

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE

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Eagle file photo

A crew runs an optical fiber cable along South Canyon Boulevard from the John Day Fire Hall to the Grant County Education Service District building on April 3. A \$6 million USDA grant announced Tuesday will provide high-speed internet access to Long Creek, Monument and Seneca.

## High-speed internet coming to Long Creek, Monument, Seneca

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Christmas came early when it was announced Tuesday that high-speed internet is coming to town — all of them in Grant County.

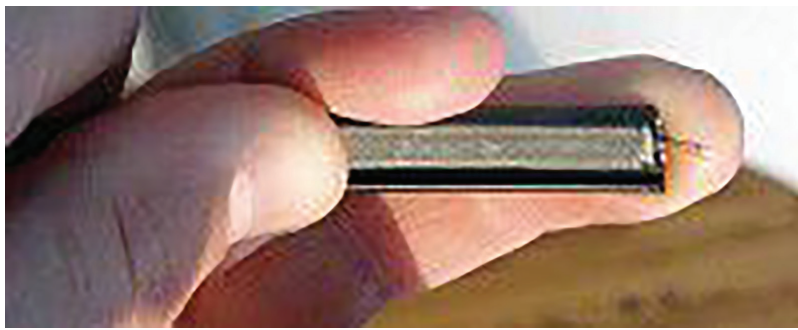
The U.S. Department of Agriculture's ReConnect Program is providing a \$6 million grant to construct 89 miles of fiber optic line, connecting the cities of Long Creek, Monument, Seneca and Spray to Oregon Telephone Corporation's high-speed broadband network that already connects the other cities in the county.

This will expand broadband across a

242-square-mile area, with nearly 650 potential new customers — 418 households, 22 businesses, 22 farms, three schools and two fire stations — that can receive broadband access and high-speed internet services, according to information from the USDA.

"Internet access is no longer an amenity; it is an essential component of daily life, as important as it was for rural communities to gain access to electricity a century ago," said John Huffman, the state director for the USDA.

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Eagle file photo

An Oregon Telephone Corporation employee holds a piece of fiber-optic cable. The company will soon offer high-speed internet access in Long Creek, Monument and Seneca, thanks to a USDA grant.

## Officers see increased thefts, domestic abuse this time of year

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle



Eagle file photo  
John Day Police Department Sgt. Scott Moore

'Tis the season to embrace family and friends and fill up with cheer, but crimes still occur during the most wonderful time of the year.

The holidays provide people with some of the best shopping deals, but with the increase of sales comes a rise in theft, according to officers at the John Day Police Department.

One reason thefts rise is how easy it is this time of year. People leaving doors to their homes and

### PREVENTING HOLIDAY CRIME

cars unlocked, going Christmas shopping and leaving gifts in the car or leaving loose items unguarded in the back of a truck is giving a thief the perfect opportunity to steal.

"We have been trying to crack down on theft by trying to change up the hours that we are on patrol or try to have conversations with residents and business owners about getting a better cam-

era system," said JDPD Officer Sam Stinnett. "If the quality in the video is so low and all that I can tell you is 'Yeah, that's a human' and there are no defining characteristics, then that doesn't really help."

Sgt. Scott Moore added that business owners should at least have a visible camera so, when people are scoping the place to see if it's an easy target, thieves would be deterred by the sight of a camera.

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## Oregon Court of Appeals upholds wolf delisting

By George Plaven  
EO Media Group



Contributed photo/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
A gray wolf moves through deep snow in this file photo.

The Oregon Court of Appeals has dismissed a lawsuit filed by three environmental groups challenging the state's decision to lift endangered species protections for gray wolves.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife removed wolves from the state endangered species list in November 2015. Lawmakers passed House Bill 4040 during the 2016 legislative session, which ratified the agency's findings.

Cascadia Wildlands, Oregon Wild and the Center for Biological Diversity sued to reverse the delisting, arguing

it was premature and not based on sound science. Though the case was initially dismissed, it was later reinstated by the appeals court.

On Nov. 27, judges again tossed out the complaint, ruling that HB 4040 rendered the environmentalists' petition moot.

"In this case, the legislature has ratified the delisting, thereby providing the delisting with the statutory effect of removing it from a rule challenge," the court wrote in its decision. "Consequently, a decision on our part regarding the petitioners' challenge would have no practical effect, and the petition is therefore moot."

Wolves are still feder-

ally protected as an endangered species west of highways 395, 78 and 95 in Oregon.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association and Oregon Farm Bureau intervened in the lawsuit to support delisting the wolves. Ranchers have long argued they need to be able to kill wolves that make a habit of preying on livestock, despite using non-lethal deterrents such as electric fences and range riders.

Killing wolves is allowed under certain strict requirements in ODFW's Wolf Conservation and Management Plan, which was last updated earlier this year.

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