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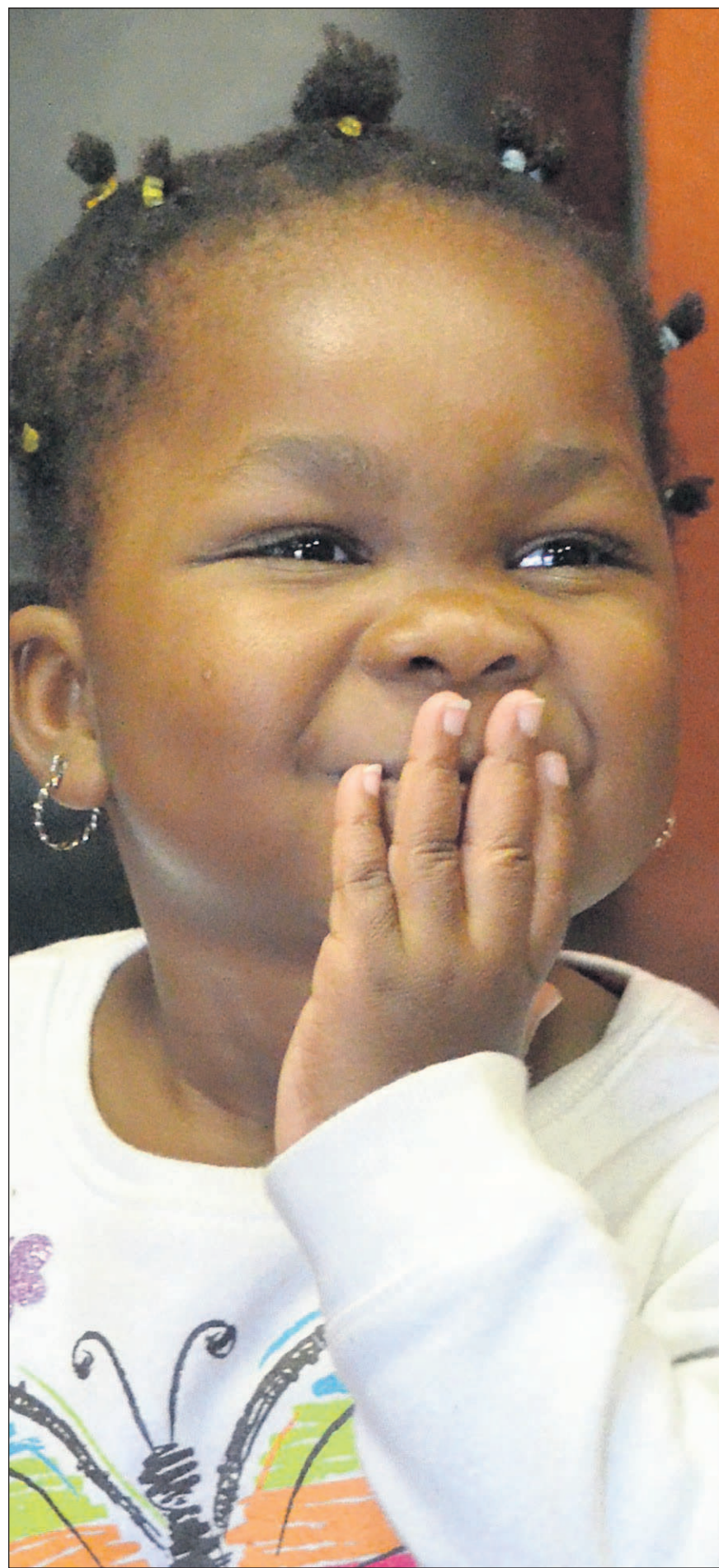
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Wella Wilson blows kisses.

'SURVIVING ON FAITH'

Couple brings adopted daughter home after lengthy stay overseas

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

A birthday celebration for 4-year-old Emmanuella “Wella” Wilson Oct. 14 included a small gathering of grateful family members. James and Kaylee Wilson, now residents of John Day, flew to Accra, Ghana, in November 2016 to adopt Wella.

