

Hamsher

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Local officials addressed the need for better cooperation in the objections they submitted to the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision, which has been scrapped by

the Forest Service. "That was one reason why they want to reset this whole thing," Hamsher said. Hamsher noted that in French's March 14 letter to Region 6 Forester Glenn Casamassa, French said that "I expect you to engage with local, state and tribal gov-

ernments, elected officials, the public and other interested stakeholders." "People are hopeful," Hamsher said. "The public's voices are being heard." The Eastern Oregon Counties Association responded right away to French's instructions to the

regional forester about withdrawing the record of decision for the forest plan. "It had become clear for our association that the proposed plans were not workable for our communities," the EOCA said in a press release. "In the development of the plan revisions,

the Forest Service had not heard or understood how the custom and culture and economies of our communities are intertwined with our forests." The EOCA credited French for hearing their objections and taking action. The EOCA also said it sup-

ported leadership changes from the regional office on down. "With the rebuilding of trust, we can work together for our common goal of forests that support our local communities' social, economic and ecological values," the EOCA said.

Survey

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reported consuming alcohol in the past 30 days, while 13 percent said they binge drank over the past 30 days. While self-reported cigarette use by 11th graders over the past 30 days trended downward for both the state and county since 2012, use reported by Grant County students in 2018 was double the state at 11.6 percent.

The perceived risk of marijuana use by older Grant County students fell significantly from 2016 to 2018, in contrast to the state. The perceived risk by eighth graders in 2018 fell from 83.7 percent to 69, and the perceived risk by 11th graders fell from 53.6 percent to 33.3 percent.

Students who perceive cigarette, alcohol or marijuana use as risky are less likely to engage in use, the survey states.

Self-reporting by eighth and 11th graders on the availability of marijuana hasn't changed significantly from 2014 to 2018, but while 16.7 percent of Grant County eighth graders reported marijuana was easy to get in 2018, nearly twice as many students statewide reported marijuana was easy to obtain.

The number of Grant County 11th graders reporting marijuana was easy to get in 2018, however, was 60 percent, closer to the statewide 65.1 percent.

Self-reporting by Grant County eighth graders about harassment on social media sites increased at a faster pace than by eighth graders statewide, doubling from 17 percent in 2012 to 35 percent in 2018.

The number of eighth graders reporting harassment on social media sites was significantly higher than by 11th graders for both the county and the

state in 2018. The percentage of Grant County 11th graders saying they received unwanted sexual comments has been lower than the state figures for three of the past four reporting years and was 6.7 percent in 2018 compared to 11.3 percent statewide.

In other school board news: The board gave its consensus to include new bleachers in the bid package for this year's seismic upgrade project at the Grant Union gymnasium.

Superintendent Bret Uptmor said the district had set aside about \$120,000 for replacing the bleachers, which could cost about \$180,000.

The wood and metal roll-out bleachers pose safety hazards for people moving up and down the narrow steps and have reached the end of their useful life, with higher preventative maintenance costs, Uptmor told the Eagle.

The new plastic and metal bleachers would be ready to use by next fall, he said. The complete seismic upgrade bid package will be presented to the board in April.

More than 200 students in grades K-6 at Humbolt Elementary School received free dental screenings, and 73 received sealant treatment Oct. 8-10.

Thanks to the efforts of Marci Judd and Shanna Northway, special education teachers at Humbolt Elementary School, a coffee cart staffed by special ed students was scheduled to begin in March.

Special ed students will employ their social, work and math skills to produce lattes, smoothies and other drinks for Humbolt staff and students. The coffee cart received funding from the Primary Practice grant program of the Oregon Education Association, Northway said.



Grant Union science student Cade Blood looks over Jacob Smith's research project during Thursday's science fair, pointing out the results of Smith's statistical analysis. From left: Blood, Smith, Donovan Smith and Cody Combs at the Grant Union Junior-Senior High School library.

Fair

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piano students and one ukulele student learn and retain knowledge of music theory.

A helpful part of her conclusion was that with more knowledge comes less variation between perceived and actual results. She also discovered that "images of items did not trigger memories as was thought."

Blood's question was "How Does Armarella Fungi Impact Forest Vegetation Growth and Composition?"

He said the project gave him a better understanding of statistical analysis, and he found "the fungi impedes the growth of coniferous trees and basal area per hectare."

"I thought it was pretty interesting that we live adjacent to one of the largest living organisms in the world," he said of the Armarella Fungi which is located in the Blue Mountains.

Silver winners were Ellie Justice and Cody Combs, and bronze winners were Drew Lusco and Jacob Smith.

Judges for the event were Amy Stiner of the South Fork Watershed Council; Dr. Anthony Tolvar, an Eastern Oregon University physics professor; Brent Smith, assistant John Day District fish biologist with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Neil Bauer, a retired Grant School District 3 science teacher.

Hennen, who has taught at Grant Union since 1998, said he noticed more students interacting and sharing their projects this year.

"The key to a good project is having a good question," he said.



Grant Union science fair participants, including Taylor Allen, center, chat while judges tally their marks.



Science fair judges and Grant Union science teacher Randy Hennen sit together during the event. Hennen is in the red shirt, and clockwise are Neil Bauer, Brent Smith, Amy Stiner and Dr. Anthony Torval.



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

With about 12 percent of Grant County workers employed by the federal government, including the Forest Service, the partial government shutdown in December and January increased the unemployment rate.

Shutdown

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employees were classified as employed, however, under establishment survey definitions used to calculate total nonfarm and industry level employment."

Grant County was at the high end among five Eastern Oregon counties over the past year for an increase in the raw unemployment rate at 3.6 percent and for

an increase in the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate at 1.7 percent.

The number of nonfarm workers in Grant County fell from 2,180 in January 2018 to 2,140 in January 2019. Declines were seen in the financial, information, manufacturing, education and health service sectors, and in local and federal governments. There was an increase of 10 workers in state government.

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