

## Grants

Continued from Page A1

Recommended upgrades from seismic assessments are fully funded by the Seismic Rehabilitation Grant Program.

Monument Superintendent/Principal Donald Petersen said the main building of the school, which houses offices and high school classrooms, is 70-80 years old and made of sandstone.

He anticipates the professionals who assess that building for long-range planning will determine how much longer it will last.

Petersen said they'd likely need to pass a bond in 10 to 20 years to make long-term upgrades.

The conservative community hasn't passed a bond "in a long time," he said, but the grants will at least allow them to plan for the future.

Improvements for the short term include areas of the Monument elementary building where there is rotted siding, peeling paint and several large single-pane windows that need replacing, he said.

"We know we need certain repairs," he said. "This (grant) establishes it professionally, so if we need to, we can get a grant from the state and apply for a matching grant to do the work that we need to do."

The Oregon Legislature created the Office of School Facilities in 2015. As of last fall, the office had awarded \$175 million in matching grants through the OSCIM Program and \$4.1 million in TAP grants to school districts.

In the 2019 round, 66 school districts were awarded 122 TAP grants totaling \$2,925,000.

### Prairie City School



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter  
**Prairie City School District Superintendent/Principal Casey Hallgarth stands in front of the entrance to the school's cafeteria and main gym. The district received a \$2.5 million seismic grant to make the building safer. Work is expected to start in June of 2020.**

### District



Donald Petersen

Prairie City School District received all four TAP grants.

The \$2.5 million seismic grant, received

after a previous assessment, will pay for upgrades to the cafeteria and gym. That work will begin in June of 2020.

Superintendent/Principal Casey Hallgarth said the TAP grants will help them implement a maintenance program.

He said areas of focus for recent TAP awards include "the Bates building, the roofs to all of our buildings, exterior and interior conditions of all buildings and developing a maintenance plan for our district to address the issues of our 100-plus-year-old building."

"These grants give us

the opportunities to have professionals come in and develop a sound plan and for us to budget for the near future and the long term," he said, adding the long-range plans will include engagement with the community to determine how to best meet educational goals for the next 20 years.

Hallgarth said the Bates building could provide an all-day daycare, carpentry classes, a dormitory or an all-day preschool down the road.

With upgrades, the students and staff could have reliable classrooms that don't leak and are energy efficient, keeping cool on hot days and warm on cold days, he said.

"It is amazing what a controlled climate in the classroom can produce against a classroom that is too hot or cold or has leaks," he said. "It also offers the students and staff a safe environment."

He added, "At Prai-



**Grant School District 3 Superintendent Bret Uptmor stands in front of Humbolt Elementary School in Canyon City. Seismic upgrades were made to parts of the school, including the cafeteria, last summer. The district has been awarded a seismic assessment grant to determine if other buildings in the district need upgrades.**

rie City, we are committed to the safety and efficiency of our classrooms, and we want to get this started here as soon as we can."

Stacie Holmstrom, who is deputy clerk/business manager for Grant Education Service District and Monument and Prairie City school districts, said the requests for proposals for the projects for Monument and Prairie City, which she'll be writing, will be sent out by June 1, and there is a list of approved architecture firms to complete the work.

The assessments will take place during the next school year, which starts July 1.

After receiving their assessment plans, schools can apply for grants through the OSCIM Program for a matching grant.

"Schools will have to determine what they can do," Holmstrom said.

### Grant School District 3

received a \$20,000 facilities assessment grant, a \$25,000 seismic grant and a long-range facility plan grant.

All the buildings in the district will be evaluated, including Seneca School and the district offices, Superintendent Bret Uptmor said.

"The seismic TAP grant will assess our buildings for future seismic projects with the buildings that were not retrofitted with any of the previous grants," he said.

The district previously received a grant totaling \$1,235,940 for seismic work through former Superintendent Curt Shelley, who moved after the 2017-18 school year.

The grant was for both Humbolt Elementary School and Grant Union Junior-Senior High School.

