



New hotel announced for John Day



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz
Court Priday discusses plan for the Inn at Whiskey Flats, the new John Day Hotel.

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

A 60-room, \$6 million hotel is coming to John Day.

The project was announced to an overflow crowd at the John Day City Council and the planning commission meeting Nov. 12 at the John Day Fire Hall.

The hotel will be located near the Oregon Pine Property east of Patterson Bridge Road. The city sold the 1.7 acres of land it owns at the site for \$74,052 — \$1 per square foot — to facilitate the deal.

John Day City Manager Nick Green revealed that the city has been working with the Priday family, a hotel investment group from Central Oregon, for three months.

The Priday family plans to name the hotel the “Inn at Whiskey Flat” and begin construction in the spring. Court Priday shared with the audience what they could expect from the investment.

“We try to be the very best in the towns that we come into,” Priday said. “We like to be involved in the community ... you’re not

going to have a company where you hear about the owner but never see them.”

The Inn at Whiskey Flat is expected to bring thousands of dollars to the community through property taxes. According to Green, the city could receive around \$50,000- \$60,000 a year in taxes from the hotel.

However, that will not happen for six years. Because the hotel development is part of John Day’s “innovation gateway project,”

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EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

Prepare and communicate when enjoying the great outdoors

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County Sheriff Office Search and Rescue Coordinator Dave Dobler said there is one common denominator when it comes to safely hunting, hiking, and traveling in the wilderness.

“Always expect the unexpected,” he said.

Dobler, who is also deputy with the Grant County Sheriff’s Office, said the county has averaged three search and rescue missions a month for the past year.

There have been many instances when a person traveling to the outdoors has not communicated with family members or others about their whereabouts or when they’ll return.

“It’s a statewide problem,” Dobler said.

He suggests families make a plan. If someone is hunting, they should be responsible for sharing where they are going, follow that plan, and be sure to call if circumstances change.

People spend big on a pickup, scope or rifle, he said, “but not \$200 a year on a satellite device and service.”

A satellite phone is one of the two most important safety tips Dobler recommends.

The other is having fire-building materials and skills.

Had Mark Larsen, 73, of Crooked River Ranch in Central Oregon been carrying a cellphone or fire-starter, he could have been rescued a lot sooner than the 10 days it took SAR to find him. He was eventually found Sept. 13 in the Fields Peak area southwest of Mt. Vernon.

Larsen did a few things right, including leaving a map for his



Contributed photo
Grant County Search and Rescue members assist an injured hiker found at Crawfish Lake near Anthony Lakes in Grant County. From left (in yellow shirts), Gretchen Ladd-Dobler, Cindy Lemcke and Nathan Gordanier.

wife with his planned location.

He also packed appropriate hunting equipment as well as food and water. However, upon arrival, he stepped out to stretch his legs with a walk in the woods and became disoriented.

The bow hunter took no backpack and was wearing only a T-shirt and jeans — brown in color — and slip-on shoes with no socks.

“He went northeast ... farther into the mountains and away from anyone that could aid him,” Dobler said, adding that almost any other direction would have sent him

toward a road or people.

Fifteen agencies spent a total of 1,800 hours looking for Larsen.

“We had SAR from Eastern and Central Oregon and the Willamette Valley,” Dobler said. This included air and ground search and rescue dogs.

One of the reasons Larsen survived the 10 days included warm weather for the elevation — temperatures reached a low of 55 degrees, and there was only one night with rain and wind.

A hunter found Larsen and waved a large blue tarp, which

helped airborne searchers locate the man.

He was flown to Blue Mountain Hospital in John Day where he spent three nights before being released, Dobler said.

Dobler said there was cellphone service available where Larsen was found, and a fire would have helped airplanes find him.

“Carry two good quality lighters, always, in your pocket,” Dobler said. “Right now, I have two quality lighters in both my front pockets. Bring flares or fire starters — they may be crucial, if

you need to keep warm.”

Lucas Francesco Cavalle, 38, went missing on Fields Peak last December and died in subzero temperatures.

His body was recovered Dec. 6 after a three-day search.

Dobler believes the man had tried to light a fire, but he may have waited too long and conditions were windy. He added that fine-motor skills are the first to go when a person becomes cold and may be scared.

The search and rescue team currently has 34 members, and Dobler would like to see that increase to 50.

Many hours are spent fulfilling training requirements. There will be an open application time to join SAR in November and December with interviews beginning in January.

About 40 hours of training will take place in March, April and May, with a combination of evenings and some Saturdays, followed by a test.

“There are lots of different things people can do as part of the SAR team, but they need to be able to follow instructions, be a good fit for the team and team player,” Dobler said. “In SAR, we have a lot of fun but it’s mission oriented.”

Ongoing training includes monthly meetings, two evening trainings per month and one Saturday a month.

“We keep busy,” he said.

Team members also present information to the public, including at three outdoor schools each year. Search and rescue crews also teach a Hug a Tree program to teach elementary students what to do if they become lost.

The county gives SAR a \$5,000

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Finding ways to avoid the fall

For older adults, falling can cause serious health problems

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Countless falls prepare a baby for their first step. But for people older than 65, falling can cause serious injuries and possibly the final steps.

An assessment released by Grant County Public Health on Oct. 30 showed that 30 percent of the Grant County population is older than 65 and that Oregon will see an increasing population of older adults. As the population grows older, the risk of falling also increases.

One out of three adults 65 years and older fall each year according to Karissa Debenport, a physical therapist at Blue Mountain Hospital, and Stacie Klusmier, an occupational therapist at Blue Mountain Hospital. Less than half of the people who have fallen talk to their health care providers about it.

Aside from physical injuries, falling can also



contributed photo
Icy roads in front of the Blue Mountain Eagle in December 2016.

cause fear to develop in some people.

“This fear may cause them to limit their activities, which leads to reduced mobility and loss of physical fitness and in turn, increases their actual risk of falling,” Debenport said. “Injuries and fear of falling make it increasingly hard to get around and live independently.”

In Grant County, some of the common causes for falling are icy and slippery stairs, uneven sur-

faces inside and outside a home, tripping on throw rugs, tripping over oxygen tubing, not using assistive devices appropriately, not taking medications as prescribed, inappropriate use of alcohol, vertigo, dizziness and impaired vision, said Klusmier and Debenport.

There are ways for people 65 and over to minimize the risk of falling by recognizing potential hazards. Simple exercise routines that can help as well. Keeping traction with the floor is an important first step: be sure to wear footwear with a non-slip sole. Make sure socks have a firm grip, especially on hardwood floors.

“Remove throw rugs from all areas of the home,” Debenport said. “Use a non-slip rug only at the shower or tub side when entering or exiting the shower. When not in use, pick it up. If you have any balance difficulty, use a cane or walker for stability.”

When walking in and out of home, be sure to keep your night lights on at all time to avoid any

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