

Former Monument resident nominated for an Oscar

Fitzgerald's parents traveled from Grant County to award show

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Former Monument resident Skye Fitzgerald was nominated for an Academy Award for his short film documentary "Lifeboat." Although it didn't win the Oscar, the 34 1/2 minute movie, filmed in 2016 as part of a trilogy, provides a glimpse into rescue missions on the Mediterranean Sea as volun-

teers with the nonprofit Sea-Watch group seek out migrants fleeing areas such as Libya and Tunisia via wooden and inflatable boats. Monument residents Mitch and Jenny Mund know Fitzgerald and remember when he was a young man. Fitzgerald's parents, Fred and Fanny Fitzgerald, still live in Monument, and Jenny said they traveled to be with their son at the

award ceremony in Los Angeles. When Mitch and Jenny moved to Monument from John Day in 1986, the Fitzgeralds were living in Monument. Jenny said she remembers Skye, 48, as a hard-working young man. She said the family lived in a truck trailer in the early days that she knew them and later built a beautiful home. She added that Fred, now

retired, was an air-traffic controller in Tri-Cities, Washington, and Fanny played string instruments with the Inland Northwest Orchestra. Mitch worked in fire control for the Oregon Department of Forestry back then, and Skye worked for him during the summer months as a seasonal firefighter. "He was always willing to learn and was always interested in finding out things that he didn't know," Mitch said. Skye interviewed Mitch for a

part of his 2018 documentary film "101 Seconds," which was about the Clackamas Towne Center shooting in December 2012. "I gave my views on the Second Amendment and gun control," Mitch said. "That's what I admire in his documentaries. He tried to give both sides of the issue, and then let the person who views it decide — not try to push any of his thoughts or beliefs on people, but let people make that choice." *See Oscar, Page A18*



The Eagle/Richard Hanners
Josh Walker, chairman of the Grant County Digital Network Coalition board, addresses a town hall meeting in the John Day Fire Hall on Dec. 18.

Broadband coalition to seek grants

Director says chances are better this year

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

New federal grant applications, plans to run a fiber line to the northwest part of Grant County and the establishment of a state-wide fiber network partnership are generating optimism by the local agency organized to improve internet access in Grant County.

Second try
The Grant County Digital Network Coalition will update last year's application for grant funding to run a main fiber line from John Day to Seneca and try again, the board decided at

its Feb. 19 meeting. The coalition learned in December they were not a recipient of a \$2.9 million U.S. Department of Agriculture Community Connect grant. A total of 124 project applications were submitted, and 19 projects were awarded. The coalition had spent \$93,000 developing the grant application and planned to come up with the \$450,000 match using the \$1.8 million appropriation the city of John Day had received from the legislature in 2017. The goal was to leverage the appropriation into larger grant-based funding. The Community Connect grant program this year is expected to attract hundreds of applicants during the 60-day submission window, but the Agriculture Department will only be able to finance a small fraction of those applicants, said Nick Green, the coalition's executive director. Green said the coalition's chances for approval are better this year because the coalition is organized and operating, the co-location facility in the John Day Fire Hall has been constructed, T-Mobile has proposed cell towers in the project area and the coalition has anticipated service provider agreements with Oregon Telephone Corporation and CenturyLink.

Racial slur highlights need for sportsmanship



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
Referee Tim Boethin at the Feb. 16 High Desert League boys basketball championship game gathers Crane and Prairie City players around him, warning that further negative comments would not be tolerated.

Prairie City rebounds from unsportsmanlike incident

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Prairie City Panthers overcame adversity with a 66-49 win over Dufur Friday to move on to the 1A boys basketball championship tournament. An unsportsmanlike incident almost overshadowed the Panthers' last-second victory over the Crane Mustangs in their previous game, the district championship Feb. 16. A Crane player was suspended from playing in the team's next game after what Prairie City athletic director Billy Colson described as "serious trash talking" during the game. At one point, referee Tim Boethin gathered players from both teams and said he wouldn't tolerate any more negative comments. Prairie City's Syd Holman said he and a Crane player were both in the



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
Prairie City Panther starters Levi Burke, left, and Syd Holman show their excitement after their team's 46-45 win over the Crane Mustangs at the District 8 tournament in John Day.

air and landed on each other. When they hit the floor, the Crane player "used the 'hard R' (the N-word)," Holman said. "Emotions were running high. I'm not going to hold it against him," Hol-

man said, but added he had no respect for the comment. Panther head coach Sam Workman said Crane had played "rough basketball" in previous games. "Every time we played Crane, their kids would

say stuff to try to intimidate with words," Workman said. "There's no defense or offense that has to do with running your mouth on a basketball court." Workman said sportsmanship leads to better outcomes. He said,