

# Mt. Vernon finishing big projects this year

Old city hall will become a museum once move across street is complete

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Mt. Vernon starts the new year by moving into a new city hall and continuing projects planned for completion in 2020.

The town plans to move into the new building within the next month, according to Mt. Vernon Mayor Kenny Delano. The building on 250 West Main was where Oregon Telephone Company's office was once located, he said.



Kenny Delano

A Mt. Vernon resident and a city council member are currently painting walls in the building. The city is also retrofitting the restrooms and entryways to be compliant with building standards.

Once city hall moves into the new building, the city plans to convert the old hall into a museum based on the city.

"We are going to do what I like to call a paper lease, which might be \$1 a year or \$10 a year, to a local historic group that has historic memorabilia from the old Mt. Vernon School and other local historical stuff," Delano said. "I am really looking forward to seeing what sort of impact that has on our community, and I think it's gonna be great."

This started when Mt. Vernon resident Mary Ellen Brooks bought the building and planned to hold it until grants would allow the city to purchase the building. The government shutdown



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

While parts of the Mt. Vernon park need to be finished, 10-year-old Kathlyne Page enjoys the new amenities Jan. 26.

delayed grants, and two months later, Brooks donated the building to the city.

"I'm excited, not just because of the new city hall building, but the way that we got it," Delano said. "A bunch of local people came together wanting to display Mt. Vernon's history."

The wastewater system improvement project is about 50% done, according to Delano, and the project is estimated to finish in October 2020. The project has been on the agenda for years — even before Delano was elected and Tami Kowing, the city recorder, began her job seven years ago. The \$2.4 million project started in fall 2019 and provided a sewer extension to an area in the city that had no sewer.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Kathlyne Page, 10, of John Day enjoys the developing park in Mt. Vernon.

The team on the project is currently focused on the headworks and collection system at the lagoons. The contractor plans to put in a new control system and

new pumps.

"With the weather, and trying to get the electronic parts and everything he needs, he's probably going to be gone for a month and then fire back up and get this project finished," said Delano. "That'll give the city a better idea of how the systems function and cleaning up a lot of the ground water influent."

When this project is finished, the city plans to bring the lagoons up to date with realistic data from the wastewater system, Delano said.

The city plans to complete the City Park Rehabilitation Project this year around the end of May, Kowing said. The city will also seek additional funds this year through the Oregon Department of Transportation's small city

allotment fund for road maintenance.

While the city council works hard to keep everything functioning, Delano added that members of the community are more than welcome to attend meetings on the second Tuesday of every month and get more involved with the council. Delano also mentioned that drivers speeding through town is a problem the city faces.

"I realize that that road is designated a state highway, but there's speed limit signs at both ends of town that people consistently ignore," said Delano. "That's a problem to solve, which would be getting people to slowdown when they are going through town."

# Prairie City finishing projects, fighting against theft

Water, sewer upgrades expected to be completed this summer

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

The implementation of a neighborhood watch program, receiving funds from the cell tower and completion of the sewer project play a part in the overall progress expected for Prairie City in 2020.

With the problem of theft and burglary in the county — 25 thefts and three burglaries in the past four months according to Grant County Undersheriff Zach Mobley — the Prairie City Council discussed fighting back.

The council approved \$300 for the Grant County Sheriff's Office tip and reward program and a neighborhood watch program. The sheriff's office is gathering information and packets for a neighborhood watch program, which will be presented in a meeting at city hall, Hamsher said.

"We are hoping in the next few weeks we will be setting up a city hall meeting and have people interested in participating because I want it to be more like a

citywide watch," Hamsher said. "Before there is much of an additional rise in theft, I'd rather be proactive than reactive with this crime."

Hamsher plans to drive around with the public works director looking for poorly lit areas. Hamsher also wants to promote the idea of community members installing security camera on their property.

"I want to send a clear message that we don't tolerate that crime here," Hamsher said

## Cell tower provides new funds

U.S. Cellular installed a new cell tower in Prairie City. The city receives about \$1,500 per month for the tower, which has improved the cell coverage in the area.

"The nice thing about this is that they only lease a 50-by-50-foot chunk of ground, and it's nice to receive \$1,500 dollars a month for a chunk of ground when 2 acres of that land was purchased for \$10 in 1956," Hamsher said. "This also won't impact the mill parking lot."

The city passed a resolution to have the \$1,500 go into the water fund to help pay off the loan for the slow-sand filter system.



Eagle file photo

Prairie City's \$2 million sand filter system along Dixie Creek Road went into operation in 2008. A new well project may be completed this summer.

