

Local medical supply service to continue

Norco not to scale back as happened in Burns

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Norco store in John Day will continue business as before, providing durable medical equipment such as beds and walkers, oxygen and related breathing equipment, splints and braces, incontinence supplies and other medical equipment.

That was the word from Wayne Barker, the branch manager at Norco's office in Bend.

"Things will continue as normal," he told the Eagle. "Negotiations have completed. There will be no change to service."

Word that the local Norco store might scale back services to supplying only oxygen had raised concerns with Grant County businesses that rely on Norco for medical equipment and supplies, including Blue Mountain Hospital District, which operates Blue Mountain Home Health & Hospice, and Valley View Assisted Living.

Local concerns were reinforced after the Norco store in Burns closed, and reduced medical supply service was offered by a respiratory therapist under the name Frontier Medical.

Grant County residents already deal with the economic impacts of living in an isolated rural area. For hospice and assisted living clients, along with disabled and elderly residents who receive special care in private homes, not having a local store with a ready inventory of special equipment and supplies could mean placing an order and waiting one or two weeks for delivery.



Darla Carpenter, the owner of Norco Medical, poses for a photo in the John Day store. The business will continue providing durable medical equipment after concerns that it could reduce its offerings to oxygen only.



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

The Norco store in John Day is a stock point, meaning it handles deliveries of equipment and supplies and not financial transactions.

In some cases, residents need access to certain equipment and supplies right away, such as patients returning home from the emergency room or people who transition from assisted living to hospice.

"That could mean longer hospital stays," Valley View Administrator Stephanie Rodriguez said. "We can't readmit people at Valley View without the required equipment."

Rodriguez said she was devastated when she heard through the grapevine that Norco might reduce services. Blue Mountain Hos-

pital District CEO Derek Daly said he began investigating options once he learned about the rumors.

The Norco store in John Day is a "stock point" or delivery location. Sales are handled by the branch office in Bend. According to Melissa Chesley, who works at the local Norco store, the store had expanded its offerings after Darla Carpenter became the manager last year and the local staff expanded to four.

Chesley said the staff use their own vehicles to deliver supplies across Grant County. A van is used for moving

beds. In addition to the hospice and assisted living facilities, she estimated Norco services hundreds of private homes.

Barker, the branch manager, said declining reimbursement rates from Medicare and other insurers over the past years have significantly impacted rural areas across the United States. In Central Oregon, the result is that only two durable medical equipment providers remain in business: Norco and Lincare.

Norco's goal is to provide quality service and still make a reasonable profit, which is increasingly difficult in some rural areas, Barker said. Norco, through its trade associations, lobbies Rep. Greg Walden and other political groups to continue to support rural areas.

"We hope that wiser minds will prevail, but it's a concerning issue," he said.

Chesley said Carpenter will continue to manage the Norco store in John Day, and plans are to continue stocking existing inventory and to maintain the staff of four.



Contributed photo

Pomp Latshaw works in the gardens at the Guyon Springs Inn in Dayville. The site is one of three in Grant County that will offer agritourism dinners this summer.

Three rural inns combine food with astronomy

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Three inns in Grant County that have turned to agritourism to increase business and bring awareness of small agricultural producers in the area will host three special dinners this summer featuring locally harvested seasonal ingredients along with an astronomy presentation.

Guyon Springs Inn in Dayville will host a dinner June 16, Land's Inn in Kimberly on July 7 and Diamond Hitch Mule Ranch in Kimberly on Aug. 11. Dinners and the show are \$30 per person.

Amy Bilbeisi, a former National Park Service interpretive ranger, will provide an astronomy show following each dinner. The event helps to showcase Bilbeisi's new business, Oregon Star Safaris, a mobile astronomical experience.

Agrotourism, a growing economic niche, involves commercial enterprises at a working farm or ranch conducted for the enjoyment of its visitors and to generate supplemental income for the owner. Activities for visitors might include outdoor recreation, educational experiences and on-farm direct sales.

According to a 2003 survey of 400 Oregon cattle ranches by Oregon State University, 21 percent of the 177 respondents promoted agritourism and reported that agritourism contributed about 8 percent of their household income.

Seventy-nine percent of responding owners reported their agritourism business was a success. About 82 percent of guests in the study were from Oregon, and 73 percent were repeat customers. About 38 percent of guests learned about the operation from friends or family.

Some agritourism businesses offer stays at a bed and breakfast. Educational opportunities range from experiencing

ranch or farm work to attending cooking classes or wine tastings. Entertainment can include harvest festivals and barn dances.

The Oregon Agritourism Partnership nonprofit established in 2014 works to connect the public with Oregon farms, ranches, wineries or other agricultural value-added operations. "Farm loops" to Canby, Farmland, Molalla and Marion feature pet farm animals, hazelnuts and chocolates, festivals and rodeos and pick-your-own produce.

