



A CHANGING ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

“Finally, we had to make a decision. At some point, you have to stop the bleeding.”

Nathan Gordanier, Manager of Muzzy's 123 Dollar Store



Main Street stores adapt, close

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Four storefronts on Main Street in John Day will be changing, but it's not all bad news for the local economy.

Some owners are closing their stores for good, while others are changing how they'll continue to do business during the tough economic times facing Grant County.

Naturally Yours

Sherry Dress, the owner of the Naturally Yours Health and Wellness Center on Main Street, plans to move most of the store's business to her home while the city of John Day completes a major upgrade project to the Weaver Building



Judy Chapman, left, LeAnne Gast and Miranda Hoodenpyl at the Eastern Oregon Cosmetology Industry Associates.

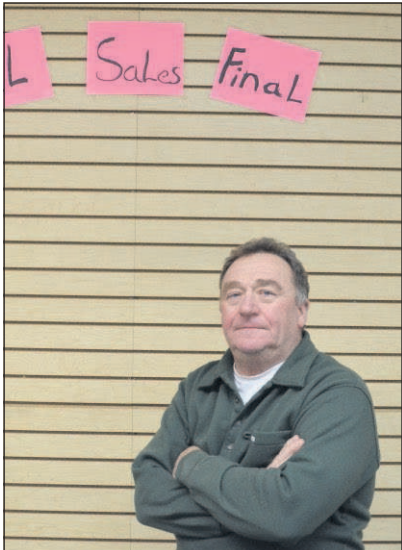
at 131 W. Main St. Through Naturally Yours, established in 1992, Dress promotes homeopathic medicine and makes various teas and tinctures for about 500 regular customers. She plans to set up her alternative health business in the front room of her home, 26984 Day Spring Road in John Day, with regular business hours of 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mondays through Fridays and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays. The health food cooperative at the store will not be moved to her home, Dress said. Volunteers are organizing a way for locals to order products online from Azure Standard, a regional organic food distributor with truck deliveries to John Day. Dress said she'll help people who want to continue to buy Azure Standard products.

Prime Time Video

After 30 years in business, Dave Bantish is closing Prime Time Video. After 19 years in the John Day Plaza, Bantish moved Prime Time Video to Main Street five and a half years ago.

See CLOSED, Page A12



Eagle photos/Richard Hanners
Dave Bantish closed his Prime Time Video store on Main Street in John Day Jan. 27. TOP IMAGE: Muzzy's 123 Dollar Store in John Day.

Silvies Valley Ranch hiring

Blue Mountain Eagle

Amid the economic difficulties, one new business, The Retreat and Links at Silvies Valley Ranch, is expanding its personnel to accommodate the first full season at the resort and golf course between John Day and Burns.

Owner Dr. Scott Campbell, a Harney County native, invested in the resort at the cattle ranch as a way to boost the local economy.

After a preview season last year, The Retreat and Links with luxury lodging, dining and golfing plans to hire 60 workers to fill a variety of positions by the official opening in April. A job fair is planned from 4-7 p.m. Feb. 16 at The Outpost Restaurant in John Day.

With a unique reversible golf course, as well as a par-3 course, ranch-to-table

See HIRING, Page A12

Funding source could assist Weaver Building project



Eagle file photo
A new grant opportunity could help pay for renovations of the Weaver Building at 131 W. Main St., which was purchased by the city of John Day.

Goal to create workforce housing

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

A pilot program from the Governor's Regional Solutions office with up to \$1 million in grant funding could be an important source of funding for the city's Weaver Building project, John Day City Manager Nick Green told the city council Jan. 23.

According to information submitted to the office by local governments and

businesses across Oregon, workforce housing shortages are constraining economic growth and job creation in many of the state's communities.

Green recommended that the city apply for a \$181,252 site-readiness grant under the new Workforce Housing Initiative. Under the program, workforce housing is defined as homes owned or rented by Oregonians with incomes between 60 percent and 120 percent of the area's median income, which in John Day this fiscal year is between \$30,600 and \$61,200.

"The goal is to provide homes for Forest Service or hospital workers," Green

said. "People with more money would likely want to build a house."

The council unanimously approved submitting an application for the grant and using the funds for architectural planning, interior demolition and debris removal and asbestos abatement at the Weaver Building.

"If the city applies for and receives the grant, we will have sufficient funding to do site readiness and will not have to include these costs in a future loan for the building renovation," Green said.

The city has already spent \$121,486 to

See PROJECT, Page A12

Adoption journey: Couple takes leap of faith to Africa

Family's timeline to return unknown

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

When James and Kaylee Wilson flew to Ghana, Africa, in November of 2016 to adopt their 2-year-old daughter Emmanuella they didn't expect to stay long.

"We were going to be there for six weeks, not 435 days," said Kaylee, who grew up in John Day.

While waiting for documents from the Ghanaian government approving her immigration, the Wilsons said they are staying positive



Contributed photo
James and Kaylee Wilson say their newly adopted daughter Wella, 3, is loving and affectionate and grew to love them within their first week together.

and enjoying their daughter "Wella," who is now 3.

The Wilsons say their jour-

ney, which began long before their flight to Ghana, has included setbacks and miracles.

"There is no way we could have made it without strength from God," Kaylee said.

Kaylee, daughter of Kirk and Kim Ausland of John Day, said she'd wanted to adopt since she was young. Although James wasn't sure about the idea of adopting when he married Kaylee in spring 2013, he said he would keep an open mind. A year later, living in Portland, the Wilsons lost a baby to miscarriage.

Making a fresh start in Temecula, California, that fall, they joined a church project to build a school for orphaned children in Kenya, Africa. After returning from Kenya in June of 2016, the Wilsons be-

gan the adoption process.

"We didn't know if it was the right time, since we had also dreamed of opening our coffee company that same year," Kaylee said.

One month later, the couple saw Wella's picture for the first time. The Wilsons researched and spoke to families with HIV-positive children.

"We felt called to this specific 'special need,'" Kaylee said.

On Nov. 9, 2016, Kaylee and James met their daughter for the first time.

"We still owed \$10,000 to the adoption agency, and

See JOURNEY, Page A12