

Old city hall building makes way for pocket park

Transition to current city hall took multiple tries

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

A piece of John Day history disappeared Monday, as a crew from the Grant County Road Department demolished the old city hall building on South Canyon Boulevard next to the Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative substation.

OTEC needs better access to the substation should a large piece of equipment fail and require replacement. Preliminary plans call for turning the narrow site between the highway and a steep embankment into a pocket park, according to Charlie Tracy, OTEC director of engineering and operations. OTEC is also



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

County crews begin demolishing John Day's old city hall building, which was built in about 1950.

exploring options for an electric vehicle charging station at the site.

Demolition began at the south end of the former city hall building, which once housed the city jail. The shovel of a large excavator banged

into the reinforced concrete roof of the jail with a loud bang again and again in an attempt to break it into smaller pieces.

Tax records in the Grant County Courthouse indicate the old city hall building was

built in about 1950. As city government grew, the lack of space in the old city hall building became an issue.

While the police and fire departments were housed on the north side of the electrical substation on Dayton Street,

the old city hall was home to the administration and the public works department, with no room large enough to hold city council meetings.

The city initially proposed constructing a new city hall at a site on West Main Street, but an \$800,000 bond election was soundly defeated in November 1985 by 377-121.

The next plan was to acquire the Grant County Federal Credit Union building on East Main Street and remodel it to accommodate city administration, police and public works, along with a public city council meeting room.

A \$250,000 levy, however, failed in the June 1986 election by a 276-163 vote, and a \$175,000 levy fell six votes shy of winning in March 1987. Finally, voters approved a smaller \$160,000 five-year levy in November 1987 by 359-283.

"It's probably one of the worst-needed things in John

Day," Ralph Hunter, the mayor at that time, said. "I'm really pleased the people finally approved it."

By coincidence, that same week residents in Mt. Vernon got a first look at their brand new city hall, fashioned from a mobile home at a cost of \$28,750.

City government moved into the current John Day City Hall on the weekend of Feb. 3-4, 1990. In an op-ed piece in the Eagle, city staff explained why the transition took so long after the 1987 levy passed.

The credit union had been given until April 1989 to complete its new building and move into it, city staff said, but the "minor remodeling" expected at the former credit union building turned out to be much more extensive. Facing numerous changes to meet code, the city finally hired an architect to assist in the project.

COPS AND COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Circuit Court

Two cases filed against Ronald J. Nishioka, 54, Yakima, Washington, were dismissed and an arrest warrant was recalled Nov. 25 in the best interests of justice following the district attorney's motion. He was charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants allegedly committed July 6, 2008, and second-degree failure to appear allegedly committed in August or September 2008.

Two cases filed against Keith P. Sroczyński, 57, Post Falls, Idaho, were dismissed and an arrest warrant was recalled Nov. 25 in the best interests of justice following the district attorney's motion. He was charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants and felony possession of marijuana both allegedly committed Nov. 30, 2013.

Two cases filed against Tommy W. Jackson Jr., 34, Banning, California, were dismissed and an arrest warrant was recalled Nov. 25 in the best interests of justice following the district attorney's motion. He was charged with furnishing alcohol to a minor and having an open container with alcohol in a vehicle allegedly committed on April 15, 2008, and failing to appear on a citation for furnishing alcohol to a minor allegedly committed on May 15, 2008.

Two cases filed against Ted E. Howell, 43, John Day, were dismissed and an arrest warrant was recalled Nov. 25 in the best interests of justice following the district attorney's motion. He was charged with fourth-degree assault constituting domestic violence and harassment, both misdemeanors allegedly committed on May 15, 2013, and fourth-degree assault constitut-

ing domestic violence allegedly committed on July 3, 2013.

One case filed against Derrick R. Unbewust, 33, Spokane, Washington, was dismissed and an arrest warrant was recalled Nov. 25 in the best interests of justice following the district attorney's motion. He was charged with second-degree forgery and second-degree theft allegedly committed on Nov. 22, 2013.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of Nov. 21:

Concealed handgun licenses: 6

Average inmates: 18

Bookings: 11

Releases: 8

Arrests: 1

Citations: 1

Fingerprints: 3

Civil papers: 11

Warrants processed: 0

Asst./welfare check: 0

Search and rescue: 0

Nov. 19: Karina Robinson, 18, Mt. Vernon, was cited for driving uninsured.

Justice Court

• Violation of basic rule: Alan P. Williams, 47, Redmond, April 19, 71/55 zone, fined \$140; Zachary E. J. Despain, Anchorage, Alaska, April 29, 78/55 zone, fined \$275; Robert H. Weis, 66, Heppner, Nov. 11, 74/55 zone, fined \$165; Chad R. Shultz, 49, Medford, Nov. 2, 82/55 zone, fined \$225; Scott A. Smith, 43, Redmond, Oct. 28, 73/55 zone, fined \$165.

• Exceeding speed limit: Cameron C. Fast, 34, Unity, Sept. 21, 82/65 zone, fined \$275; Steven W. Arment, 59, Lostine, Oct. 23, 55/35 zone, fined \$140; Brian S. Hubbard, 45, John Day, Nov. 10, 63/50 zone, fined \$140; David J. Steckler, 54, Redmond, Sept. 11, 84/55 zone, fined \$265.

• Driving uninsured: Jacob S. Ellson, 27, Prairie City, Jan. 12, fined \$265; Cameron C. Fast, 34, Unity, Sept. 21, fined \$275.

• Driving while suspended: Casey D. Branham, 40, Jacksonville, April 17, fined \$390; Cameron C. Fast, 34, Unity, Sept. 21, fined \$450.

