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SUICIDE: A by-the-numbers look at Grant County



Risk factors change as people age

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Editor's note: This is the second in a three-part series about suicide.

Suicide is a problem that reaches into every demographic category — age, gender and socio-economic class.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, suicide in 2012 was the 10th leading cause of death in the United States for people 16 years and older. About three-quarters of the suicide deaths that year were by males.

The percentage of teen deaths by suicide in Oregon doubled from 2006 to 2015, according to Children First of Oregon. At 38.3 percent, it was the No. 1 cause of death. And while the suicide rate among youths 10 to 24 years stayed roughly the same across the U.S., the rate in Oregon increased by 41 percent.

More than two-thirds of Oregon youths involved in suicide incidents from 2002 to 2012 had cited mental health problems before their attempts. More than a third had been diagnosed with a mental disorder.

The youth suicide rate in Grant County is higher than the U.S. rate, Community Counseling Solutions Clinical Director Thad Labhart said, but the rate for Oregon as a whole is higher than the national rate.

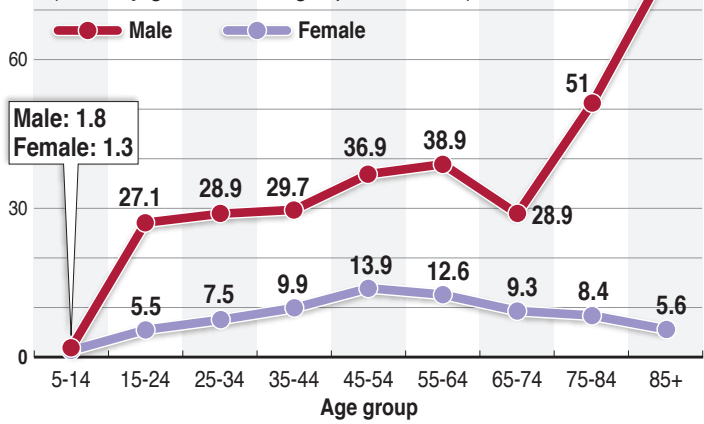
Nearly 80 percent of suicides in the U.S. are by men. The cause is typically related to loss of self-esteem due to loss of employment, becoming ill, losing a spouse or partner, an embarrassing public disclosure or fearing loss of control.

In Oregon, the highest suicide rate is for men over 85 years old: 72.4 per 100,000 individuals. For women, the highest rate was for ages 45 to 54. Men in Oregon were 3.6 times more likely to commit suicide than women, according to the Oregon Health

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Oregon suicide rates, 2013

(Rate by gender and age, per 100,000)

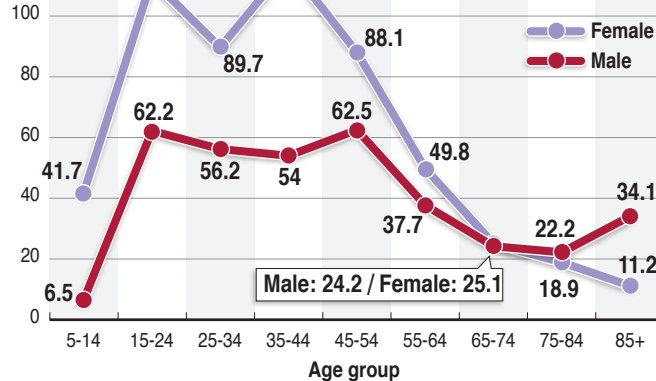


Source: Oregon Health Authority

Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

Oregon suicide attempts, 2013

(Self-harm hospitalization rate by gender and age, per 100,000)



Source: Oregon Health Authority

Alan Kenaga/EO Media Group

• The youth suicide rate for Grant County is higher than the national rate.

• Suicide is the leading cause of death for teens in Oregon.

• In Grant County, 22 people died by suicide from 2003 to 2012.

County continues discussion on resource adviser

Funding and politics delay final decision

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Budget constraints and political concerns were raised by Grant County Court members as reasons for delaying a decision on filling a proposed natural

resource adviser position.

The matter has been raised periodically at court meetings by county resident Jim Sproul and others and was addressed in a strongly worded plea by Long Creek rancher Sharon Livingston on Feb. 21.

Grant County Judge Scott Myers noted at the time that the county had received three responses to a request for proposals that it issued last year, and all

three candidates for the new position were locals. Commissioner Jim Hamsher asked that the matter be put on the court's next agenda, and the court agreed.

Myers told the court March 14 that the county budgeted \$50,000 for the position last year, but the \$50,000 is no longer available in the budget currently under development for the next fiscal year.

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Strategy for success

Nick Green presents State of the City address

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Getting smart about spending and adhering to the city's strategy for growth — that's the message in John Day City Manager Nick Green's March 13 State of the City address.

Citing a Portland State University report, Green said Grant County will lose 17 percent of its population over the next 50 years. Declining population means less revenue for city services.

"Does that have to be our fate?" Green asked. "We don't think it does."

Green ranked the city's departments according to their strengths and weaknesses. The water department is financially strong, modern and up to date, while street repair and more construction are more expensive, he said.

The fire department is lean and well run, but the unfinished fire hall and expensive construction bids present a burden. The police budget has grown at three times the rate of the prop-



Nick Green

erty tax base as a result of sharply rising costs for health insurance, retirement, tort claims and training, which is unsustainable. The 911 dispatch center will be operated by another entity altogether by June, Green said.

Green was upbeat about the sewer department, which needs an expensive new treatment plant. Green hopes to use reclaimed water from the new plant to kick-start a new industry with a commercial greenhouse producing vegetables for sale.

Under state law, property taxes are capped at about 3 percent growth per year and amount to only 10 percent of the city's \$2.5 million budget. Revenue from the eclipse event last year ranked No. 8 among revenue sources, Green noted. As a result, the city is looking

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Fire hall costs continue to climb

Ordinance establishes urban renewal agency

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The John Day City Council continued to struggle at the March 13 meeting with the rising costs to complete the John Day Fire Hall. The city has received three bids to finish renovating 1,473 square feet of the fire hall as designed in June 2015, and all were considered far too high by the council.



The Eagle/Richard Hanners
John Day City Manager Nick Green, left, and Mayor Ron Lundbom prepare for the start of the March 13 city council meeting.

Pinnacle Architecture initially solicited a bid from Kirby Nagelhout Construction Co. of Bend, which was the general contractor for the fire hall and won the bid for a seismic upgrade

project at Humbolt Elementary School to take place this summer.

Kirby Nagelhout bid \$291,000 in May 2017, but

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