

Grant Union/Prairie City
Prospector Tristan Morris
pitches against Heppner/Ione.
The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

The Blue Mountain EAGLE

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STATE PLAYOFFS

GRANT UNION/ PRAIRIE CITY BASEBALL TEAM ADVANCES TO FIRST ROUND

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CONGRATULATIONS TO DAYVILLE, LONG CREEK, PRAIRIE CITY AND MONUMENT GRADUATES! PAGES A6-7

Wednesday, May 15, 2019

151st Year • No. 20 • 20 Pages • \$1.00

BlueMountainEagle.com

Cleared for takeoff

Big grant will fix airport runways

Airport Improvement
Program provides
\$6.25 million

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

A large federal grant with no match required will enable Grant County to “decouple” its two runways and make takeoffs and landings safer.

The \$6.25 million grant was secured through the federal Department of Transportation’s Airport Improvement Program.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Oregon, voted to increase funding for the program and direct more grants to rural airports in the Federal Aviation Administration’s Reauthorization Act in 2018.

“We all know the important role this airport plays for the local economy, especially during fire season as a hub for our air attack teams to rapidly fight fires in the forests and around our communities,” Walden said in a statement. “This is tremendous news ... With more than \$6 million to improve runway safety at the airport, this grant will help support job growth.”

Grant County Regional Airport Manager Haley Walker said she worked with T-O Engineers of Boise, Idaho, to submit the grant application. The grant program targeted smaller airports, which increased their chances, she said.

Runway 9/27, which runs roughly east-west, and Runway 17/35, which runs roughly north-south, crisscross near the south end of the airfield. This



Eagle file photos

A single-engine aircraft flies over the Grant County Regional Airport. A recently awarded federal grant will improve airport safety by decoupling two intersecting runways.



The terminal at Grant County Regional Airport.

potential hazard had been identified by the FAA and was cited in the airport’s 20-year master plan.

A proposed fix is to shorten Runway 9/27. Aircraft could taxi back to the hangar and terminal airway on an existing taxiway that crosses Runway 17/35 about midway near the terminal,



Airport Manager Haley Walker addresses the Grant County Court in November 2018. Walker helped secure a recently awarded \$6.25 million grant to improve airport safety.

Walker said.

The grant money is available right away, Walker said. Final design and planning for the decoupling will take place this year, and construction could take place in 2020, she said.

In the meantime, repairs to the deteriorating aprons around the hangars could take place this

year. Prop wash from powerful planes, such as the Forest Service’s single-engine air tankers, often kicks up the gravel from the crumbling aprons that can damage other aircraft.

Design and engineering for the apron project cost about \$522,000, with the FAA paying about 90 percent, a state Critical Oregon Airport Relief grant covering about 9 percent and the county picking up about 1 percent.

Construction for the apron project is estimated to cost about \$3.47 million, Walker said. The hope is that the FAA would pay 90 percent, COAR would pay about \$150,000 and the county would pay about 1 percent.

Walker said the county is still awaiting the final design and engineering for the apron project and hope to put it out to bid by June or July.

Dems agree to drop gun, vaccine bills to get Republicans to return

Student Success Act will raise \$1 billion per year

By Aubrey Wieber, Claire Withycombe
and Mark Miller
Oregon Capital Bureau

Four Oregon senators leading the charge to inject new lifeblood into the state’s troubled education system said in their combined 88 years in the Legislature, the passage of the Student Success Act was the pinnacle of their career.

But passing the bill took some backroom horse trading with Republicans, and two deeply controversial bills were the casualties. One would have tightened the state’s gun laws and the other would remove non-medical exemptions for vaccines for school children.

Bits and pieces of how the deal came together emerged in interviews Monday, though Senate leadership remains tight-lipped on the details.

Sen. Ginny Burdick, D-Portland, was a sponsor of the gun bill.

On Saturday, she went to work to kill it. “It was terribly hard,” Burdick said. “I won’t deny that. People are counting on me. My district is counting on me. But today was a historic day. If that’s what it took to make that happen — killing that particular bill — then I accept that.”

The genesis of Burdick’s tough choice was May 7, when the 12 Republican senators staged a walkout to protest the impending passage of the Student Success Act, which would bolster education funding, provide money for early learning, help feed hungry kids and address the mental health crisis in many of Oregon’s schools.

Republicans said the state’s public pension debt should be addressed first, to make sure the new money being raised doesn’t get diverted to pay retirement costs instead of teachers.

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Death and government records

Death certificate delays can cause significant problems for those unprepared

By Richard Hanners
Blue Mountain Eagle

From birth to death, the government tracks everyone in the U.S. While the government needs this information for taxing, budgeting and other purposes, citizens depend on vital records for all manner of financial transactions.

That includes survivors of spouses or other family members who have passed on. Missing records are bad enough, but the impact can be much worse for elderly people whose financial resources are already strained.

Processing for a death certificate typically begins with a funeral director, who collects family information and enters

it in Oregon’s electronic reporting system. The report must be signed by an attending physician or the local medical examiner for unattended deaths before it is ready to be recorded by the Oregon Health Authority.

After a death is registered, the information is transmitted to the county health department for printing to create an official death certificate. Spouses or family members must present this document at banks and other financial offices to access accounts.

Vital records office

Current Oregon law states that processing of a registered certificate “should” be completed within five days of the time of death, according to Jennifer Woodward, a section manager at the Oregon Health Authority’s Center for



Contributed photo/Claude Baker

Bobette Baker, bottom left, and Claude Baker, bottom right, celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in June 2009 at the Outpost Pizza, Pub & Grill in John Day with their son James, his wife Kelley and granddaughters Lauren, top, and Emily.

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