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## Breakthroughs in missing couple case

**Terry Smith remains identified, truck found in Boise**

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Two breakthroughs in the case of the missing couple whose house burned in the Laycock Creek Road area were announced Oct. 24 by the Grant County Sheriff's Office.

The sheriff's office re-

ceived confirmation from the Boise Police Department in Boise, Idaho, that the pickup truck belonging to Terry and Sharon Smith was located over the Oct. 20 weekend.

Sheriff Glenn Palmer also announced that the Oregon State Medical Examiner notified his office Oct. 22 that samples of human tissue submitted for DNA testing had been partially analyzed. The samples, from remains found in the burned out residence on Nan's Rock Road, tested conclusively to be those of Terry Smith.



Contributed photo

Terry and Sharon Smith.

Further testing is underway on tissue samples and dental records submitted to

the State Medical Examiner's Office in an attempt to locate and identify Sharon Smith,

Palmer said in the press release.

The sheriff's office is jointly investigating the case with the Hilo Police Department in Hawaii County, Oregon State Police, Boise Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Palmer said.

Both in their 60s, Terry and Sharon Smith were considered a "sociable" couple by friends and family members, so their disappearance following the fire at their home in the hills south of Mt. Vernon was always suspect. The disappearance of their silver 2006 Toyota Ta-

coma added to the mystery.

By the time first responders arrived at the cabin on Nan's Rock Road in the early morning hours of July 18, the remodeled rural cabin was completely burned and the metal roof had collapsed over the ruins.

The Smiths divided their time between a home in Hawaii and the cabin in Eastern Oregon, where Terry often fished and hunted. The Smiths were known to let people stay on the 80- to 100-acre property in the Laycock Creek area

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**Myers meets Washington officials on their own turf**

**Vice President Pence surprises county representatives**

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

It was a whirlwind round trip, Grant County Judge Scott Myers said — about 40 hours from John Day to Washington, D.C., and back again. But memories of meeting Vice President Mike Pence in the ornate Eisenhower Executive Office Building were worth it.

About 20 county representatives from Oregon joined about twice that number from Washington at the invitation of Britt Carter, the associate director of the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Myers said.

The National Association of Counties hosted the county representatives for a dinner at their building in downtown Washington, D.C., on Oct. 10.

The next day they met with seven Trump administration officials in the EEOB, near the White House West Wing. The officials represented the departments of Housing and Urban Development, Education, Transportation, Veterans Affairs, Intergovernmental Affairs and Interior.

The three-hour meeting had gone late when the county representatives were surprised to learn that Pence had entered the room to speak to them, Myers said. White House Counselor Kellyanne Conway also made an impromptu appearance.

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## Happy Halloween!



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Two-year-old Leif Felix is ready to play a bowling game along with Sammantha Guy, 13, (back left) and Sarah Smith, 10, at the carnival and trunk-or-treat activity held Oct. 24 at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in John Day.

## Variety of events planned

Blue Mountain Eagle

Children and adults enjoyed some spooktacular fun last week at local events, and more activities are scheduled in the area for Halloween evening.

Kids played games at a free indoor carnival and trunk-or-treated at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in John Day Oct. 24.

Prairie City School's parent-teacher committee held a carnival fundraiser Oct. 27 in the school gym.

A children's party at the John Day Elks Lodge 1824 took place Tuesday past press time.

Events taking place today, Oct. 31, include:

- Free kids carnival from 5-7 p.m. at the Dayville Community Hall, organized by Dayville School student body.

- Free haunted house with candy given away at 6 p.m. at the Canyon City Community Hall, organized by their local volunteer fire department.

- Free trunk-or-treat activity from 6-8 p.m. at Humbolt Elementary School's parking lot, sponsored by the PTA.

- Laser tag from 7-9 p.m. for ages 13-18 at the John Day Elks Lodge, with a cost of \$1 or one canned food item for admission, and another for laser tag.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Zoey Rookstool holds her young friend Presley Harper during the cupcake walk in John Day.

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## Facing down the state over property rights

**County court rejects ODOT quarry buffer zone request**

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The county faced down the state to protect residents' property rights during an Oct. 17 public hearing. Allowing the Oregon Department of Transportation to limit uses in a 1,500-foot buffer zone around a quarry pit would set a precedent for similar applications in the future, Judge

Scott Myers explained.

The 20.26-acre Meadowbrook Quarry on Highway 395 near Dale contains about 1 million tons of high quality aggregate. Region 5 Manager Craig Sipp said ODOT had been eyeing the quarry site for a long time and planned to rely on it for decades to come.

ODOT took possession of the site in March 2010 through condemnation and paid Arthur Brenner \$33,000 plus interest for the land and \$22,500 for Brenner's legal costs in defending against the condemnation proceeding.

Protecting quarry operations from potential nuisance lawsuits by adja-

cent landowners is a high priority for ODOT, which requested a "significant aggregate site" designation in Grant County's comprehensive plan for the quarry site.

ODOT also requested a 5(b) designation, which would limit conflicting adjacent uses to protect quarry operations. A 5(c) designation would fully allow conflicting uses in the buffer zone despite possible impacts to quarry operations, thereby protecting adjacent landowners' property rights.

"Throughout the process, the neighboring property owners have requested that the impact area be assigned a 5(c) level of protection,"

Grant County Planning Director Hilary McNary told the court.

### Year-long process

A mandated Economic, Social, Environmental and Energy analysis identified potential conflicting uses within 1,500 feet of the quarry as recreational uses, such as parks and campgrounds, hunting and fishing preserves and natural areas, as well as construction of land dwellings. A signed agreement had resolved potential access issues with an existing agriculture operation using neighboring corrals.

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