

Aging facilities plague the school district

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The gym floor at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School in John Day is buckling, but no immediate solution is at hand, Superintendent Curt Shelley told the Grant School District board Jan. 17.

"We can't sand it down. There's not enough wood left, and we'd hit nails," he said.

School staff had dealt with leaking steam pipes in the gym last fall, but the source of the moisture causing the southeast corner of the gym floor to warp turned out to be an ice machine.

Shelly said he's looked at the pros and cons of submitting a claim to the school district's insurer, which might deny the claim. He also felt sure the problem fell outside the scope of a seismic upgrade project for the gym next year — although he was concerned about the safety of the roll-away bleachers during an earthquake.



Light reflects off the buckled gym floor at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School Jan. 22. Moisture from plumbing for an ice machine caused the problem, according to Grant County School District Superintendent Curt Shelley.

Basketball players cross the damaged floor area during games, but so far the buckled floor hasn't posed a safety hazard, he said.

In other school board news:

- An annual audit report was presented by Cara Wilber, from the Oster Professional Group office in Burns. Wilber noted that the school district's Public Employees Retirement System funds showed a significant net liability — growing from \$1.8 million last year to \$4.8 million this year.

Wilber said the big increase resulted from a rate increase in the actuarial tables, and the net liability is expected to increase again next year. It's a long-term financial problem that plagues school districts and cities across the state.

Shelley noted another long-term concern is the school district's aging buildings, with steam-heating and roof problems always looming.

"We're in good shape now, but I wish we had newer facilities," he said. "We're putting

Band-Aids on our buildings."

Board Chairwoman Chris Cronin credited "good fiscal management over the years" for the school district's success.

- Shelley said it "raises my hackles" to read about Oregon's 48th-place ranking for graduation rates for the second year in a row. According to federal figures, 74.8 percent of students in the state's class of 2016 earned diplomas within four years of starting high school. That's 1 percent higher than for the class of 2015.

Shelley noted that Oregon has stricter graduation requirements than other states, and Grant County's graduation rates are higher than the rest of the state.

- Shelley told the board he wasn't sure how the school district would be impacted if the Measure 101 ballot measure fails. The ballot measure provides for certain assessments or taxes on health care insurance and the revenue of certain hospitals to provide funding for Medicaid expansion.

"I sure would like to see some stable funding in the state of Oregon," he said. "It would help ensure stable employment."

Lost motorist found on forest road

Stuck in the snow near Ukiah

Blue Mountain Eagle

A 52-year-old woman from Starr, Idaho, was found stuck in the snow on a Forest Service road near Ukiah after she was reported missing by family members.

According to the Oregon State Police and the Grant County Sheriff's Office, Ruby Pike left Portland Jan. 19 at 8:30 a.m. and was expected to arrive in Idaho by 10 p.m. Pike told a family member she planned to take a scenic route, and her last contact was with her husband at 4:13 p.m. Pike said she would call him when she reached Ontario, but she never did.

The sheriff's office was notified Pike was missing at about 8 a.m. the next day. A ping from her cellphone placed Pike around 10 miles south of Ukiah. An extensive search by Grant



Ruby Pike

County Search and Rescue and OSP troopers from John Day, Baker City, La Grande, Pendleton and Ontario began around noon.

Two Grant County deputies located Pike's white Toyota Tundra pickup truck stuck in snow on Forest Road 52 near milepost 35 at 7:58 p.m. Pike was found inside the truck and in good health. She was transported to Ukiah where she was checked by ambulance staff and reunited with her family.

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

Misdemeanor charges of criminal mischief and harassment against Jeramie M. Lambeth, 45, John Day, were dismissed Jan. 17 following a motion for a judgment of dismissal by Grant County Chief Deputy District Attorney Mara Houck. The charges involved a July 13 incident. Lambeth earlier was found guilty except for insanity Jan. 11 in Malheur County Circuit Court for misdemeanor charges of recklessly endangering another person and disorderly conduct following a July 24 incident in Ontario.

