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**AMONG THE
BEST**



Contributed photo/David Zaitz
LEFT: Chipping onto a green at The Retreat & Links at Silvie Valley Ranch.

ABOVE: The Chief Egan mountain meadow 9-hole golf course at The Retreat & Links at Silvie Valley Ranch.
Contributed photo
Silvie Valley Ranch

Silvie's recognized by golfing magazines

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Retreat & Links at Silvie Valley Ranch, operating since a soft opening in 2017, has caught the eye of golfing professionals across the U.S. The boutique resort south of Seneca recently was recognized by two nationwide magazines, while the resort's chef was given a top award by the Oregon Beef Council. Golf Magazine, with a circulation of

1.4 million, recognized the resort's McVeigh's Gauntlet 7-hole ridge course as "the best new golf experience of the year." The 1,177-yard McVeigh's Gauntlet course includes par-3 and short par-4 holes and features goats as caddies. The leashed goat-caddies can tote a handful of clubs in leather golf bags up and down the course's steep, rugged terrain.

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'I played most of the great golf courses in the United States, and many in Europe, in my 40 years in golf course management. Nowhere else will you find an experience like this!'

Sean Hoolehan,
past president of Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

Legal challenges to county measures, ordinance dismissed

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle



Mark Webb

Legal challenges to two Grant County measures and one ordinance have been dismissed, but the judge did not rule on whether the laws were valid. County resident Mark Webb sought an order from the Grant County Circuit Court declaring measures 12-37 and 12-40 and Ordinance 2013-01 invalid because of procedural errors

and conflicts with state law and state and federal constitutions. Measure 12-37 declared Grant County a United Nations-free zone, which Webb argued conflicts with the U.S. Constitution. Measure 12-40 directed the county to petition Congress for title to public land within the county, which Webb argued was improper because it compelled an administrative, rather than legislative, act.

Ordinance 2013-01 prohibits road closures on public land without authorization from the Grant County Court and the sheriff, which Webb argued was preempted by state and federal law.

Former county counsel Ron Yockim filed motions on behalf of the county to dismiss Webb's complaint on several grounds, including that Webb failed to

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Hemp farmers look to Prairie City and Mt. Vernon

Plants must contain less than 0.3 percent THC

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

New state and federal laws that protect hemp farming have come on the heels of a rapid growth in the industry.

In the U.S., hemp sales topped \$820 million in 2017 while the global market was estimated to be \$3.9 billion. In Oregon, the number of hemp farming permits doubled from 2017 to 2018.

Tai Ma Oregon LLC, which has been developing an industrial hemp farm in Prairie City for the past two seasons, plans to grow hemp on a 10-acre hay field just south of the fire hall in Mt. Vernon. The narrow property extends along Beech Creek nearly all the way to the city's sewage lagoons.

Mt. Vernon reaction

Mt. Vernon Mayor Kenny Delano said the city learned about the company's plans in December when Tai Ma Oregon LLC

presented the city with a land-use compatibility statement from the Oregon Department of Agriculture to show that they complied with local zoning regulations.

Hemp growing is regulated, but hemp farmers are no longer required to provide a compatibility statement to the state, ODA Director of Communications Andrea Cantu-Schomus told the Eagle. Only hemp handlers, who process hemp products from farmers, are required to provide the compatibility statement, she said.

The Mt. Vernon City Council took up the matter at their Jan. 8 meeting, where it encountered some vocal opposition. David Kilpatrick and Chauncey Groves, partners in the Tai Ma Oregon business, attended the meeting.

Kilpatrick assured the council that industrial hemp does not have a strong odor, like recreational or medical marijuana, and they had heard no complaints in Prairie City. He also said anyone who steals hemp and tries

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School board to ask for \$700,000 bond

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Dayville School Board will ask voters to approve a \$700,000 bond for school improvements in the May election.

The cost of the bond is estimated to be \$168 per year for a \$100,000 home. The board vote on Jan. 8 was unanimous, School Superintendent Kathryn Hedrick told the Eagle.

If successful, the bond could raise \$1.4 million with an Oregon School Capital Improvement Match grant. The OSCIM grant could match up to \$2 million.

A needs assessment

by Straightline Architects of Boise identified some expensive renovations and remodeling that could have required a higher bond request.

The school board, however, pared down the request by eliminating things like parking lot paving and installing lights on the football field, which had never been seriously considered by the board, Hedrick said.

While the board has not yet specified what needs they hope to address, they will likely include roof repairs to the main building, which was built in 1924, and electrical upgrades to the elemen-

tary school, which was built in 1953.

It's possible needed structural repairs to the gym could be paid for through a seismic upgrade grant that the school board will apply for later this year, Hedrick said.

The school board has been talking to community members about the importance of these repairs for some time and will actively promote the May bond election, Hedrick said.

"They're not looking at new buildings," she said. "They'll do everything they can to make it cost effective and safe for the students."

