

Broadband

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New grant

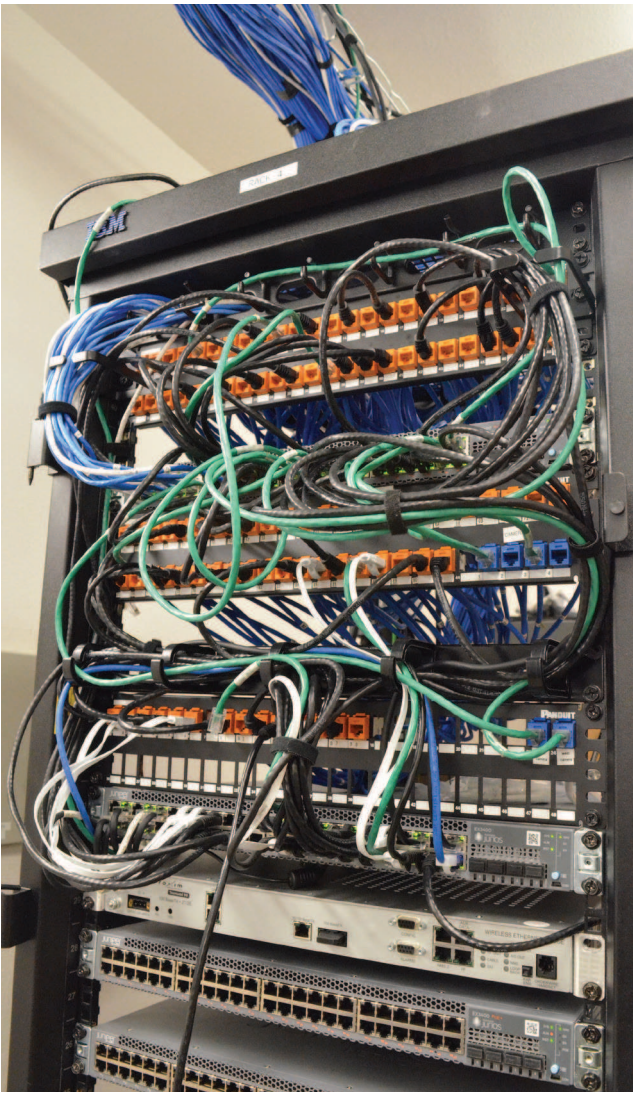
The board also agreed to apply for a USDA ReConnect grant. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue announced the new broadband program for rural areas in December, offering up to \$600 million in loans and grant funding. Approved projects must establish internet access speeds of at least 25 megabits per second download and 3 mbps upload.

“Community Connect for 2019 is very similar to the 2018 program application we submitted,” Green told the Eagle. “ReConnect is an entirely new program, and it has a different set of rules.”

Green criticized the ReConnect program’s scoring system, where connecting pre-subscribed farms is given one point each up to 20 points total while health care centers are given up to 15 points. There are no health care facilities in the coalition’s proposed project area.

In addition, the ReConnect program requires a 25 percent match, while the Community Connect grant requires a 15 percent match, Green told the Eagle. The coalition will use funding it received from the state in 2017 to pay for the matches, Green said.

The board also agreed to move forward with a professional services agreement with CTC Technology and Energy of Maryland to assist in drafting the grant



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

Servers at the Grant County Education Service District will temporarily provide internet access to the Seneca City Hall and the county’s 911 dispatch system.

applications up to \$12,000 to revamp the Community Connect application and up to \$40,000 to prepare the ReConnect application.

Lateral lines

On Feb. 5, the coalition board agreed to issue a notice of intent to award Blue Mountain Telecom of Walla Walla, Washington, a \$33,333 contract to

run fiber from the fire hall to the Grant County Education Service District offices on South Canyon Boulevard in John Day. This will enable the new 911 dispatch center in the fire hall to utilize ESD’s internet provider service.

A similar project calls for running a 12-fiber cable from the city hall in Seneca, which has poor inter-

net access, to the Seneca School, which has ESD service. Commstructure Consulting of Oregon City estimated the cost of the lateral at \$4,538, and the board is waiting for a bid from Blue Mountain Telecom.

Commstructure also estimated the cost of running a 96-fiber cable from the fire hall to the John Day City Hall at \$45,651. The fiber will run north to First Street and North Canyon Boulevard, where CenturyLink has a microwave tower facility, and then east past the People Mover bus facility and back to Highway 26.

Connecting critical infrastructure will improve the coalition’s position when applying for federal grants, Green told the Eagle.

“We’ll be looking at another lateral to connect the hospital and other facilities as well later in 2019,” he said.