Mark Crawford, 38, Mt. Vernon, pleaded guilty Jan. 18 to knowingly hunting elk with a .22-caliber rifle and knowingly hunting elk without a valid tag, both misdemeanor wildlife violations, on March 18. He was sentenced to 24 months probation and 60 hours community service, and fined \$300. His hunting license was revoked for three years.

Alexander C. Ringe, 28, Hermiston, pleaded guilty Jan. 18 to unauthorized use of a vehicle, a felony, committed Nov. 23. He was sentenced to six months in jail and one year of post-prison supervision.

Neal Allen Burch, 39, Prineville, was convicted Dec. 11 based on an Alford plea of felony second-degree sexual abuse committed Jan. 17, 2016, and felony second-degree sexual abuse constituting domestic violence committed Oct. 1, 2011. He was sentenced by Deschutes County Circuit Court Judge Michael C. Sullivan to 80 months in prison and 120 months of post-prison supervision. He was ordered to have no contact with the victims in the two cases or any minors, to register as a sex offender and undergo recommended treatment and not to frequent or visit places that exist primarily for the enjoyment of children.

Kent A. Vannorsdall, 25, Prineville, pleaded guilty to felony unauthorized use of a 1984 Chevrolet pickup truck April 5, 2016. He was sentenced to 20 days in jail and 24 months supervised probation and ordered to pay a \$200 fine and \$4,959 in restitution to the victim. His driver's license was suspended for one year.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of Jan. 18:

Concealed handgun licens-

es: 9

Average inmates: 12

Bookings: 4

Releases: 3

Arrests: 2

Citations: 0

Fingerprints: 3

Civil papers: 14

Warrants processed: 1

Asst./welfare check: 6

Search and rescue: 0

Justice Court

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

- Driving while suspended: James S. Byrd, 44, Albemarle, North Carolina, Dec. 31, fined \$435; Melanie L. Camarena, 45, John Day, Nov. 21, fined \$435; Travis A. Palmer, 27, Mt. Vernon, Nov. 26, fined \$435.

- Driving uninsured: Melanie L. Camarena, 45, John Day, Nov. 21, fined \$260; John E. Guthridge, 54, Burns, Dec. 18, fined \$260.

- Violation of the basic rule: James S. Byrd, 44, Albemarle, North Carolina, Dec. 31, 72/55 zone, fined \$160; Rodney D. Tachenko, 62, Baker City, Dec. 9, 77/55 zone, fined \$260; John E. Guthridge, 54, Burns, Dec. 16, 76/55 zone, fined \$260; David K. Dethman, 56, Jan. 5, 75/55 zone, fined \$165.

- Exceeding speed limit: Debra J. Bryant, 63, Bates, Jan. 8, 76/55 zone, fined \$220.

- Failure to carry proof of financial responsibility requirements: John E. Guthridge, 54, Burns, Dec. 16, fined \$260.

- Failure to properly use safety belt: Jessica J. Hunt, 23, John Day, Dec. 28, fined \$75.

- Unlawful operation of vehicle: Kristin M. Nodine, 32, Mt. Vernon, Nov. 23, fined \$220.

- Failure to drive within lane: James S. Byrd, 44, Albemarle, North Carolina, Dec. 31, fined \$260.

Bronco. Both drivers were transported to the hospital. According to lab results, Wallenstein's blood alcohol content was 0.438 percent, and she was cited for DUII alcohol, assault, reckless driving and failure to stay within the lane.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 144 calls during the week of Jan. 15-21. Along with the various traffic warnings, trespassing, injured animals, noise complaints and juvenile complaints, these calls included:

• John Day Police Department

Jan. 15: Responded for an unwanted subject on East Main Street in John Day.

Jan. 15: Dispatched to West Main Street in John Day for a harassment report.

Jan. 17: Responded to a hit-and-run report on Main Street in John Day.

Jan. 18: Cited a minor in possession of alcohol in John Day.

