

# A harvest of local offerings on the John Day River Food Trail

Western Grant County businesses team up to promote agritourism

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

A drive through Dayville, Kimberly, Spray, Monument and Long Creek offers an abundance of scenic views, but the area is more than just a feast for the eyes.

The prime micro climate, rich soil and water sourced from the John Day River are ingredients for an ideal area for growing crops, raising livestock and having recreational fun.

Owners of orchards, farms, ranches, beehives, stores, cafés, RV parks, Airbnbs and more are promoting the local economy while introducing visitors to what they have to offer.

A group of west-side proprietors gathered to create what they call the John Day River Food Trail, which uses Kimberly as its hub.

Beekeepers Matt Allen and Liz Lovelock, who own Apricot Apiaries in Kimberly on the Thomas Orchards property, manage 400 beehives.

Allen and Lovelock cooperate with Jeff and Laura Thomas family and family. They own and operate Thomas Orchards, a 100-acre property at Kimberly with a diverse crop of fruit trees.

The beekeeping couple started their family business in 2012, and their blue beehive boxes are spread across 50 miles, focusing on honey production in the John Day River Basin. They keep a couple dozen beehives at Thomas Orchards and operate a stand there with a variety of honey and beeswax items, such as lip balm, salve and candles.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Pat Irwin weighs a box of nectarines at Thomas Orchards on June 29, and Christy Howell, at the cash register, helps Linde Irwin as she purchases their four boxes of fruit.

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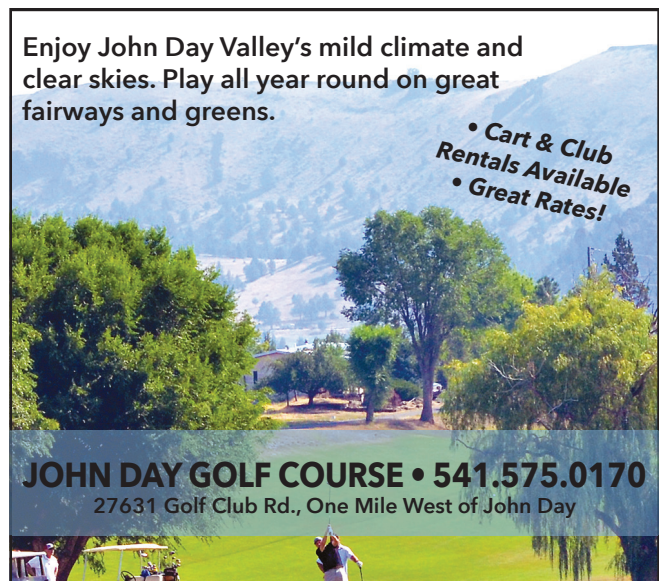
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