## Sewer project completion

This year, Hamsher is looking forward to the completion of upgrades to Prairie City's sewer collection system and treatment plant. The first part of the project used cameras in the sewer system to identify where sewer pipes had cracks. The cracks would let ground water into the system and created an influx of groundwater going to the lagoon, Hamsher said.

Hamsher added, with many pipes now replaced, the city has seen a reduction in the gallons of sewage going to their lagoons.

"Currently, with the stuff already done on the project, we are seeing approximately 20,000 gallons a day of less sewage, and that's a big reduction," said Hamsher. "That shows you that 20,000 gallons was not sewage, but ground water."

The pumps have also been replaced with new vari-

able-speed sewer pumps, which are turned on depending on the flow of sewage. This will reduce electrical usage by about 30% because the old pump was based on an on-or-off system, Hamsher said. Depending on how much the team can work in the winter, the project is expected to wrap up in summer of this year.

## Water project progress

The Fainman Springs well project proved to be difficult, regarding permitting from the state and federal agencies, Hamsher said. The city had to conduct cultural studies and wetland surveys and get approval from the court of engineers and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

Funding for the project is now in place, he said, and the city secured all permits needed for the project. Since the project for the well runs

through two private properties, the city needs to make agreements with those landowners before continuing. One landowner accepted an agreement while negotiations continue with the other, according to Hamsher.

Once there is an agreement, the company working on the sewer project will also be starting the Fainman project and begin digging and installing pipes. Hamsher said, depending on the weather, the project is looking to be completed in the summer of this year.

With many projects expected to wrap up in 2020, Hamsher added that the city received a \$100,000 grant to finalize the closure of the landfill in Prairie City. The city also received \$90,000 in Secure Rural School funds, which will help fund a crack seal and chip seal road project with the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Your Rural Family Health Clinic

**Grant County HEALTH Department**  
528 E. Main, St. E.  
John Day

Monday - Thursday  
7am - 6pm  
Friday 8am - 5pm

Appointments available

Call and schedule your appointment today!  
TOLL FREE  
**888-443-9104**  
or **541-575-0429**

**Services Provided:**

- Primary Care
- Acute Care
- Women's Health Exams
- Men and Children Exams
- Immunizations
- Family Planning
- Contraception
- Pregnancy Testing & Referrals
- HIV Testing & Referrals
- Cocoon
- WIC
- High Risk Infants
- Maternity Case Management

Grant County Health Department does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities, or in employment.

**PAINTED SKY CENTER FOR THE ARTS**  
118 S. WASHINGTON STREET  
CANYON CITY, OR 97820  
(541) 620-3788  
PAINTEDSKYCENTER.COM

**Group Guitar with Stephanie LeQuieu:** Begins Wednesday, February 5, 5:30 - 6:30 PM.

**Chamber Choir Group Class with Stephanie LeQuieu:** Begins Thursday, February 6, 5:00 - 6:15 PM.

**Introductory Rock Band with Stephanie LeQuieu:** Begins Thursday, February 6, 6:30 - 7:30 PM.

**Knitting 101 with Jessica Moore:** Begins Monday, February 10, from 6:00 - 8:00 PM.

**Basic Drawing Class:** Ongoing, Tuesdays through March 24, 5:30 - 7:30 PM.

**Liberating the Writer Within:** Ongoing, Tuesdays through February 25, from 6:30 - 7:30 PM.

**Knit & Purl (Beginner Knitting) with Jessica Moore:** Ongoing, Wednesdays or Mondays, 6:00 - 8:00 PM.

**Intermediate Drawing Class:** Ongoing, Thursdays through April 2, 5:30 - 7:30 PM.

**Arts After School & Friday Art Club:** Ongoing; see more at Paintedskycenter.com/Kids-Art.

For more info or to register visit paintedskycenter.com or email paintedskycenter@gmail.com.

**DOUG'S**  
MOTOR VEHICLE REPAIR  
5165204-1

**23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL**  
**OFT ANGUS VALLAD CATTLE**  
**PERFORMANCE SALE**

NEW LOCATION: PRODUCER'S LIVESTOCK VALE, OREGON

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2020**  
**1 P.M. MST**

**SELLING REGISTERED**  
**ANGUS & HEREFORD BULLS**  
One of the West's Premier Selections of Older Bulls

**OFT ANGUS RANCH**  
Ontario, Oregon  
Terry Oft  
Home: (541) 889-6801  
Cell: (208) 741-0824

**VALLAD CATTLE**  
Ontario, Oregon  
Jason & Deanne Vallad  
Home: (541) 889-4562  
Cell: (208) 881-7989

**DVAuction**  
Broadcasting Real-Time Auctions

5167561-1