

CASA requests funding amid surge in child court cases

Court moves forward with oil heating for Trowbridge Pavilion

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant-Harney County CASA requested funding for two staff members in Grant County Court Jan. 22 as the organization sees a surge in children in the court system.

Hanna Hinman, the executive director, said the 18 court appointed volunteers are meeting the needs of 65 children between Grant and Harney counties. Grant County, added Hinman, works with slightly more than half of those children.

Hinman said there is a strong correlation between joblessness and neglect, and neglect makes up a majority of the cases the organization sees.

“CASA is historically understaffed,” explained Hinman.

Hinman requested an immediate infusion of \$7,500 and two years of subsequent funding of \$7,500 after that. She said she is looking for funding from other areas too, including Harney County.

Hinman said the position starts in July, and the purpose of getting county funding is twofold. The money would indeed offset costs, but more importantly, according to Hinman, she wants to “leverage” the county dollars to get more funding elsewhere. Hinman said the program coordinator would primarily supervise volunteers.

The other paid position is for an administrative assistant, and the duties would mostly consist of data entry. Hinman said the program coordinator would also enter data as well.

“Three years of funding demonstrates ongoing local support,” said Hinman.

County Judge Scott Myers said the court could not commit to three years of funding.

“We need more breathing room on making a decision today,” he said.

Commissioner Jim Hamsher commended the work CASA does in the community. He said funding is an important decision and that the court would need a specific budget line to make a three-year commitment.

Myers moved to table the issue, and both Hamsher and commissioner Sam Palmer concurred. Hamsher added that funding from the court to CASA last year represents the court’s support.



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

CASA Executive Director Hannah Hinman requests funding from the Grant County Court Jan. 22.

Fairgrounds to get oil heaters

The county court decided that oil will fuel the new heating system for the pavilion at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

While the county previously advised Fair Manager Mindy Winegar to look for bids for propane as a heating source, Myers pointed out the liability of propane and said the court should move forward with what he said was the safer option.

“Propane explodes while stove oil burns,” Myers said.

Palmer said, while he initially saw propane as the source that would yield a better return on the county’s investment, he said the caveat he did not take into consideration is that the fairgrounds only has to heat the pavilion in the winter months. Thus, he said, oil is the better source.

The court voted 2-1 for oil. Winegar also proposed funding for a storage building and picnic area. She said the lack of storage space is a hardship.

Myers said the court had reviewed such a request five to six years ago. Winegar said she needed approval from the court, given the ongoing construction on the pavilion. The court moved forward on the storage building with a picnic shade area, and Winegar will go to the John Day Planning Commission Feb. 18 for approval.

Winegar updated the court on the Oregon Fairs Association annual convention she attended earlier this month.

She said two more carnival companies closed, and the closures impacted at least eight other county fairs. Winegar said she has reached out to multiple carnival companies for Grant County’s carnival later this year.

Winegar said the county fairgrounds is asking the 2020 state legislature for \$25,000 for operating costs. She said the fairgrounds received \$53,000 through the state lottery. Winegar said the operating costs for the county fair are \$120,000.

Regional law enforcement training center

The court voted to move forward on potentially converting the old Strawberry Mountain Beef building into a regional law enforcement training center.

The court will enter into a memorandum of understanding with Old West Credit Union, who owns the building, to explore other funding options.

Palmer, who introduced the item to the court, said the facility could be used by multiple law enforcement agencies. The commissioner said the county’s volunteer search and rescue team has used the building for training over the years. He said the team could potentially use the facility as a command center.

Palmer said the training center would bring other benefits to the community, from increased commerce to local businesses to a more significant law enforcement presence in the area.

In other Grant County Court news:

- The court approved Library Director Vicki Bond’s request to purchase additional shelving. Bond and Kathy Smith, library treasurer, requested \$11,770.

- The court voted to uphold the Planning Commission’s decision that denied Windy Canyon Ranch owner Phillip Wirth’s application to build a house on his ranch on Nov. 26.

The Planning Commission denied the application, stating the non-farming partitions would alter the stability of the land.