Travel Oregon launched the Oregon Agritourism Network in 2015 to promote agritourism businesses. Travel Oregon also convened an Agritourism Working Group to identify six priority focus areas and develop a 2025 vision for agritourism.

The Guyon Springs Inn dinner on June 16 will feature traditional lamb asado with meat from the Cade farm in Monument, field green salad from the inn's garden, Dutch oven spanakopita made with greens from the garden and strawberry shortcake for dessert. For tickets, call Kerri Latshaw at 541-620-4950.

The Diamond Hitch Mule Ranch dinner on July 7 will feature Painted Hills grilled sirloin, cheese from a local fromagerie, seasonal grilled vegetables and local greens and homemade pies using fruit from Kimberly Orchards. For tickets, call Jody Foss at 541-934-2140.

The Land's Inn dinner on Aug. 11 will feature chicken and vegetables from Grimma and Dan Horgan's Happy Hens farm. For tickets, call Carol or Tom Buce at 541-934-2333.

Peterson elected chairman of BEO board

Blue Mountain Eagle

BEO Bancorp and its subsidiary, Bank of Eastern Oregon, upon completion of the annual shareholders meeting in Heppner, elected Joel Peterson as chairman of the board and Joe Gonzalez Jr. as vice chairman.

Peterson joined the board in 1993 and is the current

board's longest serving director. He is president of Daily Bread Farms, a family owned farm near Ione. He and his wife, Lea, a middle school teacher, have three children.

Gonzalez joined the board in 2015. He owns an electrical contracting business in Richland, Washington. He and his wife, Delia, live in Richland.

"We are excited to have Joel and Joe lead the board of directors for the next year. Both gentlemen are active and engaged board members. Joel continues his service as chair of the funds management committee, also serving on the compensation and loan committees. Joe serves on the audit and funds management committees,"

said President and CEO Jeff Bailey. "The vast experience and leadership qualities of these two men will serve our shareholders well."

T-O Engineers celebrates 30 years in aviation

Blue Mountain Eagle

T-O Engineers, Inc., a full-service planning and engineering firm, is celebrating 30 years in the aviation sector.

T-O Engineers has served the Grant County Regional Airport since 2012 and has successfully completed projects including the reconstruction of Runway 9-27 and development of the new Airport Master Plan. T-O is currently in the design phase of a project that will reconstruct the

corporate and general aviation aprons and relocate the airport fueling facility.

Aviation team members will be traveling to visit clients throughout the Northwest and thanking them for their continued support.

"We truly care about our clients and about doing things the right way," said Aviation Services Manager Dave Mitchell. "We care about the communities we serve by improving their airports, and we work hard to help those

communities accomplish their goals for their airport."

Billy (Buddy) Iven Warren
Born March 19, 1929
Passed away February 2, 2018



There will be a memorial service for his burial where he will be laid to rest June 16th at 1 p.m. at the Prairie City Cemetery.

61701

ATTENTION GRANT COUNTY VETERANS:

Did you know a service-connected disabled veteran is entitled to **FREE use of Oregon State Parks?**

See your Grant County Veteran Services Officer today for more information, located at Grant County Courthouse.

Call 541-620-8057 for an appointment
530 E. Main, Ste. 5, John Day, OR



Katee Hoffman

ELTRUM HISTORIC THEATER
1809 First Street • Baker City • (541) 523-5439
BARGAIN MATINEES IN (J) Adults \$7
ALL FILMS \$6 ON TIGHTWAD TUESDAY
MOVIE SCHEDULE JUNE 8-14

OCEANS 8 (PG-13)
Debbie Ocean gathers an all-female crew to attempt an impossible heist at New York City's Met Gala.
FRI-THURS (4:00) 7:00 9:40

BOOK CLUB (PG-13)
Four lifelong friends have their lives changed after reading 50 Shades of Grey in their monthly book club.
FRI-THURS (4:10) 7:10 9:45


SOLO: A STAR WARS STORY (PG-13)
Han Solo meets his future copilot Chewbacca and encounters Lando Calrissian years before joining the Rebellion.
FRI-THURS (3:45) 6:45 9:35

\$9 Adult, \$7 Senior (60+), Youth

GROWING GENERATIONS TOGETHER

Since 1945, Bank of Eastern Oregon has had roots in eastern Oregon. We believe in the value of a handshake and provide unparalleled and unbiased service because we know you – we are you, your neighbors, and your community members. BEO keeps working hard for you to ensure that our banking services are never difficult.

Visit your local branch & let us help you realize your financial dreams.



Bank of Eastern Oregon

Term Loans • Lines of Credit • Ag & Commercial Real Estate Loans
beobank.com

Member FDIC