It was a process that took much longer than expected. When the Eagle last reported on the family in February, they were still waiting for their daughter’s immigration documents to be approved.

The trio finally landed on U.S. soil on June 23 this year, a total of 590 days since first arriving in the African country. “It’s fun to see her blossom and thrive,” Kaylee said of Wella.

When James and Kaylee first met their daughter, she was a malnourished 2-year-old, stricken with malaria, the parents said. In order to adopt, the couple was required to take 12 hours of parenting classes and read several books with topics that included adopting children with attachment issues.

“Those were things we prepared for, which we didn’t have to deal with,” James said, adding their daughter bonded well with them.

Wella is now thousands of miles away from her birth country, but Kaylee said, “In her world, nothing has changed — she’s with mommy and daddy.”

Although their daughter has adapted well to her new surroundings, James and Kaylee said they had some adjusting to do.



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter

James and Kaylee Wilson have enjoyed adjusting to life back in the U.S. after a long process adopting their daughter Wella, 4, in Ghana.

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Forest Plan objections could swamp reviewers

More than 300 objections received

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision for the Malheur, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman national forests drew 341 objections before the filing period ended Aug. 28.

Many issues are shared by objectors, including the size of the allowable timber harvest, grazing restric-

tions and combining three forests into one document.

Published June 29, the plan is supported by a final environmental impact statement (FEIS), draft record of decision and other documents. According to the management planning rule adopted by the Forest Service in 2012, a reviewing officer typically has 90 days to resolve objections.

Review process

The first step is to determine eligibility of objectors and their objec-

tions. Objectors must submit substantive formal comments and link previous comments with objection issues, with exception of new information that arose after the 2014 comment period ended, according to Forest Service literature.

Peter Fargo, acting team leader and public affairs officer for the Blue Mountains Forest Plan, told the Eagle how a reviewing team typically addresses a large number of objections, many of which are lengthy and complex. The reviewing team will look for similar issues and place

them into categories that will be used to inform agendas for resolution meetings, he said.

“The review team often finds that it needs more than 90 days to work through the objection-resolution process, and that not all issues can be resolved,” Fargo said. “If more than 90 days are necessary for the resolution process, objectors and interested persons will be notified.”

All objectors and interested persons will be invited to resolution meetings, and public notices for meetings will be placed in local

newspapers, Fargo said. The meetings will be open to the public as observers only.

The reviewing officer will decide how many resolution meetings will be held as well as the meeting format and agenda, Fargo said. Resolution meetings will likely combine similar, overarching issues on which the reviewing officer would like further dialogue, he said.

“Although not all issues can be resolved, the goal of the resolution

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Predator program passes one-year mark



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

USDA Wildlife Services District Supervisor Patrick Smith and Animal Damage Control Officer Nick Lulay describe progress and needs for the county’s predator control program at the Grant County Court’s Sept. 26 meeting.

Funding needed to make up budget shortfall

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Federal animal damage control agents spent more than 1,000 hours in Grant County over the past year, controlling a wide range of predators and other animals.

The work primarily took place on 75,155 acres of private land belonging to 25 participating landowners, according to a data report generated by USDA Wildlife Services.

Nick Lulay provided nearly all the predator control work. Traps, snares and firearms were used to kill 185 animals over the past year, including six badgers, 25 chipmunks, 114 coyotes, two marmots, four skunks, two rock doves and 32 common ravens.

In addition, 10 inactive barn swallow and cliff swallow nests were removed with hand tools.

The actions eliminated damage threats to alfalfa and other hayfields, pasture land, calves, goats and pets, the report stated.

Ravens posed a threat to calves, starlings threatened pets and ground squirrels and

badgers caused damage to hayfields and pasture land, according to the report.

When asked about wolves, USDA Wildlife Services District Supervisor Pat Smith told the Grant County Court Sept. 26 that wolves were handled by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. His agency couldn’t touch wolves without going through an environmental assessment process, he said.

Funding shortfall

Grant County had no federal animal damage control officer for nearly two decades when successful lobbying by

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