Rancher Rick Valet, who has cattle on the land, said he supported the commission’s decision to deny the application. According to Valet, the house, which Wirth had intended to build at the bottom of Rim Rock Canyon, would impact ranching and elk habitat.

- The court moved to retain attorney Dominic Carrillo for union negotiations.

- The court approved a 1.66% cost of living wage increase. Julie Ellison, county treasurer, said the sheriff’s union minimum increase is 1%.

Mark Owens appointed to Oregon House

Blue Mountain Eagle

Republican Mark Owens was selected unanimously by County Commissioners as the next state representative for House District 60 Jan. 21. The position was left vacant after Sen. Lynn Findley resigned and was appointed to the Oregon Senate Jan. 6.

“I am thankful and humbled today to have been appointed to serve as the next state representative for House District 60,” Owens said in a press release. “I look forward to serving the communities and being a voice for eastern Oregon in Salem.”

Owens, a Harney County commissioner, farmer, small business owner and Crane school board chair, filed to run for the seat on Nov. 4.

“At the state level, there is a lot of work to be done to protect our way of life in Eastern Oregon and to provide a better path for future generations of Oregonians,” Owens said. “We need to make sustainable natural resources a top priority. Our kids deserve stronger schools and greater opportunities for their career paths. Families need financial sta-



Eagle file photo

Mark Owens, left, stands with Frances Preston at a campaign event in Grant County. Owens was appointed to the Oregon House of Representatives Jan. 21.

bility instead of living paycheck to paycheck and having to worry about the next tax increase coming our way from Salem. Most importantly, my top priority and my number one job will be to listen, learn and represent the constituents in Eastern Oregon.”

House District 60 encompasses all of Baker, Grant, Harney and Malheur counties as well as portions of Lake County. Owens will be sworn in later this month and will serve in the short legislative session that begins Feb. 3.

For more information, visit markowensforegon.com.

Hay truck stolen and crashed

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Oregon State Police arrested a man Friday who they say stole a truck loaded with one-ton hay bales, crashed it and attempted to hide from law enforcement officials near Long Creek. The truck and trailer was jack-knifed in the highway Friday morning, Oregon State Police Sgt. Tom Hutchison said in a report regarding the crash. The truck blocked both north and south bound traffic on Highway 395B near milepost 89.5.

“The pup trailer had turned onto its side, spilling the bales of hay onto the roadway...” Hutchison said in the report. “Subsequent investigation revealed that the (commercial motor vehicle) was stolen from a residence about 12 miles north of

the crash site.”

After OSP and Grant County Sheriff’s Office officers searched the area, they found the driver, Travis B. Farr, 27, of Canyon City who was arrested and charged with unlawful use of a motor vehicle, driving under the influence of a controlled substance and driving while suspended, said Hutchison. The passenger in the truck has not been located, according to the report. The suspect’s van was located near the site where the truck was stolen, and was towed as a hazard, Hutchison said.

Hutchison added that the highway was closed for about three hours while Oregon Department of Transportation conducted traffic control and the owner of the stolen hay truck removed the truck and the hay from the roadway.

COPS AND COURTS

Arrests and citations in the Blue Mountain Eagle are taken from the logs of law enforcement agencies. Every effort is made to report the court disposition of arrest cases.

Grant County Circuit Court

Harry J. Yazzie Jr., 48, was convicted based on a guilty plea on Jan. 23 for a count of driving under the influence committed on Oct. 26. He was sentenced to 48 hours in jail and 24 months of bench probation. His license was also suspended for a year, and he was ordered to pay \$2,255 for the DUI fine and intoxication conviction fee.

Michael Bly, 58, was convicted based on a guilty plea on Jan. 22 for a count of resisting arrest and a count of menacing constituting domestic violence committed Oct. 14. He was sentenced to 30 days in jail, 36 months of bench probation and 80 hours of community service. He was also ordered to pay \$200 in court and bench probation fees.

Travis J. Friere, 33, was convicted based on a guilty plea on Jan. 23 for a count

of felon in possession of a restricted weapon committed Dec. 4. He was sentenced to 15 days in jail, 18 months of bench probation and 60 hours of community service. He was also ordered to pay \$200 in court and bench probation fees.

