

GREAT ideas for the local economy

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Resource Enhancement Action Team remains active in the community after a quarter-century supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs.

Incorporated in 1992 as the Upper John Day Community Development Corporation, the nonprofit organization later changed its name to GREAT.

The organization started out handling capacity-building grants that were used to fund an economic development coordinator, Treasurer King Williams said. The county took over that position in 2012.

GREAT's 19-member board includes representatives from Grant County's nine cities, the chamber of commerce, county court, state and federal agencies and professionals from agriculture, timber and education. Getting a quorum at meetings sometimes can be difficult, so the bylaws allow



Eagle file photos

GREAT serves as the fiscal agent for the Saturday farmers market in John Day.

members to vote by email, Williams said.

The organization's vision is to be a catalyst to building a strong diversified local economy, and its mission is to increase and enhance the economic stability of Grant County by attracting, retaining and expanding businesses.

The impact of one new job here is like 250 in western Oregon's urban areas, Williams said, noting that former Grant County Economic Development Coordinator Sally Bartlett's mission was adding "one job at a time."

GREAT often serves as a fiscal agent for small non-

profits, such as the John Day Farmers Market and the John Day Community Garden. The group provided \$1,000 to the garden in 2010 to finalize city water service. It also arranged for \$4,900 in funding for the David Romprey Oregon Warline telephone counseling service.

The organization also

acted as the fiscal agent for \$50,000 in funding for construction of the Prospector Trail along Canyon Creek through sale of a house donated by Wells Fargo in 2010. The goal was to provide a safe route for schoolchildren, Williams said.

GREAT also has served as a fiscal agent for startups, such as the Blue Mountains Forest Partners. In 2009, GREAT asked Congress to appropriate \$7.7 million for restoration and hazard fuels reduction projects on 400,000 acres of the Malheur National Forest and another \$2 million for the heritage, botanical and road access studies or surveys needed for the stewardship projects. Blue Mountains Forest Partners is now a registered nonprofit and no longer needs a fiscal agent, Williams said.

Progress is sometimes slow. In 2001, GREAT was awarded \$133,500 by the Forest Service to purchase mill equipment to prove value-added use and market viability of small-diameter wood products.

The doweling machine, however, lay dormant due to a shortage of needed Forest Service timber sales, Williams said. Iron Triangle acquired the machine in 2010, and it was put to work in Seneca making fence posts as it was originally intended, he said.

GREAT also finds funding for economic studies. In 2001, it received \$28,155 from the Forest Service to develop a final marketing plan aimed at increasing winter tourism in Grant County. GREAT hired Green & Christofferson Marketing of Enterprise to write the report.

In 2010, GREAT expanded its micro-loan program to assist local business startups from \$2,500 to \$5,000. Beneficiaries of the program over the years include a woman who started a medical transcription business and David Irwin, the owner of Environmental Measurement in Mt. Vernon, which manufactured the ThermoFan woodstove fan kit.

SENIOR Outlook Chester's

Prairie City Seniors

Rose Coombs



PRAIRIE CITY – Welcome to spring in Grant County! One week two feet of snow and the next week all the creeks are over their banks. After that we have 75 degree days to get everyone excited

about yard work only to have it rain the next day; typical Grant County weather. For you newcomers, we have two adages: always take a jacket and if you don't like the weather wait a minute... The spring flowers are all a-bloomin' and the bees are a-buzzin'. Nephew Ivan gave us a bouquet of beautiful and fragrant daffodils from his yard, thanks so much; their sweet scent filled the house.

Jay Colson led the flag salute and Tom Roark asked the blessing. Carlos and Jay made the home deliveries and Bonnie Lake was the winner of the gift certificate donated by Chuck's Little Diner.

The ham for our Easter meal today was donated by Huffman's Market as part of our entrée program. Thank you, Blaine and staff, it was delicious! Along with the ham, we had scalloped potatoes, carrots, deviled eggs, Jell-O with cherries, a roll and muddy buddies for dessert. Now, I had never heard of muddy buddies, but lots of others had. Must be a new item from the recent past... like 25 years ago, ahem.

Before we sat down to eat, we had an Easter egg hunt. Tom had hidden little plastic eggs all over the dining room and library. He said, "Why should the kids have all the fun?" You should have seen them rushing

about as all and sundry jumped up and started grabbing eggs. Tom had put little candies inside of them, so you got rewarded for finding them. Lots of fun.

Bob Meador has returned from his winter in the south and a newcomer to our area is Dennis Scott who has joined us for the last couple weeks, welcome to you both.

We were blessed to have son number one and family join us for Easter weekend. They took a scenic route through Maupin and Antelope and encountered a big thunderstorm in that area. There certainly is a difference between a gentle shower and a 'gully-washer'. Kind of took the fun out of the trip, but it is one that they will remember.

