

Some events being moved for fairgrounds safety upgrades in spring

10-week project expected to take place between March and May

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Safety improvements at the fairgrounds have been scheduled, but the work will cause changes to some events planned next spring.

Grant County Fair Manager Mindy Winegar told the Grant County Court Oct. 23 that the 10-week project on Trowbridge Pavilion is set to begin and end between March 9 to May 11, depending on contractors and availability.

The construction project is necessary because roots on the north side of the pavilion have lifted and cracked the pavilion's concrete floor and created a tripping hazard.

While some events in the pavilion have been canceled, Winegar made changes for the location of several events. The Gun Show on April 25, which is usually planned in the pavilion, will be moved into the Heritage Building

or another facility on the fairgrounds.

While all events can't be accommodated, Winegar is working with other facilities — the Grant County Regional Airport, the Elks Lodge, and others — to host events. The fairgrounds will lose approximately \$1,000 in revenue, she said.

When asked why there couldn't be a temporary fix for the biggest crack in the pavilion to avoid cancelling events, Judge Scott Myers said, "We've attempted to do that several different times, but those cracks have just come back. By killing the trees and removing the trees, we are now pulling the concrete up and getting to the 'root' of the problem."

During the county court meeting, commissioners decided that propane will fuel the new heating system for the pavilion. While Winegar pushed to use oil to avoid dealing with 1,000 gallon propane tanks, Commissioner Jim Hamsher talked about the benefits of propane.

"As far as cost goes, heating oil is currently twice the price of propane,"



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Fair Manager Mindy Winegar talks about plans for the heating system in Trowbridge Pavilion at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

Hamsher said. "In the long term, with price fluctuations in oil, propane will be a more stable source since it is produced domestically."

While propane would cost more money to install than oil, Hamsher said in time propane will be a cheaper investment because of the resource cost and lower need for maintenance.

The county court advised Winegar to look for bids for a propane fueled heating system.

In other county court news:

- The court approved

two-year term dates for the members of the Natural Resources Committee. They also decided to stagger the terms so half of the committee would be up for election each year, and there are no term limits.

Dan Becker, Jim Bahrenburg, Doug Ferguson, Steve Baldwin and Billie Jo George, were appointed to serve a one-year term.

Judy Kerr, Haley Olson, Scott McDonald, Pat Voigt and Burke O'Brien were appointed to serve a two-year term. The terms were alphabetically appointed.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

From left, Commissioner Sam Palmer, County Judge Scott Myers and Commissioner Jim Hamsher listen to presenters Oct. 23.

- The court appointed Richard Tirico as an additional death investigator for Grant County. With the inclusion of Tirico, there are now a total of three death investigators in the county.

- The court appointed Scott Myers, Bob Quinton and Elisa Moore as the 2019-2020 Board of Property Tax Appeals members. This is a one-year appointment.

- The court approved their letter of support for Harney and Willowa counties and there participation of Senate Bill 2.

Senate Bill 2 is a planning bill that allows local

counties flexibility on up to 50 acres for land development, according to Myers.

"We have decided collectively as 10 counties, that instead of spreading out \$100,000 dollars (given by the Oregon Legislature) across 10 counties and getting nothing done, two counties decided that they would like to have \$50,000 each to proceed as demonstration counties to show how this bill will roll out," Myers said.

Next year, Myers said the legislature will likely give a \$500,000 grant so other counties will be able to try this program, but that is not guaranteed.

John Day City Council chooses locations for future parking spots

Funding options will be discussed at next meeting

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Parking in John Day is about to get easier for vehicles that are as big as an RV or as small as a Fiat.

The John Day City Council decided on two locations to develop for future parking at its Oct. 22 meeting.

The lot next to the John Day City Hall will be developed, and the old Chevrolet parking lot on West Main Street downtown will need to be acquired before development begins.

The future parking lots are intended to help locals and visitors find a parking spot to enjoy downtown, but parking for RVs and vehicles of the same size were also discussed.

"The biggest problem that we have is not a matter of where cars are going to park," said Sherrie Rininger, the president-elect of the Grant County Chamber of Commerce. "We know it's more of an issue of where these big vehicles are going to park."

Rininger continued by asking why the John Day Elks Lodge was not in consideration when talking about parking. John Day City Manager Nick Green said the parking lot at the Elks Lodge is not owned by the city. When the Elks Lodge decides what they want to do with their property, then the option can be re-evaluated, he said.

Heather Rookstool, an employee at Java Jungle, agrees with the lack of parking for big vehicles and believes this issue creates a general parking problem for smaller cars.

