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City brings in \$12.5 million in outside funding

Grants pushing the development of future projects

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

The city of John Day has helped bring in more than \$12.5 million to Grant County since 2017 through successful grant applications.

The John Day City Council shared on Dec. 8 that the city has

applied for and received 23 grants. There are also 10 potential grant opportunities pending with award decisions coming in the next fiscal year.

A decision on the \$3 million 2019 USDA Community Connect Grant for broadband is expected this month. This could fund a



City Manager
Nick Green

broadband connection between Burns and Seneca, which would give John Day faster and more reliable access to internet. This grant is different from the \$6 million USDA ReConnect grant, which was recently

awarded to expand access to Seneca, Long Creek and Monument.

"We're really, really lucky to have somebody who's successful and knows how to write (grant applications)," said John Day Mayor Ron Lundbom. "We really couldn't have anything without these grants. They have acted as match funds or they have covered what we needed to

come up with for projects."

Lundbom said projects in the city are being heavily funded not by the city, but through these grants and other people. Interest in John Day has risen for private investors as well with plans for a hotel and the purchase of the Weaver Building from the city.

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DUI DANGERS

THE HIGH COST OF DRIVING IMPAIRED

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

In Oregon State Police Sgt. Tom Hutchison's years in law enforcement, he has seen a marked increase in cases of drivers under the influence of intoxicants, beyond alcohol.

"Of our DUIs this year, more than half have been DUI marijuana or controlled substances — those aren't coming from the bar," he said. "Most are coming from home or traveling. A lot of people out on road trips are either drinking and driving or using substances and driving."

Driving while impaired can, of course, result in fines, driver's license suspensions and jail time — or worse, injuries and fatalities.

Hutchison, a certified drug recognition expert, has been the OSP sergeant at the John Day Work Site for seven years and has been in law enforcement for a total of 18 years, with all of those years in Grant County.

On the morning of Dec. 18, 2018, Hutchison responded to a single-vehicle noninjury crash on a snowy Highway 395 near Starr Ridge, south of Canyon City.

He said the 39-year-old male driver from Washington state, who had slid off the road, appeared to be impaired with central nervous system depressants and CNS stimulants.

The driver consented to field sobriety tests, after which the man was arrested and taken to the Grant County Jail.

"During a search of the driver and vehicle, incident to arrest, I seized 2 grams of cocaine, lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), 3 grams of methamphetamines, evidence of inhalants and prescription medication that the driver did not have a prescription for, including Valium," Hutchison said.

The driver was booked and lodged on charges of DUI-drug and unlawful possession of controlled substances.



The Eagle/Angel Carpenter
OSP Sergeant Tom Hutchison



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Riley man arrested for animal abuse after riding deer in video

Buck was trapped in fenced enclosure

Blue Mountain Eagle

An 18-year-old man from Riley has been arrested for riding a deer in a video posted to social media.

Oregon State Police arrested Jacob Belcher after interviewing him on a rural ranch in Harney County, according to an OSP press release.

The buck mule deer had trapped itself within a fenced feeding enclosure, before being ridden by Belcher, the investigation revealed.

OSP Fish & Wildlife troopers received information about a video shared via social media that showed a young adult riding on the back of the deer.

"Throughout the video, the mule deer buck can be heard grunting and/or bleating and after escaping the rider, the buck jumped into a linked fence, multiple times, attempting to escape the enclosure," the release states.

The buck was eventually freed, and its status at this time is unknown.

After reviewing the video, troopers conducted further investigation and identified two suspects from Riley.

Following interviews, Belcher was arrested and lodged at the Harney County Jail on charges of wildlife harassment and second-degree animal abuse.

Another suspect, who was responsible for filming the incident, was identified and interviewed as well. Charges of aiding in a wildlife offense will be referred to the Harney County District Attorney's Office.



Contributed photo
Oregon State Police arrested Jacob Belcher, 18, of Riley for animal abuse after a video was posted on social media showing him riding a deer.