



# Local gun initiative shot down

Judge Cramer cites superior state laws, limitations to county authority

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

An initiative aimed at prohibiting enforcement of laws that restrict gun possession in Grant County will not appear on the November ballot after Grant County Circuit Court Judge William D. Cramer Jr. determined it was pre-empted by state law.

In a June 29 decision, Cramer said the proposed ordinance would have violated a state statute prohibiting counties from regulating firearms, components and ammunition, and the



EO Media Group file photo

initiative would have confused voters about limitations to county authority.

The Second Amendment preservation ordinance, which could have appeared on the ballot this fall as Measure 12-72, was submitted by Ron Rue of Prairie City and was challenged by Mark Webb of Mt. Vernon May 14.

According to an initiative summary provided by the Grant County District Attorney's Office, the proposed ordinance would make uncon-

stitutional in Grant County "any law or regulation that restricts a person from possessing firearms, ammunition and firearms accessories" and "would require the Grant County sheriff to review federal, state and local laws affecting firearms, firearms accessories and/or ammunition."

## Initiative review

In his petition, Webb maintained that "given the scope of its subject matter," Rue's initiative "goes well beyond the matters of county concern" allowed under the state's initiative process.

Some of the initiative's language was so broad that substantive legal changes to existing statutory and constitutional law would occur if it

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## IP 43 supporters throw in the towel on 2018 measure

By Claire Withycombe  
Capital Bureau

Supporters of an initiative petition to ban certain firearms in Oregon say they'll withdraw the initiative, but maintain efforts to restrict firearm possession in the state.

Initiative Petition 43, an effort to ban certain types of semiautomatic firearms and magazines holding more than 10 rounds, was proposed by a coalition of faith leaders in the wake of the shooting that killed 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on Feb. 14.

Supporters were enthusiastic, but encountered legal opposition to their efforts when gun rights advocates filed challenges at the Oregon Supreme Court against the language used to describe the measure.

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# FIRST CLASS

## Graduates of 2018 first not to attend Mt. Vernon Middle School

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The first graduating class at Grant Union not to attend Mt. Vernon Middle School recently turned their tassles.

The Grant Union class of 2018 was the first to attend six full years at Grant Union. At the close of the 2010-11 school year, the sixth- through eighth-grade middle school, part of Grant School District 3, closed its doors because of budget cuts.

In fall 2012, the class of 2018 stayed

on at Humbolt Elementary School for sixth-grade, while seventh- and eighth-graders joined the newly named Grant Union Junior-Senior High School.

Grant Union PE teacher Doug Sharp, who taught at the middle school back then, said it was a difficult transition.

"It was hard to give up Mt. Vernon

because the middle school kids had their own facility and identity," he said. "Change is always hard, but it's worked out."

He said there were worries about bullying, recess, lunchtime and how athletics would work, but he added, "All in all, it's been nice."

"I tell the kids look for the good in everything, and don't focus on the negative," he said.

Grant Union history teacher Cindy Dougharity-Spencer, who also once taught at the Mt. Vernon school, said there were "definitely some growing pains" but the transition worked out fairly well.

"The big thing is, the students missed

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The Grant Union High School class of 2018.

# Design chosen for sewer treatment plant

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

A new sewer treatment plant in John Day could cost \$10.3 million, the John Day City Council learned June 26, but complete financing for the critical infrastructure project has not been nailed down.

"The key to implementing part or all of the John Day wastewater system improvements project ... is the ability of the city to acquire a low-interest loan coupled with grant financing," the engineering firm Anderson Perry concluded in their draft feasibility study.

City Manager Nick Green told the Eagle the city will also be looking into nontraditional funding sources, including the New Markets Tax Credit Program, which provides private invest-



Contributed photo

A conceptual rendering from Sustainable Water of the proposed wastewater treatment plant in John Day with a hydroponic greenhouse behind.

ment to distressed communities, and new programs from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and Senate Bill 839, which allows government support of water projects with economic, environmental and community benefits,

particularly for promoting water reuse and conservation.

He said the goal is to finance 80 percent of the project with grants and the other 20 percent with loans, which could finance the plant at or near current sewer rates for residents.

## Alternative designs

Anderson Perry studied three alternatives. Two are not considered viable because the engineers were unable to find available land needed for a large lagoon despite a decade-long search.

The cost of the least expensive alternative, which called for spray-irrigating effluent on a 45-acre pasture, would have been \$6 million. The cost of the third alternative, a mechanical system using a membrane bioreactor with a large lagoon for winter storage, would

have been \$13.7 million.

The selected alternative calls for replacing the existing percolation ponds with either a mechanical treatment facility or a hydroponic treatment facility designed and prefabricated by Sustainable Water. Either facility costs \$10.3 million. No storage lagoon would be included.

Class A or B effluent could be produced with either system, and the cost for producing Class A or B effluent would be about the same, Anderson Perry's Brett Moore told the council.

Class B effluent could be used to irrigate the city golf course, landscaping around the proposed Innovation Gateway project, non-residential toilet flushing, log deck watering at Malheur

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