Jan. 18: Report of harassment in John Day.

Jan. 18: Toby Dreyer, 35, John Day, was cited for furnishing alcohol to minors on East Fifth Avenue in John Day.

Jan. 19: Report of ongoing trespassing at an unoccupied home on Northwest Bridge Street in John Day.

Jan. 19: Responded to a restaurant on Main Street in John Day for a theft of services report.

Jan. 20: Report of a disturbance on Violet Street in Mt. Vernon.

Jan. 20: James Haney, 38, Boise, Idaho, was cited for speeding 84/65 zone on Highway 26.

way 26 near Indian Creek Road.

Jan. 20: James M. Hancock, 43, Canyon City, was cited for driving with a suspended license and no insurance on West Main Street in John Day.

Jan. 20: Responded to West Main Street in John Day for an unattended death.

Jan. 21: Dispatched to Highway 26 and Pine Creek Road for a vehicle accident.

• Grant County Sheriff's Office

Jan. 15: Responded to Middle Fork Lane in Bates for a fraud report.

Jan. 15: Dispatched to the Mt. Vernon post office for a suspicious person.

Jan. 16: Responded to Little Indian Creek Road in John Day for an unattended death.

Jan. 16: Dispatched to Widows Creek Road in Mt. Vernon for a harassment report.

Jan. 17: Advised of a horse at large on Dog Creek Road in John Day.

Jan. 18: Responded to Main Street in John Day for a dispute report.

Jan. 19: Advised of a do-

mestic dispute on Marysville Road.

Jan. 19: Responded with John Day police to West Main Street in John Day for a dispute.

Jan. 20: Received a report of identity theft.

Jan. 20: Dispatched to a convenience store in Mt. Vernon for a report of criminal mischief.

• John Day ambulance

Jan. 15: Responded to a senior living facility in Prairie City for an 80-year-old man.

Jan. 15: Dispatched to Little Canyon Mountain Trail for an elderly woman with possible pneumonia.

Jan. 15: Responded to a senior living facility in Prairie City for a 79-year-old man.

Jan. 16: Dispatched to a senior living facility in Prairie City for an 82-year-old man.

Jan. 16: Responded to a senior living facility in John Day for a woman with shortness of breath.

Jan. 17: Dispatched to a senior living facility in John Day for a woman with flu-like symptoms.

• Mt. Vernon fire

Jan. 20: Responded to a flue fire on Highway 26.

Jan. 18: Responded to a senior living facility in John Day for a 65-year-old woman.

Jan. 18: Dispatched with Monument fire and ambulance to Highway 402 for a man with diabetic issues.

Jan. 19: Responded to West Main Street in John Day for a 54-year-old woman.

Jan. 19: Dispatched with Long Creek ambulance to Long Creek School for a 14-year-old with a possible dislocated hip.

Jan. 21: Responded to Reynolds Road in Prairie City for a woman in labor.

Jan. 21: Dispatched to East Main Street in John Day for a 65-year-old male who had fallen.

Jan. 21: Responded to Southwest First Avenue in John Day for a 58-year-old woman.

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OSU Extension Service Open House

January 26th, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Come see us at our new location:
116 NW Bridge St., John Day

7-8...Meeting with County/City Government

8-9...Tree Care & Maintenance ~ Jerry Galland

9-10...Youth STEM Activity ~ Kristal Hansen

10-11...Interior Decorating ~ Kattie Piazza

11-12...Grazing Behavior for Land Management

~ Dr. Dave Bohnert

12-1...Lunch (chili, cornbread, cinnamon rolls)

1:30-2:30...Healthy Trees, Healthy Forests

~ Bob Parker

2:30-3:30...Blue Mountain Land Trust ~ Marti

3:30-4:30...Open Campus Educational

Opportunities ~ Didgette McCracken

5-7...Volunteer Appreciation Social Hour

Silent Auction 4-H Fundraiser hosted by Jozie Rude