

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE

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## Coordinating 'coordination'

### Grant County Court seeks 'equal footing' with Forest Service

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Court agreed Jan. 23 to look into "invoking coordination" with federal and state agencies as a way to protect community interests during planning for projects on public land.

Commissioner Sam Palmer brought the matter to the court after earlier providing research material and sample documents to Judge Scott Myers and Commissioner Jim Hamsher.

Palmer said invoking coordination would give the county "equal footing" during planning by government agencies and would allow the county to be involved from the very beginning of the



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

**Grant County Commissioner Sam Palmer discusses his recommendation that the court invoke coordination for planning purposes during the court's Jan. 23 meeting.**

planning process.

Palmer said he spoke with officials in Harney and Crook counties about how they dealt with coordination. He recommended creating a

six-member committee representing various local interests to advise the court on invoking coordination.

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### Federal interpretation only requires addressing plan discrepancies

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Despite calls for the county to have "equal footing" with federal agencies through a legal provision known as coordination, the federal interpretation of the law does not appear to provide it.

Supporters of invoking coordination to improve a local government's position in public land planning cite the word's inclusion in the National Environmental Policy Act, National Forest Management Act, Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act and other acts, rules, policies and executive orders.

Some supporters distinguish between

collaboration, cooperation and coordination, words that are found in many official documents that govern public land planning. Coordination is more than just joint planning, they say — it also means that the parties are equal in rank.

Many supporters often cite the work of Fred Kelly Grant, a Boise, Idaho, attorney who spoke publicly about coordination in John Day in November 2015. Grant formed a group to promote coordination called the Stand and Fight Club and wrote a guidebook on the subject titled "Coordination, Government to Government."

In his guidebook, Grant claims that

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## Prairie City cemetery to see improvements

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Recent and future improvements at the Prairie City Cemetery are the result of hard work and kind donations by locals and family members.

The tall red Marciel Well Drilling rig is installing a new irrigation well, Prairie City Cemetery District secretary-treasurer Carla Wright said. The irrigation ditch the cemetery has relied on ran dry by the end of last summer, she said.

Several diseased black olive trees along County Road 62 have been removed, a new wrought-iron archway has been installed at the east entrance and preparation work has begun for new fencing at the cemetery.

The district receives some tax revenue, but it's just enough to pay for groundskeeping, district president Marlene Woodley said. The district asked Jennie Messmer to write a grant application to pay for a new water source, but she passed away in March 2018.

Messmer had worked for the League of Oregon Cities and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments and served as interim city



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

**Carla Wright, left, and Marlene Woodley stand near the Marciel Drilling rig that will install an irrigation well for the Prairie City Cemetery.**

manager for several Oregon cities. She received awards for her service to Oregon.

Sharon Fritsch, Messmer's sister and a teacher at Humbolt Elementary School, stepped up to finish the grant writing in honor of her sister.

The cemetery district was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Oregon Community Foundation, a \$4,500

grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's Historic Cemeteries Program and a \$1,000 grant from the Shelk Foundation.

That money was earmarked for the well drilling and fencing projects, but the new well will cost \$55,000, Wright said. A fund supported by donors over the years will be wiped out covering the difference, she said, and the district will need additional donations to cover the costs of plumbing and electrical connections for the new well.

Raymond Field donated part of his costs for removing the black olive trees in memory of his brother Ronald, who passed away in 2018, and the Grant County Road

Department helped with removing the debris.

Donations from Wright, cemetery district board member Jim Sullens and Fran Bunch covered the remaining cost for the tree removal. City personnel assisted in removing old fence posts and cement in preparation for the new fence.

The cost of construct-

ing the wrought-iron archway, one of Boyd Britton's last metal projects in Grant County, was covered with several thousand dollars in donations from Messmer's family and friends.

The Winegar family, with some of the oldest headstones in the cemetery, paid for constructing the cobblestone directory building in honor of Virginia Winegar, who died in 1996.

Members of the Prairie City School FFA program constructed a split-rail fence near the directory building with wood donated by the McKinley family.

Wright said 17 burials took place at the Prairie City Cemetery in 2016 and 12 in 2017 — both unusually high numbers. Eight burials took place last year.

According to Wright and Woodley, the oldest known grave at the Prairie City Cemetery is about 175 years old. An ancestor of Burt Rutan, the prize-winning retired aerospace engineer, is buried at that site. Wright also noted that unmarked plots exist for three unknown soldiers.

Six Confederate soldiers are buried in the older section of the cemetery.

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## Legislators back plan to spend \$3 billion more on schools

By Paris Achen, Aubrey Wieber and Claire Withycombe  
Oregon Capital Bureau

A small group of legislators spent a year compiling their wish list of improvements to Oregon's failing education system. Now they have five months to whittle it down to something realistic, find a way to fund it and sell the rest of their colleagues on spending up to \$3 billion more on K-12 education. The state currently spends about \$8.2 billion.

"We only get one chance to educate our children," said state Rep. Greg Smith, R-Heppner. "They're only



Pamplin file photo

**Sen. Lew Frederick talks with Portland students in September 2018 during a tour of the state by the Joint Committee on School Success.**

in first grade once, they're only in 10th grade once. We need to take advantage of that opportunity."

A report released Thurs-

day details the wish list a legislative committee compiled after a summer of hearings and tours around Oregon. The report echoes much of what

the committee already has said publicly is needed to improve schooling for Oregon's children. That includes a longer school year, more state-paid preschool, diversity among teachers and smaller class sizes.

It also shows lawmakers have learned from past mistakes.

"Historically, the school state fund has not come with strings attached," said state Rep. Barbara Smith Warner, D-Portland, co-chair of the Joint Committee on School Success. "What we are trying to do is to ... tie this funding to outcomes. It's not just, let's put more money in the state school fund."

That means school districts around Oregon might have to agree to measurable improvements to get and keep extra state money.

The state would work with districts to come up with tailored plans. What works in a large, urban school might not be right for a school of just a couple hundred students, legislators said. If the districts follow through on the plan and see improvement, the state would continue paying for their initiatives.

The proposals would transform Oregon's school system in every way, from how the state intervenes with

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