

# John Day to consider impounding vehicles

By Richard Hanners  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of John Day is considering impounding vehicles when drivers stopped for a traffic violation are repeat offenders and behind on fine payments, Police Chief Mike Durr told the city council Feb. 12.

Some repeat offenders who don't have a valid driver's license or insurance have been put on a payment plan by the courts but aren't making the payments, he said. One woman has racked up about \$12,000 in fines, he noted.

The impounded vehicle owner will be responsible for the towing and storage charges and an administrative fee to the city. All vehicle and driver requirements must be met to retrieve a vehicle, including license plates, registration, insurance and a driver's license, he said.

It would be up to the tow truck company to decide what to do with vehicles that are never retrieved, Durr said.

## Annual report

According to the city's

"Annual Public Safety Review," public safety spending in fiscal year 2017-18 included \$422,840 for police, \$173,676 for fire and \$423,116 for 911 dispatch.

Total spending has increased about \$23,000 per year from about \$500,000 in FY1999 to \$1 million in FY2018, which is faster than inflation, City Manager Nick Green said. The \$100,000 increase in the past fiscal year resulted from capital improvements, he said.

Transition of 911 dispatch service from the city to the Grant County Emergency Communications Agency effective Jan. 1 will significantly change public safety spending. The city will no longer receive funding from a state tax on phone bills, but the tax revenue was not keeping up with the cost of providing emergency communications service.

Dispatch consoles and other furniture have been installed at the new dispatch center in the John Day Fire Hall, and the council approved a payment of \$49,476 to Evans Consoles Inc. of Virginia for the new consoles. A lease agreement



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

From left, John Day Fire Chief Ron Smith and Police Chief Mike Durr updated the city council at their Feb. 12 meeting.

for use of the fire hall space has been fully executed, Green said.

Remaining work for the dispatch center includes fiber optic work by Blue Mountain Telecom and installation of security cameras and magnetic door locks. Dispatch service is expected to physically move from the John Day City Hall to the fire hall in early March, Green said.

This year's annual public safety review document lacked statistics from local agencies, Green said, but according to Oregon Uniform Crime Report figures

from 2016, Grant County ranks fairly well for three crime rates compared to Oregon's 36 counties - 13th for behavioral crimes, 29th for personal and 25th for property.

## Police department

Durr has been chief for about half a year now and also has been serving as the school resource officer at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School. He said some policy changes should improve service, such as providing overlapping and more flexible shifts, which will allow two officers to be

on duty in busy time periods.

A more proactive than reactive approach, with officers contacting residents and establishing a relationship, has reduced call outs, Durr said, but he didn't have the numbers yet to support that conclusion. His officers investigated two serious domestic assault cases that led to prison sentences last year.

Durr said the department's four vehicles have less than 100,000 miles and won't need replacement for several years. Plans call for purchasing two electronic radar signs for installation at two locations with the most complaints - Highway 26 east of John Day and the intersection of Bridge and Third streets. He also said he wants to sell the department's 12 aged shotguns and purchase five new identical shotguns.

With the recent return of a new officer from the police academy, the department is now up to full staffing levels, Durr said. Online training will allow the officers to maintain certification with less travel. Durr said he is considering hiring a part-time clerical clerk and train-

ing Officer Scott Moore to fill in for Durr when he's absent.

## Fire department

John Day Fire Chief Ron Smith also updated the council. The fire department has 12 volunteers, including an assistant chief and two lieutenants. He said the staff support moving 911 dispatch to the fire hall as it will provide 24/7 security.

Most fires in the John Day area are weather-related as opposed to human-caused, Smith said. The past year was not a busy year, with few significant fires. The department responded to 30 city calls and 19 rural, including mutual aid calls, he said.

Looking forward, Smith noted that the department's backup engine has some issues, and they are beginning to look for a replacement pumper. With the fire hall completed, the compressor system for the department's self-contained breathing apparatus will be moved from the public works department to the fire hall, which will make topping off bottles after a call much easier, he said.

## 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

Nathan M. Elledge, 27, Bend, pleaded guilty Feb. 14 to felony fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer and misdemeanor reckless driving committed on Dec. 6 or 7. He was sentenced to 10 days jail, 10 hours community service, 18 months probation and \$550 in fines and fees.

Debra L. Shawn, 63, Mt. Vernon, pleaded guilty Feb. 14 to failing to perform the duties of a driver in a crash involving property damage committed on Nov. 4. She was sentenced to 20 days house arrest, 10 hours community service, 12 months bench probation and a \$100 fee. Her driver's license was suspended for 90 days.

Nicholas P. Gibson, 27, Prairie City, pleaded guilty Feb. 14 to fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer committed on Jan. 3. He was sentenced to 15 days jail, 30 hours community service, 18 months probation and a \$100 fine. His license was suspended for 90 days. A second count of attempting to elude a police officer was dismissed.

### Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff's Office reported the following for the week of Feb. 13:

Concealed handgun licenses: 12

Average inmates: 17  
Bookings: 6  
Releases: 4  
Arrests: 1  
Citations: 0  
Fingerprints: 2  
Civil papers: 9  
Warrants processed: 4  
Asst./welfare check: 0  
Search and rescue: 1

### Justice Court

• Exceeding speed limit:  
Laurel K. Nelson, 72, John

Day, Dec. 19, 42/20 zone, fined \$165.

• Gregg A. Chambers, 30, Cape Coral, Florida was found guilty by jury trial Feb. 12 of second-degree criminal trespass. He was sentenced to 30 days jail and \$100 in fines and fees.

### Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 133 calls during the week of Feb. 11-17, including:

### • John Day Police Department

Feb. 11: Following a traffic stop on Main Street in downtown John Day, Tina Couey, 58, Prairie City, was cited for driving with a suspended license and no insurance.

Feb. 11: Responded to Northwest Seventh Street in John Day for a suicidal person.

Feb. 13: Advised of suspicious circumstances at Dayton and East Main streets in John Day.

Feb. 14: Took a credit card fraud report at a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day.

Feb. 14: Responded to a noninjury crash near the high school in John Day.

Feb. 15: Following a traffic stop on Highway 26 east of John Day, Christine N. Daum, 30, was cited for driving with a suspended license and no insurance.

Feb. 16: Received a report of a theft at the fairgrounds in John Day.

Feb. 16: Following a traffic stop in the John Day City Hall parking lot, David S. Ashby, 55, Redmond, was cited for speeding, 45/25 zone.

Feb. 17: Advised of suspicious circumstances at an apartment complex on Highway 26 east of John Day.

• Oregon State Police  
Feb. 11: Dispatched to Highway 395 near Highway 402 for a vehicle slide-off.

Feb. 13: Responded to a noninjury crash on North Canyon City Boulevard in Canyon City.

Feb. 14: Advised of a suspicious vehicle on Highway 26

east of Dayville.

### • Grant County Sheriff's Office

Feb. 11: Received a report of suspicious circumstances in Mt. Vernon.

Feb. 12: Advised of suspicious circumstances at the Prairie City School.

Feb. 12: Search and rescue crews stood down when several snowmobile riders became stuck in the Vinegar Hill area of the Middle Fork of John Day River drainage and spent the night.

Feb. 13: Received a report of an assault on Ingle Street in Mt. Vernon.

Feb. 14: Advised of criminal mischief at the RV park in Prairie City.

Feb. 14: Received a report of shots fired on South Bridge Street in Prairie City.

Feb. 16: Advised of a dispute on North Johnson Avenue in Prairie City.

Feb. 17: Received a report of suspicious circumstances on Owens Street in Dayville.

### • John Day ambulance

Feb. 11: Responded to Long Creek.

Feb. 11: Dispatched to Bridge and Second streets in John Day for an elderly woman who fell.

Feb. 12: Transported a patient to the airport in John Day.

Feb. 13: Transported a patient to the airport in John Day.

Feb. 14: Responded to a senior home in John Day for a 97-year-old woman.

Feb. 14: Dispatched to a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day.

Feb. 15: Responded to Southwest First Street in John Day for a 76-year-old man with chest pain.

Feb. 15: Dispatched with Long Creek ambulance and fire

to Leasy Road in Long Creek for a man who had a seizure.

Feb. 15: Responded with Monument ambulance to Cribbage Lane for a 3-year-old with a finger injury.

Feb. 16: Dispatched to East Main Street in John Day for a woman with swollen legs and feet.

Feb. 16: Responded to East Main Street in John Day.

Feb. 16: Dispatched to a mobile home park on West Main Street in John Day for a 62-year-old woman with stroke symptoms.

Feb. 16: Responded to Laycock Creek Road in John Day for a 75-year-old man with breathing complications.

Feb. 17: Dispatched with Seneca ambulance to A Avenue in Seneca for a 63-year-old woman having seizures.

Feb. 17: Responded to a 911 call from Northeast Seventh Street in John Day.

Feb. 17: Dispatched for a 911 call from Bridge Street in John Day.

Feb. 17: Responded to South Johnson Avenue in Prairie City for a 74-year-old woman who had fallen.

Feb. 17: Transported a patient to the airport in John Day.

### • Monument ambulance

Feb. 17: Responded to Top Road in Monument for a 911 call.

### • John Day fire

Feb. 11: Responded to East Main Street for a flue fire.

Feb. 16: Received a report of a chimney fire on East Main Street in John Day.

### • Long Creek fire

Feb. 16: Responded with Long Creek ambulance, Grant County sheriff's deputies, state police and Columbia Power personnel to a structure fire on Highway 402 near Long Creek.

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Hello Grant County,

Did you know that the Chamber has a Facebook page? If you haven't "liked" us, please do! We are at Grant County Oregon Chamber of Commerce. We will be doing some contests soon, so check us out and you could win some Grant County Greenbacks!

Our February Chamber meeting is Thursday, February 21st. The Board meets at 10:30 a.m. at the Chamber office and the no-host luncheon is at 12 p.m. at the Outpost Pizza, Pub & Grill.

Kim Randleas will be sharing exciting news about a new Center for the Arts that is in the works.

This is the time of year we secure sponsors for our newsletter and banner ads on our website; we have a couple sponsor spots available for both. The cost is \$200/year; if you are interested, please call Tammy at the Chamber office, 541-575-0547.

We would like to welcome Apricot Apiaries as new members! Matt Allen and Liz Lovelock are based in Kimberly. Check them out on our website or Facebook.

If you're not a member of the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, we would love to talk to you about joining. Call the Chamber office, or talk to one of our directors, Bruce Ward, Jerry Franklin, Greg Armstrong, Shannon Adair, Taci Philbrook, Dave Driscoll, Elaine Eisenbraun, Sally Knowles or Amber Wright.

It seems like we had a short spring, and now it's winter again! Well, I'm not going to complain - it's one of the nice things about living in Grant County! And, the snowmobilers are happy!

We have been working on a design for a billboard on the freeway near Ontario, and we are waiting for one to open up between Portland and the Coast. You can check out the preliminary design on our Facebook page and watch out! More people will be heading for Grant County!

We hope to see you Thursday!  
**Tammy Bremner**  
Manager, Grant County Chamber of Commerce

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