

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter  
Tucker Carpenter of John Day and Zeke Mullin of Henderson, Nevada, enjoy the slides at Gleason Pool in John Day.

## MAKING A SPLASH!

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EO Media Group

A cable gun lock. The Oregon Supreme Court dismissed three challenges filed to the ballot title for a proposed Oregon gun-storage initiative.

## Oregon Supreme Court fast-tracks gun-storage petition

Dirk VanderHart  
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Backers of a gun-control proposal aimed for November's ballot got some unexpected help from the Oregon Supreme Court on Monday.

The proposal, Initiative Petition 44, has less than three weeks to collect and submit more than 88,000 valid signatures. The petition had been tied up after opponents with the National Rifle Association, Oregon Firearms Federation and other groups challenged its ballot language.

No longer. In a surprise move, the Supreme Court announced it wouldn't entertain those challenges, which it said were "not well

taken." The court instead certified ballot language drafted by the Oregon Department of Justice.

That means supporters can begin collecting signatures immediately. They had been bracing for a weeks-long delay that likely would have doomed their chances of gathering enough signatures by the July 6 deadline.

Challengers Keely Hopkins, state director for the National Rifle Association, and Paul Donheffner, legislative committee chair for the Oregon Hunters' Association, had expressed concerns about regulating how gun owners store their weapons.

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## John Day adopts housing incentives plan

Rebates won't be distributed until late 2019

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

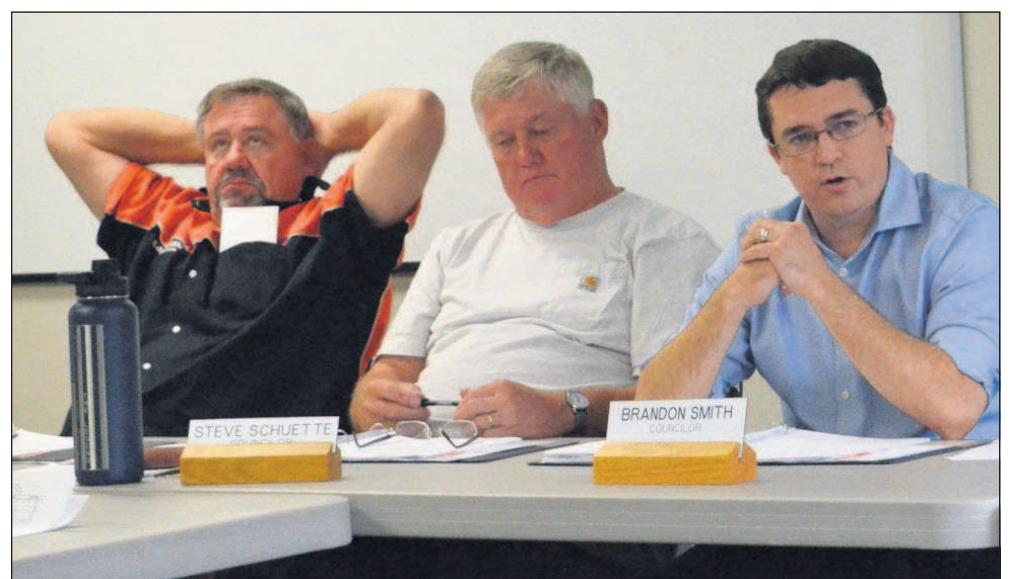
The John Day City Council unanimously approved an ordinance at the June 12 meeting that creates a housing incentives plan, with the goal of seeing 100 new homes built in the 20-year life of the program.

City Manager Nick Green said city staff have worked on the plan for 18 months. The plan was reviewed by community and technical advisory committees and the city's planning commission.

To encourage new home construction within boundaries established for the plan, the city will waive system development charges for water and sewer service and provide property owners a 7-percent rebate on the increase in the property's assessed value.

The plan also proposes an incentive for home remodeling that includes a 15-percent rebate on the increase in the property's assessed value, with a \$10,000 minimum increase required.