Michael W. Hagopian, 32, was convicted based on a guilty plea on Jan. 23 for a count of menacing committed Dec. 10. He was sentenced to 24 months of bench probation and 30 hours of community service. He was also ordered to pay \$100 in court and bench probation fees.

Grant County Sheriff

The Grant County Sheriff’s Office reported the following for the week of Jan. 22:

- Concealed handgun licenses: 6
- Average inmates: 11
- Bookings: 6
- Releases: 9
- Arrests: 0
- Citations: 1
- Fingerprints: 3
- Civil papers: 15
- Warrants processed: 1
- Assistance/Welfare check: 0
- Search and Rescue: 1

Dec. 31: Summer Miller, 20, Canyon City, was cited for violation of the basic rule, 79/55 zone.

Justice Court

Violation of the basic rule: Garrett A. Gregory, 36, Keizer, Jan. 3, 71/55 zone, fined \$165; Gordon T. Gray, 70, Redmond, July 17, 74/55 zone, fined \$140; Jordan B. Walker, 28, Seneca, Jan. 8, 73/65 zone, fined \$140; Alexandria J. Smith-Peterson, 23, Mt. Vernon, Dec. 28, 45/30 zone, fined \$165.

Violation of speed limit: Ryan B. Hamilton, 35, Boise, Idaho, Nov. 11, 70/55 zone, fined \$165.

Dog as a public nuisance: Joseph V. Radinovich, 42, John Day, Oct. 28, fined \$265, Nov. 1, \$265, fines will be waived if there are no further citations for dog as a public nuisance in the next 12 months.

Dispatch

John Day dispatch worked 138 calls during the week of Jan. 20-26, including:

- **John Day Police Department**
Jan. 21: Responded to a report of harassment on West

Main Street.

Jan. 21: Responded to a report of a fire at Malheur Lumber.

Jan. 21: Responded to a report of a disturbance on East Main Street.

Jan. 24: Arrested Tyler D. Dehiya, 26, of Mt. Vernon on an Oregon state parole board warrant.

Jan. 24: Cited Silvia R. Sweeney, 60, of John Day for driving while suspended, driving without insurance and speeding, 53/35 zone, on Highway 26 near milepost 163.

Jan. 25: Ty Prusak, 21, of John Day was cited for theft at a business on West Main Street.

Jan. 26: Responded to a report of a possible intoxicated driver.

• Oregon State Police

Jan. 24: Received a report of a noninjury crash at Long Creek.

Jan. 26: Along with sheriff’s office and John Day ambulance, responded to a report of a motor vehicle crash on Highway 26.

• Grant County Sheriff’s Office

Jan. 21: Received a report of animal abuse on Bucannon Road.

Jan. 21: Received a report of trespassing on Cupper Creek Road.

Jan. 24: Received a report of a burglary on Patterson Drive.

Jan. 24: Received a report of juvenile problems on North Washington Street.

Jan. 25: Responded to a 93-year-old woman with

bleeding on Dog Creek Road.

Jan. 26: A tow truck was called for a motorist whose parked vehicle had rolled over.

• John Day ambulance

Jan. 20: Responded to an 82-year-old woman with stomach distended and swollen face.

Jan. 24: Responded to an 84-year-old man with breathing problems on Charolais Heights.

Jan. 24: Responded to an 80-year-old woman who was confused and combative on McAllum Avenue.

Jan. 26: Responded to a 38-year-old woman with seizures on Fort Road.

• Grant County Road Department

Jan. 26: Advised of a rock slide on South Fork Road



Look who will be 80!



Come help Jimmy celebrate his 80th on Saturday February 8th, 2020 at the Teen Center Prairie City from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M.



Benefit Dinner And Silent Auction for Wyatt Simmons



February 8th 5 pm at Mt. Vernon Community Hall

Taco Feed Dinner

Raffle tickets for a 308 Riffle

- \$100.00 Snaffle Bit Gift Certificate
- Concealed Weapon Purse
- Pioneer Feed
- Electric Water Heater
- Andy’s Plumbing
- Kids Themed Basket HECS
- And Many More Items

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