• No operator's license: Brian S. Hubbard, 45, John Day, Nov. 10, fined \$265.

• Careless driving causing an accident: Norma Y. May, 54, Prineville, Oct. 26, fined \$375.

• Open container of alcohol: Ryan L. Kreps, 37, Boardman, Oct. 19, fined \$265.

Oregon State Police

Nov. 18: Investigated a non-injury crash on Highway 26 east of Dayville where an SUV struck a deer.

Nov. 19: Mitchel D. Long, 48, was arrested at the OSP office in John Day and charged with failing to file as a sex offender.

Nov. 19: Investigated a non-injury crash on Highway 395 near Ukiah where a northbound vehicle failed to negotiate a curve, lost traction on ice, over corrected, left the roadway, hit a tree and rolled down a steep embankment to the river bank.

Nov. 19: Following a traffic stop on Highway 26 near Moon Creek, Hunter D. Martin, 19, Prairie City, was arrested and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants and unlawful possession of a firearm. The passenger, Colt J. Martin, 20, Prairie City, was arrested and charged with resisting arrest and unlawful possession of a firearm.

Nov. 24: Investigated a non-injury crash on Highway 395 near Meadowbrook Pass. A northbound SUV slowed for a slower vehicle, lost traction on ice, rolled off the roadway and came to rest at the creek bottom.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked

153 calls during the week of Nov. 18-26, including:

• John Day Police Department

Nov. 18: Received a report of a suspicious person at a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day.

Nov. 18: Responded to West Main Street in John Day for a burglary report.

Nov. 18: Received a call about a dispute at a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day.

Nov. 19: Responded to a restaurant on South Canyon Boulevard in John Day for a theft report.

Nov. 20: Dispatched to a bank on Main Street in John Day for a fraud report.

Nov. 21: Tracy Clark, John Day, was cited for having a dog as a public nuisance.

Nov. 21: Responded to a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day for a harassment report.

Nov. 21: Dispatched to North Canyon Boulevard in John Day for criminal mischief of vehicles.

Nov. 21: Received a report of a juvenile problem on Southeast Hillcrest Drive in John Day.

Nov. 22: Responded to East Main Street in John Day for a report that two dogs had killed chickens.

Nov. 23: Investigated a credit card fraud at a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day.

Nov. 24: Responded to a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day. Dakota Stout, 21, John Day, was arrested on a Grant County warrant. Tylor J. Gifford, 24, John Day, was arrested on a community corrections detainer.

Nov. 24: Advised of livestock on County Road 16.

Nov. 25: Received a report of harassment on Southeast

Hillcrest Drive in John Day.

Nov. 25: Responded to West Main Street in John Day for a noninjury crash.

• Oregon State Police

Nov. 24: Advised of a slide-off crash on Highway 395 near Bear Valley.

Nov. 24: Received a report of cattle on Highway 395 near Ritter.

• Grant County Sheriff's Office

Nov. 20: Advised of a dispute on Violet Street in Mt. Vernon.

Nov. 20: Received a report of a grass fire on South Canyon Boulevard in John Day.

Nov. 21: Advised of criminal mischief at the former school in Mt. Vernon.

Nov. 21: Received a report of domestic dispute on West Sixth Street in Prairie City.

Nov. 23: Advised of livestock on County Road 63.

Nov. 23: Received a report of a domestic on Park Street in Canyon City.

Nov. 24: Advised of suspicious circumstances near Austin Junction.

Nov. 24: Received a report of menacing at an apartment complex in Prairie City.

• John Day ambulance

Nov. 18: Responded to Nugget Lane in Canyon City for a 911 call.

Nov. 19: Dispatched to a motel on Main Street in John Day for a 911 call.

Nov. 19: Responded to Screech Alley in John Day for a 22-year-old woman having seizures.

Nov. 20: Dispatched to a convenience store in Mt. Vernon for a 911 call.

Nov. 21: Responded to

Northeast Dayton Street in John Day for an 85-year-old woman.

Nov. 21: Transported a patient to the airport in John Day.

Nov. 21: Responded with John Day police, sheriff's office and state police to a crash with injuries at Bridge and Third streets in John Day.

Nov. 23: Dispatched to Highway 26 near John Day for a 65-year-old woman.

Nov. 23: Responded with Monument ambulance to North Street in Monument for a 911 call.

Nov. 23: Dispatched with Prairie City ambulance to East Sixth Street in Prairie City for a man with unknown medical conditions.

Nov. 23: Responded to North Johnson Avenue in Prairie City for a 24-year-old woman with cramping.

Nov. 24: Dispatched with sheriff's office to North Johnson Avenue in Prairie City for a woman in pre-term labor.

Nov. 24: Responded with Long Creek ambulance, state police, sheriff's office and Oregon Department of Transportation to a rollover accident on Highway 395.

Nov. 24: Dispatched to Aslin Avenue in Mt. Vernon for a 911 call.

Nov. 25: Responded to Green Acres Lane in Mt. Vernon for a 911 call.

• Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative

Nov. 23: Advised of a downed power line on Harper Creek Road in Mt. Vernon.

• Forest Service

Nov. 25: Received a report of livestock on Forest Road 1710.

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Grant County Fairgrounds Pavilion

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Soup & Pie Available
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Grant County Fairgrounds in Keerins Hall
Large variety of items

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**Timber Truckers
Light Parade**

December 8th at 6:00 pm
Downtown John Day

Parade Theme
Tis the Night Before Christmas

Preregistration is encouraged by calling
Leslie Traylor at 541-620-4032 or
541-575-1862
\$10 entry fee

Register day of 3-5:30pm @ Grant Western

Winners will be announced at the Elk's Lodge following the parade.