"If it's not going to be policed, I don't really see many of the downtown merchants being super



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

The Chevrolet parking lot could provide parking for the west side of downtown, if acquired.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

John Day City Manager Nick Green and Mayor Ron Lundbom listen to Mike Ricker talk about the Riverside Mobile Home Park.

keen on paying for something that the city is not willing to police," Rookstool said. "Say an RV does park in front of a business, we don't have any manpower to say, 'Please move your vehicle down to the RV designated parking.'"

Councilor Shannon

Adair echoed what she said during the last meeting and talked about using signs to address the problem.

"I think that we can handle that with signage that says the certain amount of time a vehicle can park," Adair said.

Rookstool also asked

about the issue of distance between each parking lot and their distance from downtown.

The council quickly addressed that issue by talking about the People Mover as an option for people who do not want to walk.

The lot behind Dreamers Lodge was presented again as an option for more parking for employees and business owners. The city council and community members both agreed the lot wasn't necessary because the area is too narrow to address the RV problem and current workers are doing fine finding parking.

The estimated development cost for the lot next to the John Day City Hall is \$83,281. It will cost \$60,000 to acquire the Chevrolet parking lot and approximately \$112,392 to develop the area. Both

lots will feature a public restroom, which the city currently does not have. Initial plans include a total of 26 new parking spots for cars and four pull-through spots for RVs.

The city now plans to gather more information on how to make these lots possible. Several options for funding the lots were discussed, such as the city taking out a loan or having business owners help, but no decision was made. It will be discussed at the

next city council meeting.

In other city council news:

- Mike Ricker, a resident at the Riverside Mobile Home Park, shared his concerns about hazards at the park.

Cats and fleas, fencing and signage and speed bumps were some of the concerns Ricker shared.

"I have to watch my dog because of fleas and those cats," Ricker said. "I have seen feral cats about three trailers from me, and they have fleas."

The main thing that the city can do is pursue code enforcement at the mobile park, Green said.

"We can put a group together within the city and go down there and identify any code violation of development code or a nuisance violation that are occurring," Green said. The city has done this to pieces of the park before but not the entire park.

Green will talk to the mobile park manager, Chris Fox, and come up with plans to address this issue to present at the next meeting.

- The city council approved Green to work on the property line adjustment for Third Street with Grant County. The city will accept land on Third Street, which would be donated from the county. This adjustment will make it easier for three property owners to connect with the city sewer system.

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Free Writers Workshop with Rick Steber: Saturday, November 2, 1:00 - 2:30 PM at Canyon City Community Hall. Join Rick as he discusses the writing process and shares his writing experience.
Author Night: Rick Steber: Saturday, November 2, 4:00 - 5:00 PM at Canyon City Community Hall. Award-winning author Rick Steber will talk about his books based on characters with rural Oregon connections.
Piano Lessons: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday piano lessons with Jamie Wylie-Lupien. Register at any point in term.
Flute Lessons: Mondays, starting October 28, 6:30 - 7:00 PM. Group flute lessons with Leanna Perkins. Register at any point in term.
Intro to Music: Tuesdays, starting October 29, 6:30 - 7:00 PM. Group introduction to music lessons with Leanna Perkins. Register at any point in term.
Chamber Choir: Thursdays, starting November 7, 5:00 - 6:00 PM. Choral ensemble instructed by Stephanie LeQueu. Register at any point in term.
Decoupage with Dave: Thursdays, starting November 7, 5:30 - 7:30 PM. Turn old boxes, furniture, trunks, etc. into durable, useful, and beautiful works of art.
Friday Art Club: Fridays, 8:00 AM - 5:15 PM. A Friday-only arts program open to children ages 5-12. Your child will have exposure to music, arts, crafts, and more!
Knit a Hat with Magic Loop: Saturdays, starting November 9, 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM. Learn to knit while creating something beautiful and warm.
Beginning Traditional Rug Hooking: Saturday, November 16, 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM. Learn the basics of traditional rug hooking (P.S. It's different than latch hooking).
Arts After School: Ongoing, Mon-Thu 3:30 - 5:45 PM, and Fri 8:00 AM - 5:45 PM. Follows school calendar. Your child will have exposure to music, arts, crafts, and more!
Youth Arts Program: Ongoing, Monday 6:00 PM rehearsals
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ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Saturday November 9, 8am-3pm

Mt. Vernon Grange Hall

Located across from Holliday State Park on HWY 26

We encourage you to come out and support the grange and all the vendors for the Christmas Bazaar.

Serving: Stew with fresh baked rolls, pies, cakes and cookies.

Eat lunch here or take it home for dinner.

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