



The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2018

• No. 48

• 18 PAGES

• \$1.00

www.MyEagleNews.com



Eagle photos/Richard Hanners

Jerry Franklin, left, listens as Friends of Kam Wah Chung Vice President Francis Kocis recognized Franklin at the Nov. 15 Grant County Chamber of Commerce meeting.

Kam Wah Chung promotions could increase area tourism

Franklin recognized for his support

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Jerry Franklin was recognized Nov. 15 by Friends of Kam Wah Chung for his continued self-driven contribution to the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site, and specifically for coordinating the design and construction of the dragon and tiger sign at Highway 26 and Canton Street.

The former Grant County Chamber of Commerce president said he was honored and humbled for the recognition, but he credited the numerous students, craftsmen and businesses who donated time and materials to the project.

Friends of Kam Wah Chung Vice President Francis Kocis presented Franklin with a certificate of appreciation and said his name will be attached to a plaque honoring Carolyn Minheimer and a dozen people who have worked to protect the historical site.

Film crews

It was another busy year at Kam Wah Chung, but the future looks even busier, museum curator Don Merritt told chamber members at their monthly meeting. The historical site saw 8,851



From left, Eric Brand, a consultant on Chinese herbal medicine, and Beth Howlett, director of communications at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine in Portland, discuss their roles during production of a Discovery Channel Asia film about the Kam Wah Chung Co. in John Day.

visitors this year, slightly down from 9,314 visitors in 2017, which was bolstered by the eclipse event.

Camera and sound technicians from Yiping Media Group of Shenzhen, China, came to Kam Wah Chung on Aug. 1 to work on a documentary about the spread of Chinese herbal medicine around the world.

See TOURISM, Page A18



State Park Ranger Lauren Ettlin holds Ing 'Doc' Hay's shirt outside the Kam Wah Chung Co. building in John Day.

Two seasons left for Gleason Pool

New pool options include outdoor facility

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

Many small rural communities across the United States deal with their aging public pools in a similar way — while the seasonal facilities present mounting operations and maintenance costs, and sometimes on-going debt, residents and officials often are resigned to the notion that children need to learn how to swim and a place to go in summertime.

The solution for many of these communities is to fix leaks and replace boilers, pumps or other equipment and keep the pool running. But that option does not exist for the residents of Grant County — the Gleason Pool and adjacent city-owned property is likely to be sold to the state as part of a major improvement project for the nearby Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site.

Pool closing

Swimmers will have use of the Gleason Pool in John Day for only two more summers, City Manager Nick Green told city councilors at their Nov. 13 meeting.

Councilman-Hunsaker, the consulting firm hired to develop options for a new facility, did not speak at the meeting, but they may present options at a special Dec. 4 meeting at the Grant County Regional Airport or at the council's Dec. 11 meeting at the fire hall.

See POOL, Page A18



Eagle file photo

Tucker Carpenter of John Day and Zeke Mullin of Henderson, Nevada, enjoy the slides at Gleason Pool in John Day this summer. Gleason Pool will close after the 2020 season, and stakeholders are looking at options for a replacement.

Broadband coalition seeks to build public support



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

Grant County Digital Network Coalition board chairman Josh Walker listens to discussion at the Nov. 20 meeting.

Board moves ahead with first fiber-run proposal

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

One of the biggest tasks facing the Grant County Digital Network Coalition, in addition to securing financing and solving technical infrastructure problems, is gaining the support of people in Grant County.

The coalition board discussed steps to achieving that

support at its Nov. 20 meeting — including hiring a Eugene-based firm to develop a logo and marketing strategy and preparing for a Dec. 18 town hall meeting.

Building support

Too often, news about broadband is too technical for the public, and the board needs help with messaging and creating talking points, board member Brandon Smith said.

Chairman Josh Walker said much of the initial negativity about the coalition stemmed from a false rumor that the network would use Grant County road funds to

pay for new infrastructure.

Walker said what he hears now from people are questions about how soon broadband will become available in their neighborhoods. But the coalition still needs more support, and he suggested finding people in the community who could provide testimonials in support of improving internet access.

Board member Dan Becker recalled early opposition to the digital network coalition and noted that many people don't understand the need for broadband in the county. Sam Palmer will be sworn in as a

See COALITION, Page A18



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