Work outlined for Humbolt with that grant was completed last summer, and upgrades to Grant Union will begin May 13 with a short break during gradua-

tion week.

A new roof was added to the elementary school's cafeteria.

"Top to bottom, everything is tied together" with reinforcements in the ceiling, walls and flooring, Uptmor said.

Walls were also reinforced in classrooms, and rock walls outside the school office were taken out. Since that removed seating, a couple benches were added in place.

Five steel, U-shaped beams tie classrooms to the gym near the breezeway between the buildings.

Uptmor said the facility assessment TAP grant can be used to assess the current physical condition of the facilities, determine the level of deficiencies and provide a rough estimate for repair costs.

"The long-range facility plan and facilities assessment grant provide information to the Grant School District Board of Directors (including) direction and planning for the future of our facilities," he said.

### Dayville School District

Dayville School District received a \$25,000 seismic assessment grant.

Last year, the school was awarded assessment grants for facilities and long-range planning, totaling \$45,000, said Superintendent/Principal Kathryn Hedrick.

"We used that money to develop plans for repairs and upgrades and led the board to go to the voters ... for a bond proposal," she said.

She said, with the seismic assessment grant, they will "have a structural engineer study the gym, the elementary, and the main high school building through the seismic lens."

She said the school board will choose the engineering firm for that assessment at their meeting in May.

## 911

Continued from Page A1

Grant County Emergency Communications Agency went into operation Jan. 1 and moved into the John Day Fire Hall in April.

Emergency dispatch service has been the norm in Oregon for nearly four decades. According to material presented by Findley, the Oregon Legislature mandated the establishment of 911 emergency dispatch services in 1981, along with a 3 percent surcharge on phone fees to support the service. Ten years later, the surcharge was increased to 5 percent.

The Legislature converted the phone fees to a straight 75 cents per transaction in 1995. Sixty percent of the collected revenue currently goes to counties and cities to operate 911 dispatch centers, with a minimum of 1 percent per county.

The statewide phone fees raised \$45 million in 2018, with \$27 million going to the cities and counties, but operational costs for all of the state's 911 dispatch centers is estimated to be \$145 million.

### Committee hearings

A public hearing for the bill took place before the

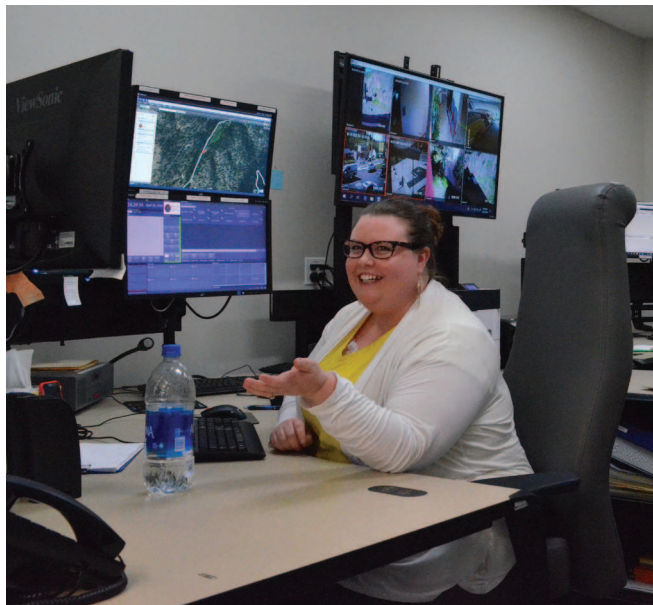
House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness on March 12, with 24 agencies providing testimony, including John Day City Manager Nick Green and Grant County Emergency Communications Agency Director Valerie Maynard.

According to Green, when the city operated the 911 dispatch center in Grant County, it was one of the smallest centers in Oregon "but also one of the most efficient." Nonetheless, over the past two decades, the cost-revenue gap "grew to the point that it became operationally unstable," he said.