‘Hat trick’

The board also heard about plans by Oregon Telephone Corporation to apply to the ReConnect program for funding to run fiber up Highway 395 from Mt. Vernon to several miles north of Long Creek and possibly west to Monument.

If the coalition is awarded both federal grants and completes a fiber line from John Day to Burns, and if Ortelco is awarded ReConnect funding and runs fiber to the northwest part of the county, much of Grant County’s broadband network would be built out, the board noted.

Board chairman Josh Walker characterized the potential achievement as a “hat trick.”

Green also reported on talks he had with Steve Corbato, executive director of the Oregon Fiber Partnership, a collaborative effort by Oregon State University, the state’s major public research facilities and state government.

The partnership has purchased 1,500 miles of fiber from CenturyLink to connect the state’s education and research facilities, which it hopes to activate this summer. The statewide network runs north-south along the coast, Interstate 5 and U.S. Highway 97 and east-west along I-84 and a central route connecting Newport, Bend, Burns and Ontario.

These routes, however, circle a broadband void in Grant and Wheeler counties. The Oregon Fiber Partnership “has the ear of the governor” and will support the coalition’s applications for federal grants, board member Dan Becker told the Eagle.

The partnership has expressed interest in the Grant County coalition’s efforts, as its John Day to Burns line when combined with Ortelco’s John Day to Baker City line would provide the partnership with a Burns to Baker City connection, Becker said.

The partnership “is coordinating their long-range planning to include John Day, specifically providing internet access to our educational facilities,” including the Grant County Educational Service District, local schools and the OSU Extension office, Green told the Eagle.

Oscar

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“I’m proud of him,” Mitch said, adding he’s worthy of the recognition and honor. “He’s very appreciative of everything he’s received throughout his life, and what he’s earned. He’s a hardworking person.”

“I’m glad to say he’s from Grant County,” Mitch said.

Rod Thompson, who lives on the Umatilla Indian Reservation just outside of Pendleton, said when he heard the Academy Awards nominees, the name Skye Fitzgerald “rang a bell.”

Thompson worked as a foreign exchange program in the 1980s and ‘90s and received Fitzgerald’s application for studying abroad in Sweden.

He recalled interviewing Skye and his parents at their home, which is on a Forest Road past Top Road, as part of the process.

“They were in a remote part of Grant County, which is by itself remote,” he said.

Thompson said Skye’s grades were excellent, and his parents were incredibly supportive.

Students applying for studying abroad are interviewed, Thompson said, to make sure they’re suitable for it as great students who are open to learning new things and living in a new culture — a unique culture, as well as a sub-culture.

He said Skye also took in a trip to Leningrad during his time in Sweden.

“It’s a broadening experience for them,” he said.

Thompson said he remembers all the students he worked with through American Scandinavian Student Exchange, which is now called ASSE.

“Most exchange students I’ve been able to keep track of have all achieved,” he said, adding Skye is “achieving things — it’s a big deal.”

Slur

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although the incident was terrible, OSAA took care of it, and the athlete was suspended from playing in Crane’s next game.

Crane lost to Powder Valley 58-47 Feb. 19 in the first round state playoff.

Crane Superintendent Matthew Hawley said the district is using the situation as an opportunity to teach their student athletes.

“Here at Crane, we have the highest expectations of our student athletes and our fans for portraying positive sportsmanship,” he said. “I think all parties involved have the same expectations that we hold our student athletes to high standards, and we expect the best from them.”

He said OSAA’s guidelines makes it clear “it’s about respecting the game, respecting your opponent, respecting the people involved,” and the district is readdressing its expectations of students.

Hawley said, through collaboration with Prairie City school officials, he believes they have handled the situation in an appropriate manner and are “continuing to do so.”

Colson said the Prairie City athletes handled the situation well.

“Lots of kids — everyone — makes mistakes,” Colson said. “I’m glad to see that both schools seem to be moving on from it.”

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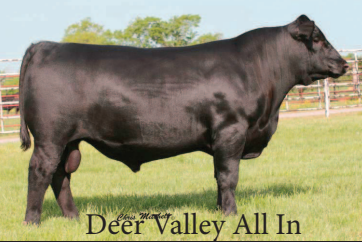
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SUNDAY (4:20) 7:20

MON-THURS 7:20

FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (PG-13)

A former wrestler and his family make a living performing at small venues around the country while his kids dream of joining WWE.

FRI & SAT (4:00) 7:00 9:30

SUNDAY (4:00) 7:00

MON-THURS 7:00

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG)

Hiccup must seek "The Hidden World" a secret Dragon Utopia before a hired tyrant finds it first.

FRI & SAT (4:10) 7:10 9:35

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\$9 Adult, \$7 Senior (60+), Youth