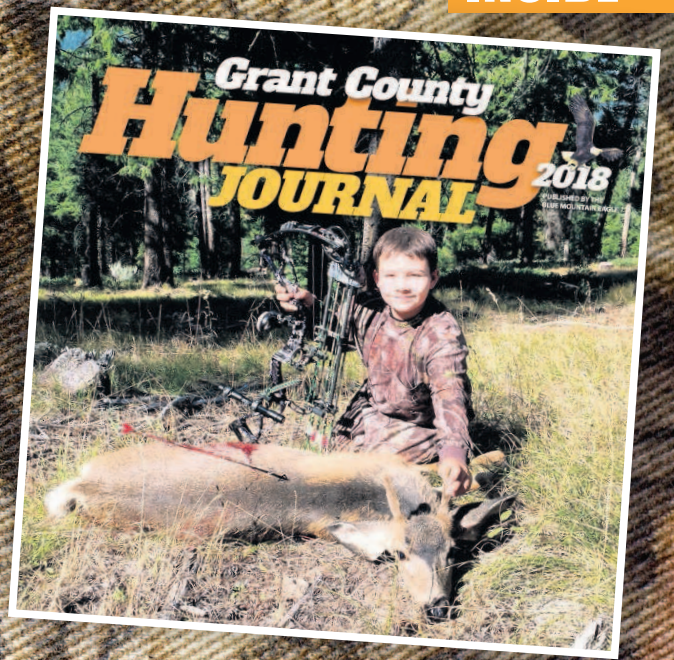


GRANT COUNTY HUNTING JOURNAL

INSIDE »

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School's in session



Photos by The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Humbolt Elementary sixth-grade teacher Georgia Boethin asks her students questions about classroom rules on the first day of school.

New administrators and teachers announced

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Schools in Grant County have opened their doors and children are again ready to hit the books.

While each of the seven schools in the county have welcomed new students, new staff members have also joined each of the five school districts, including one superintendent, three superintendent/principals, one principal and one head teacher.

Casey Hallgarth is the new superintendent/principal of Prairie City School District 4.

He said he and the staff are excited to welcome 160 students, with attendance up by about 20 from last school year.

"We have a great veteran staff that is ready to make differences in the classroom," he said, adding that administrative assistant Susie Combs, in her 34th year, has been an integral part of the school.

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Students in Georgia Boethin's sixth-grade class at Humbolt Elementary are ready to answer their teacher's question.

State money will address PC water emergency

Mayor: Developing Faiman Springs site is city's best option

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Prairie City residents heard some good news at a town hall meeting at the senior center Aug. 22 — a grant and loan from the state could help move the city closer to solving its water emergency.

Drought conditions have impacted the city's water sources — both the wells and infiltration galleries on Dixie Creek — while debt from an expensive water treatment plant made it difficult for the city to find funding to develop a new well at Faiman Springs.

Mayor Jim Hamsher has promoted the Faiman Springs site as the city's best option for more than a decade. With a water emergency declared, he began calling Rep. Greg Walden, Sen. Ron Wyden and Gov. Kate Brown's offices for assistance, and those calls might have paid off.

The state will provide needed funding for developing the Faiman Springs well, Scott Fairley, Business Oregon regional development officer, told residents. With a top estimate of about \$1.5 million for the project, the state could provide one-third as a grant and the rest as a 30-year loan at 1.7 percent interest.

If the cost of the project comes in lower, the grant and loan would be correspondingly reduced, Fairley said. The original estimate to develop the Faiman Springs site was about \$900,000.

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The Eagle/Richard Hanners

With the round-trip to John Day and back to the dumping station at Ricco Ranch Road in Prairie City being about an hour, as many as three water tenders at a time can be seen adding water to the city's water system.

Gilman Fire tested alert system's effectiveness

Terrain makes communication difficult

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

In the late evening of Aug. 20, as the Gilman fire was burning 12 miles north of Monument amidst thick smoke from distant and regional fires, Grant County issued a Level 1 Pre-Evacuation Fire Advisory for northwest Grant County.

While the county's AlertSense system issued the notice to some residents in the Monument, Ritter, Dale and Middle and North Fork communities, some residents said they did not receive the message.

The Blue Mountain Eagle also never received a notification.

Grant County Emergency Management Coordinator Ted Williams

said he will be contacting the newspaper in the future and that isolated technical failures in the alert system, such as phone calls without messages, also need to be addressed.

He said, however, the mountainous terrain in that part of the county will always challenge communications.

The alert system

The AlertSense emergency communication system will automatically send messages Williams creates to all landlines inside a designated geographic boundary. People with cellphones or those who want email notices need to sign up online at

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The Eagle/Richard Hanners

Ted Williams, the Grant County emergency management coordinator, stands in front of an incident command organization chart Aug. 24.



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