

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE



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## State Justice Department investigating Grant County Sheriff's Office deputy

Seven months of paid administrative leave for Mobley has cost the county more than \$39,000

By Sean Hart  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The state Justice Department is investigating criminal allegations against a Grant County Sheriff's Office deputy.

The Oregon Department of Justice said an investigation involving Deputy Abigail Mobley was

ongoing but did not provide any details.

Mobley was placed on paid administrative leave March 18 and has remained on leave through Oct. 17, according to county records obtained by the Eagle. Grant County officials have declined to discuss the circumstances surrounding the leave.

Attorney Dominic Carollo, on behalf of the county, said in an Aug. 28 statement that records requested by the Eagle regarding the circumstances behind the leave were exempt under a state statute that shields "investigatory information compiled for criminal law purposes."

"To the best of the County's

knowledge and belief, they are part of a pending criminal investigation being conducted by a third-party state agency," Carollo said.

Grant County Human Resources Manager Laurie Wright said Oct. 17 that the "public records requested by the (Blue Mountain Eagle) are part of information that was referred to the

Oregon Department of Justice."

In response to an Aug. 21 records request from the Eagle, a DOJ employee said Oct. 17 the agency possessed no records related to active investigations of or complaints against Grant County Sheriff's Office employees.

After further questions from

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# INTO THE WORKFORCE



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Paul Hendrix-Mills sands a 1948 Studebaker on Sept. 27 at 1st Choice Auto Body in John Day. He started the job last summer through Grant Union's youth transition program.

## Students with barriers to employment gain practical work experience

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Paul Hendrix-Mills was busy sanding down a 1948 Studebaker on Sept. 27 at 1st Choice Auto Body in John Day.

The 20-year-old landed the job last summer after working at the auto shop through a Summer Youth Work Experience Program internship.

He is just one of many success stories stemming from the program that allows high school students and young adults to brush up on work skills and gain job experience.

Being part of the program led to a permanent job for Hendrix-Mills, and that is the ultimate goal of the program.

Similarly, the Youth Transition Program at Grant Union Junior-Senior High School, which has been in place for several years, aims to give students opportunities to explore job interests and gain job skills and social and customer service skills. The program expands what the school's life skills classes can provide, preparing students to work at various jobs in their community.

Both programs are funded through the

Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

This year, the Grant County Education Service District received a grant to expand YTP to all schools in the county, including Prairie City, Dayville, Long Creek and Monument.

Tami Sasser, the youth transition specialist for Grant School District 3 and program coordinator for the ESD, said both the summer program and YTP "help transition students with a barrier to employment into adulthood and help them find jobs or college or permanent positions as adults."

There have been 25 students, ages 15-21, over the past two years in Sasser's summer program.

Hendrix-Mills, who earned his GED in 2018, said the summer work program helped him move from a job in a fast-food restaurant to the auto body shop and said he appreciates the guidance he receives from shop owner Jeb Bowling and his coworkers.

Hendrix-Mills is usually busy prepping vehicles for paint jobs.

"I'm learning the right tool for the right job will make it a lot easier," he said.

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The Eagle/Angel Carpenter

Jessie Stubbs, who participates in Grant Union High School's Youth Transition Program, picks up some birdseed to load up for a customer at Pioneer Feed in John Day.

## Hemp: Plenty of risk, reward possible in growing newest cash crop

By George Plaven  
EO Media Group

When Paul McGill first considered growing hemp earlier this year, he was intrigued by the enormous potential payoff.

McGill and his wife, Dianne, moved from Portland to Salem in 2014 to buy True North Orchards, with 3 acres of U-pick fruit including apples, pears and plums. The couple immediately took to the lifestyle, though they continued to work off-farm jobs to make ends meet.

Seeing an opportunity to boost their bottom line, McGill planted a half-acre of hemp in early July. Harvest began Oct. 5, which he figures will take about a month to finish, cutting it by hand.

"Thus far, we've been very pleased with the results," McGill said.

The McGills are among



EO Media Group/George Plaven

Several hundred field workers pick hemp flowers on a late September morning at Hemptown USA's Oregon farm in Central Point.

nearly 2,000 farmers taking part in a hemp-propelled gold rush across Oregon, where experts predict the newly legal crop could generate a \$1 billion farm gate value this year. That would make it the state's most valuable agricultural commodity — ahead of the powerhouse nursery, hay and cattle industries.

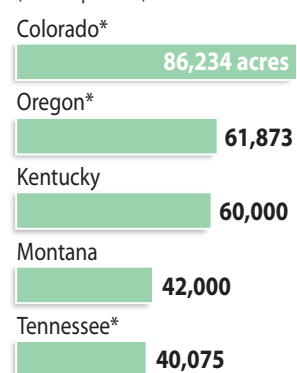
Since hemp was legalized in the 2018 Farm Bill,

the floodgates have opened for farms large and small to capitalize on the booming new industry. Oregon now has more acreage in hemp than the acreage devoted to potatoes and onions combined. Only Colorado, with 86,234 acres, grows more hemp in the U.S.

Like most farmers, McGill is growing hemp for cannabidiol, or CBD, an extract made from the flowers that is said

### Top hemp states by acres cultivated

(As of Sept. 2019)



\*Includes greenhouse cultivation  
Source: New Leaf Data Services

Capital Press graphic

to have multiple health benefits. Hemp fiber from the stalks can also be used to make paper, textiles, building materials and food ingredients, among other products.

"I don't think they've even truly reached the scope of

potential for what this biomass can be used for," McGill said.

While the average cost of growing hemp is estimated at between \$8,000 and \$15,000 per acre, farmers can bring in upward of \$50,000 per acre, depending on the markets and yields. The promise is so great that McGill recently left his day job at an irrigation supply company to become a full-time farmer.

But the high potential rewards of growing hemp are accompanied by equally high risks.

First-time growers such as McGill are learning about hemp as they go, and mistakes can be costly, putting huge dents in their yields. Federal regulations are still being written that could cripple the industry, and this year's early rains across the Willamette Valley have threatened to ruin whole

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