in Mt. Vernon for a report of harassment.

John Day ambulance

Nov. 20: Responded to Highway 26 west of John Day for a man with trouble breathing.

Nov. 20: Responded to a senior home in John Day for a male subject.

Nov. 21: Dispatched to a senior home in John Day for an 85-year-old man with shoulder pain.

Nov. 21: Responded to Bumpy Road for a man who was dizzy and fainting.

Nov. 22: Dispatched to Monument area for a 70-year-old man.

Nov. 22: Responded to sheriff's office to a noninjury accident on Belshaw Creek Lane in Mt. Vernon.

Nov. 22: Dispatched to Main Street in John Day for a 47-year-old woman with chest pain.

Nov. 24: Responded to Laycock Creek in Mt. Vernon for a 7-year-old boy who had passed out and hit his head.

Nov. 24: Responded to a senior home in John Day for a person not feeling well.

Nov. 25: Responded with sheriff's office to Patterson Bridge Road in John Day for an 80-year-old woman with difficulty breathing.

Nov. 25: Dispatched to Main Street in John Day for a 57-year-old woman with difficulty breathing.

Nov. 26: Responded with Monument ambulance to Highway 19 near Monument for a 48-year-old woman with a dislocated knee.

John Day fire

Nov. 25: Responded to West Main Street for a report of a chimney fire.

Nov. 26: Responded with sheriff's office to Highway 395 in Canyon City for a report of downed power lines.

Oregon Department of Transportation

Nov. 20: Report of a large rock on Highway 26 near the Wheeler County line.

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J. TABOR

JEWELERS

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Saturday, December 9
at Grant Union High School

Wrestling begins at 9 a.m. with ages 8 & under.
Ages 9-14 begin at 12:30 p.m.

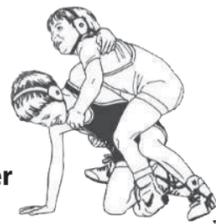
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Spectators: \$2
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Contact:

Cindy Dougharity-Spencer
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