



The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868

Wednesday, January 16, 2019 151st Year • No. 3 • 18 Pages • \$1.00 BlueMountainEagle.com

County pot tax needs voter approval

Ordinance to be rescinded, money returned

By Richard Hanners Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County's tax on recreational marijuana does not meet statutory requirements and will



Jim Carpenter

the county will not enforce the 3 percent tax, and the \$5,050 collected by the county will be returned to Rocky Mountain Dispensary, Myers said. It will be up to the dispensary to

be rescinded, Judge Scott Myers said Jan. 9.

The county will not enforce the 3 percent tax, and the \$5,050 collected by the county will be returned to Rocky Mountain Dispensary, Myers said. It will be up to the dispensary to

return the money to its customers, he said.

The tax was unanimously approved by the Grant County Court as an emergency ordinance following a single public hearing on Dec. 19 with the intent that it would go into effect the same day.

State law, however, requires local taxes on recreational marijuana to go to the voters at the next statewide general election

for approval. The next statewide general election in Oregon will be held in November 2020.

Myers said the county court received an opinion on the matter from District Attorney Jim Carpenter, who is now serving as the county counsel.

In a Jan. 10 press release, Carpenter noted that "scrutiny by the Blue Mountain Eagle brought the issue to light, causing recon-

sideration of the legality of the ordinance."

Carpenter said the sole marijuana retailer in the county, Rocky Mountain Dispensary, had been collecting a recreational marijuana tax from its customers during the last quarter of 2018.

"The retailer, in good faith, thought there was a tax and was

See Pot, Page A9



FORGED BY FIRE

Survivors of Camp Fire receive Grant County assistance

By Angel Carpenter Blue Mountain Eagle

After seeing the devastation caused by the Camp Fire in Butte County, California, on the evening news last November, Dean and Courtney Fox of Canyon City felt driven to offer a helping hand. It was California's deadliest wildfire, killing 86, destroying 13,900 homes and displacing up to 50,000 residents.

The city of Paradise was decimated as well as nearby smaller towns, burning more than 150,000 acres.

The Foxes started a fundraiser in November with the idea of hand-delivering donations to people in need before Christmas while also offering encouragement.

Many Grant County residents and businesses contributed, including locals who, like the Foxes, sur-

vived the Canyon Creek Complex fire, which started in August 2015 south of Canyon City, destroying more than 110,000 acres. The Foxes were among 43 people who lost their homes in the fire, but no lives were lost.

Courtney said the people they met during their Dec. 17-20 trip to Northern California were extremely grateful

See Fire, Page A18



Contributed photos

Ten-year-old Brooke Taynton of Canyon City, left, stands with her mom Courtney Fox and one of the families they were able to help who survived the Camp Fire in Paradise, California, including parents John and Mary McDonald and their boys Johnny Ray, Jimmy Royce and Jerry Reece. John was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer before the fire broke out. TOP IMAGE: There is a cross for each of the 86 victims of Butte County, California's Camp Fire, which ignited Nov. 8.

POLITICS

Bentz: Legislature facing numerous complex issues

By Richard Hanners Blue Mountain Eagle

Reducing carbon dioxide emissions and addressing a significant health care budget shortfall are just two of the challenging issues facing the Oregon Legislature



Oregon Sen. Cliff Bentz

to focus on in the session beginning Jan. 22 are the impact of carbon reduction legislation on rural areas, addressing water resources in drought years and providing more attainable housing.

An attorney and farmer in Ontario, Bentz served in the House from 2008 until he was appointed on Jan. 8, 2018, to fill the remainder of former Sen. Ted Ferrioli's seat. He easily won election in November.

Bentz is the Senate Deputy Republican Leader, but

this year, state Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario, told the Eagle.

Bentz said the top issues he expects

to focus on in the session beginning Jan. 22 are the impact of carbon reduction legislation on rural areas, addressing water resources in drought years and providing more attainable housing.

An attorney and farmer in Ontario, Bentz served in the House from 2008 until he was appointed on Jan. 8, 2018, to fill the remainder of former Sen. Ted Ferrioli's seat. He easily won election in November.

Bentz is the Senate Deputy Republican Leader, but

the Democrats hold a supermajority in the Legislature. He has been appointed co-vice chairperson of the Joint Carbon Reduction and the Joint Tax Expenditure committees and vice chairperson of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee. He will also sit on the Joint Transportation and Senate Judiciary, Environment and Natural Resources committees.

"I am pleased with my committee assignments," Bentz said. "Except for Judiciary, I was on similar committees while in the House, so I am happy to have the opportunity to put my 10 years of House experience to work for Oregon and my district now that I am in the Senate."

See Bentz, Page A9

Findley excited for role as vice chair of House Revenue Committee

By Richard Hanners Blue Mountain Eagle

The Oregon Legislature will face three big issues this session — taxes, carbon reduction and health care — without the appetite to take them all on at one time, state Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale, told the Eagle.

The session starts Jan. 22. Democrats have introduced 40 new bills which all raise taxes, Findley said. What's needed is tax reform, and he hopes his seat on the House Revenue Committee will make a difference.

"I am looking forward to getting to work for the people of House District 60," Findley said in a press release. "I know a lot of people in Eastern Oregon feel like their voices aren't



Oregon Rep. Lynn Findley

heard in Salem and don't matter, but I'm here to tell you that they do matter. I will do everything in my power during this next session to work across the aisle and to promote Eastern Oregon values with every vote that I take."

Findley worked in fire and aviation management for the Bureau of Land Management for 32 years and was the Vale city manager for five years. He also served on several planning commissions in Malheur County.

He was appointed in January 2018 to fill the remainder of former Rep.

Cliff Bentz's term after Bentz was appointed to former Sen. Ted Ferrioli's seat. Findley ran unopposed in the November election.

Findley has been appointed vice chairperson on the House Revenue Committee and co-vice chairperson on the Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures. He also will sit on the House committees for Energy and Environment, Veterans and Emergency Preparedness and the Joint Transportation Committee.

"These committee assignments, especially as vice chair on the Revenue Committee, will give Eastern Oregonians a unique voice in shaping tax policies," Findley said.

Findley said he

See Findley, Page A9

OREGON FARM BUREAU

GRANT COUNTY FARM BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING AT THE AIRPORT, SAT JAN 19TH 12PM

Please RSVP @ grantfarmbureau@gmail.com

See A-5 for more details