The city will recoup the cost of the incentives through tax-increment financing. Taxes on properties within the plan's boundaries will be frozen this year at their current



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

John Day City Councilor Brandon Smith, right, explains how property taxes are used to support the John Day Housing Incentives Plan during a public hearing June 12. Councilors Gregg Haberly, left, and Steve Schuette listen to the discussion.

levels, and any future increases will go toward paying back the city for the incentives. Rebates will not be paid until a property's new assessed value is on the tax rolls.

Green estimated incentives will be paid back in full in seven years, at which time the full tax revenue on improved properties would be made available to all taxing jurisdictions. Many tax-increment financing plans don't return the full tax revenue to taxing jurisdictions for 20 years, Green noted.

"In year eight, the other tax jurisdictions begin benefiting financially from the increased tax revenue that would not have occurred but for this

program," Green said in his report to the council.

Grant County Assessor David Thunell told the council that he has received numerous questions about the plan but none from representatives of the affected taxing jurisdictions. He also expressed concerns about the administrative costs for the plan, which Green said could be high.

Former councilor Louis Provencher, who said he opposed the plan from the very beginning, provided the council with numerous concerns and two recommendations. For one, the plan benefits a limited number of people and basically redistributes tax revenue, he said.

He was also concerned about the effective date of the plan and asked about properties where home construction on lots inside the plan's boundaries was already underway. Providing benefits to those property owners would "defeat the purpose" of the plan, which is to encourage new home building, he said.

Provencher also wanted the city to focus instead on financing a new sewer treatment plant, which might require a bond. The city has too many projects and needs to slow down and work out the costs of these projects, he said.

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## Engle named Regional Teacher of the Year

Monument educator will be considered for statewide award

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Monument School teacher Michele Engle said she was honored and excited to learn she is one of 13 people in Oregon named as Regional Teacher of the Year.

"It really makes you feel good that people notice how hard you're working at trying to make children successful," she said. "I've taken on some pretty hard tasks. ... It fuels your motivation to continue doing what you're doing."

Engle, who was born and raised in Monument, has taught at Monument School District for 23 years with one year at Dayville School prior to that.

She teaches English for grades

7-12, as well as courses in welding and agriculture, which includes wood shop, and a leadership class.

Grant County Education Service District Superintendent Robert Waltenburg presented Engle with the award, and a check from the Oregon Lottery for \$500, at a school assembly with Monument's interim Superintendent/principal Michael Lane present.

"I have seen many teachers in my time in Grant County, but few show the dedication, the love, the commitment to kids, school and community that Michele has shown," Waltenburg said. "These are some of the reasons that she was selected as the 2019 Regional Teacher of the Year for the Eastern Region."

He added, "As she moves into the next level of the competition, ... I believe that she will win this award as well and be named the 2019 Oregon State Teacher of the Year."

Oregon Department of Education

Deputy Superintendent Colt Gill stated in a letter to school officials that he was pleased they were able to expand the program to recognize dedicated educators across the state, and to raise awareness of best practices.

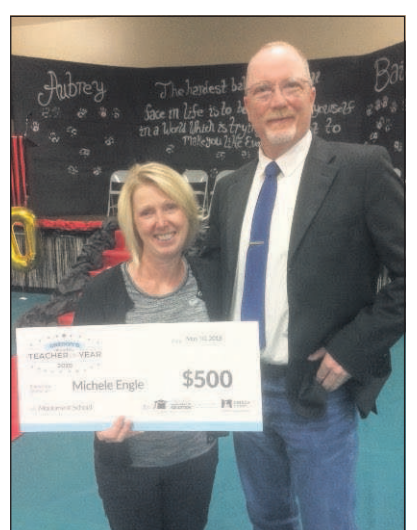
"These teachers, their schools and districts should be very proud of the innovation and collaboration that helps deliver students a well-rounded education," he said.

Along with her classroom teaching, Engle is also the middle school advisor. She recently returned from a field trip to the coast with the eighth-grade class.

In her first 18 years in the field of education, she mainly taught fourth-through sixth-graders, then third through sixth. She also received a science teaching certificate.

"I was fortunate when I grew up here to have a wonderful science teacher," she said. "I love this school

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Contributed photo

Monument School teacher Michele Engle receives an Oregon's Regional Teacher of the Year Award and \$500 presented by Grant County Education Service District Superintendent Robert Waltenburg, at right, on May 30 at the school.