"While revenue measures are rarely popular, especially in a conservative county, we heard a consistent message during our attempts to pass the local ballot measure" to support local 911 service, he said. "Residents would much rather pay an additional 75 cents per month in their phone bills than a disproportionate rate in their property tax base."

Maynard noted that rising costs and limited resources nearly forced the local 911 center to close, with dispatch service outsourced to another county.

"The cost to do business continues to rise every year, and yet we are still operating on a tax that is 24 years old,"



The Eagle/Richard Hanners

**Cammie Haney works in the Grant County Emergency Communications Agency's new dispatch center in the John Day Fire Hall on April 30.**

she said. "We do not have the resources to pull from in our rural county to support the increased cost share burden that is being put on our residents."

Testimony in support of HB 2449 came from representatives of the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials, National Emergency Number Association, Oregon State Sheriffs Association, Oregon Association of Chiefs of Police, Oregon Fire District Directors Association and League of Oregon Cities, as well

as cities and counties from across the state, large and small.

The committee followed up with a work session on April 4, where it voted 7-1 to refer the bill to the House Committee on Revenue as amended. An amendment removed a provision that would have provided counties with less than 40,000 residents 2 percent of the total phone tax revenue instead of 1 percent. Testimony in support of the bill was provided by eight more cities and counties.

### Opposing testimony

The House Committee on Revenue, where Findley is vice chairman, took up the bill with a hearing on April 22. Testimony was taken from at least 38 representatives of cities, counties, emergency dispatch providers and communications companies. Testimony in support came from metropolitan areas such as Portland, Eugene, Salem, Gresham, Hillsboro and Clackamas and Washington counties.

Concerns about the bill were voiced by CTIA, a trade association for the wireless communications industry. CTIA noted that HB 2449 called for collecting \$1.50 per phone bill for emergency dispatch, while Washington collects 95 cents, California collects 31 cents, Idaho collects \$1 and Nevada collects 25 cents.

Funding for 911 dispatch should be limited to "allowable costs," CTIA said, and not be used for "leasing real estate, cosmetic remodeling of facilities, salaries or benefits, or emergency vehicles." CTIA also called for counties consolidating 911 centers into regional centers "covering as large a number of local jurisdictions as can be efficiently served."

Verizon and T-Mobile representatives also testi-

fied about concerns they had with the bill. Verizon noted that the increase to \$1.50 per phone bill far exceeds the inflation rate. Based on the consumer price index, overall costs increased by 65 percent from 1995 to 2018, but forecast revenues from HB 2449 would be 197 percent higher.

The increase in 911 dispatch costs, however, results from more than inflation, according to Findley. Much of the increased costs result from changes in technology, including implementation of a statewide digital network, text to 911 service, new call-taking equipment, mapping hardware and software, data management for geographical information systems, additional work stations needed for increased call volumes, higher vendor costs for phone system maintenance and increased 911 call delivery infrastructure due to increased statewide call volume.

The next step for the bill is up to Revenue Committee Chairwoman Rep. Nancy Nathanson, D-Eugene. She could schedule another work session, where amendments could be adopted and the bill would be voted out of committee for a House floor vote, or the bill could die in committee.

## Grant SWCD Weed Control Dept. Working for You in 2019

Thanks to the Grant County Court and Northeast Oregon Forests Resource Advisory Committee, Grant Weed Control is able to offer a **50% Cost Share Program for Noxious Weed Control on Private Grazing Lands, through a Title II funded Grant Project.** This program will provide a maximum \$5,000 of noxious weed control services with a \$2,500 maximum landowner contribution to qualifying participants. To be eligible for participation, the treatment property must not be actively irrigated and must be primarily managed for livestock grazing, minimum of 20 acres in size, located within Grant County, and must contain weed species listed on the Grant County Noxious Weed List. Applications for this limited weed control assistance opportunity will be funded on a first come first serve basis.

Applications due by June 5th.

Contact the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District Office at (541) 575-1554 or visit 721 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845 for applications and additional information.

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## National Nurses Week ~ May 6-9

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