Got a new book at a thrift shop entitled "The Long Road to Lonesomeville." It's about old towns in Eastern Oregon that boomed back in the late 1800s and up to the mid 1900s but slowly lost population due to 'modernity.' But those places are attracting new residents precisely because of that. Kind of like Prairie City; new people come in because they like the slower pace of life and the friendliness of the people. Even my father's hometown was mentioned – Drewsey. The old general store that was there reminds me of how Amazon works today; you could get anything you wanted there. We came back through there after our honeymoon in Northern California 58 years ago and the owner/manager, Sam Burt, who had known me since I was born, gave us a handmade wooden paddle for future use on children, quite a wedding gift!

Prov. 22:6 "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it."

John Day Seniors

Dusty Harris



JOHN DAY – What a glorious Easter Sunday He truly blessed us with. The sun was shining, birds were chirping and only a slight breeze was present! It's hard to believe that we are already at the end of

April... time flies when you're having fun I guess!

On April 15 our greeter was Ron Dowse and there were 39 regular and 40 frozen meals delivered by the lovely team at Step Forward. This time, our meal was served by the wonderful volunteers from First Christian Church; we thank all of you!

Yao was our winner of the gift card donated by Len's Drug and yours truly won the two free meals!

Speaking of meals, our meal was breakfast, which consisted of biscuits with sausage gravy, hash browns, link sausages and fruit salad for dessert. On April 18 our greeters were Gregg, Bonnie and Jeanette and we had 49 total meals delivered by Linda and Dennis Dickerson, and Joel and Joan

Tayles. The meal was served by our great volunteers from the Methodist Church with M.D. Enterprizes donating the meal; thank you for all your compassion toward us! We had an Easter hat contest, which was very fun, and Marllie Mediger won the large rabbit; she had cute little lights on her hat and it was oh-so-cute!

We also had some little stuffed rabbits to give away as door prizes and they were won by Billie Bullard, Jean Willey, Bob Meador, Jay Colson, Tom Roark, Barbara Pollack, Ron Dowse, and Kim Ausland who gave hers to Louise. Congratulations to all our lucky winners!

For Easter dinner we had glazed ham, creamy potatoes with peas, maple carrots, relish trays, French bread and honey nut crispies for dessert. As always, our lovely cooks, Shay and Barbara, outdid themselves and we are so thankful for them!

On Wednesday, May 15, from noon to 4 p.m., there is a Living with Alzheimer's seminar for caregivers at DHS in John Day.

We are so blessed to live in this community and have such wonderful folks attending our senior meals each week.

Daniel 2:20 "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might."

Monument Seniors

Soo Yuhawa



MONUMENT – We had a special Easter meal that was served, compliments of Larry Vogt and Pam Callahan. Our cooks were Terry Cade and Teawna Jewell. The meal served was baked ham, scalloped potatoes, carrots, dinner rolls and Easter cake. Sounded delish right, well, so did 60 other guests on the books. Then there were fourteen takeout's. The cooks were very busy; we thank them for their hard work.

I'm not sure I have all my details right; I was not present at the Easter dinner. I was home sick and in misery. Ha. Seriously, I was not well at all and thank the Lord I finally got over it. I don't know if I had the flu, or stomach virus, or what, but I did not step a toenail out the door for five days. So, bear with me while I try and write from the written notes of my kind husband who tried to write everything for me.

The North Fork Café has new hours starting April 17-May 21. They will be open from Wednesday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. They are closed Mondays and Tuesdays. They also have a new menu with new items like the "take & bake" pizza.

There will be a memorial service for Janet Engle Hardin on Saturday, April 27 at noon with a potluck to follow at the Monument Senior Center.

There will also be a celebration of life for Joanie Howell on the same day,

Saturday, April 27 at 1 p.m. It will be held at the Monument City Park with a potluck to follow.

On May 4, the Monument SKILS USA, high school organization will be having a trap shoot to help raise funds for their trip to Nationals in Louisville, Kentucky. They will be having a taco feed, dessert auction, silent auction, and have a raffle for a beautiful knife. Please come and show your support.

Again, on the same day, you can make your rounds and not have to cook all day; there will be the EMT Cinco De Mayo Fiesta dinner.

There are two seating times, 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. The menu will be selected by Sylvia Cockrell. There is also a raffle for a Traeger Smoker and there will be a dessert auction and silent auction. If you would like to make a donation, please contact Rose Howe.

Lastly, the Third Annual Senior Center Rummage Sale is set for June 14, 15, and 16. A huge amount of items will be there and I'm sure you will find something you never knew you needed. Ha.

Well, we got baby goats! My sweet Bonnie had twin boys! Sherry Allen of the Monument RV Park helped me name them. They are Chip and Dale, cute huh? Dolly had her twin girls two days later. My kiddos wanted to name them; they are Chevre and Frita. Both sets have one with ears and one with no ears. They are adorable and I've already banded the boys; they are over a week old now.

Psalm 28:7 "The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: Therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; And with my song will I praise Him."

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