



The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868

LEFT: Grant Union valedictorian Drew Lusco speaks at the school's graduation ceremony May 30. LARGE PHOTO: Grant Union graduates celebrate their ceremony May 30.

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Black Lives Matter march proceeds peacefully amid worries of rioting and looting from outside agitators

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

More than 140 people gathered in John Day Friday for a peaceful protest and march in solidarity with Black Lives Matter.

The march made its way down to Third Street and past Chester's Thriftway, turned around at Timbers Bistro and traveled back down to Highway 395, past Canyon City Food Cart.

The protesters, ranging in age from 4 to 90, waved signs, mostly addressing racial inequality, police brutality and systemic racism.

The demonstration, organized by yoga instructor Ashley Stevick and Prairie City School Board Chairperson Lindsay Sain Rausch, was in response to the death of George Floyd, an African American man who died May 25 while in police custody in Minneapolis. He was handcuffed and lying face down during an arrest as police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes, killing Floyd.

Several bystanders caught the incident on their cellphone cameras, and Chauvin has been charged with second-degree murder. Three other officers on scene have been charged with



Protesters raise their hands in front of Ashley Stevick's home Friday to show the community they were local residents. Rumors swirled on social media that protesters were being bused in from outside of the county, which did not occur.

aiding and abetting a homicide. Floyd's death spurred an international outcry and prompted protests across the country. Some devolved into rioting and looting.

Stevick and Rausch first announced plans June 3 for "John Day is with you! BLACK LIVES MATTER." John Day Police Chief Mike Durr said he met with Stevick beforehand to ensure it would be carried out peacefully.



John Day Police Chief Mike Durr

Despite the organizers' efforts to dispel rumors that the group Antifa — short for "anti-fascists" and an umbrella term for leftist militant groups that confront and resist white supremacists at demonstrations — was bus-ing in members from outside the county, armed citizens concerned about rioting and looting lined the streets in front of businesses throughout downtown John Day.

Throughout the country, the theories about Antifa were deemed false by both Twitter and Facebook and traced back to white supremacy groups like Identity Evropa and American Guard, and some members of these groups, according to an AP article, have been caught posing as part of the Antifa movement.

An armed group of citizens referring to themselves as "peacekeepers" met in downtown John Day ahead of the demonstration. Organizer Sammi Bell said the group intended to support law enforcement.



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell
From left, Bass Hodge, Evan Hodge, Shaun Robertson and Warner Robertson watch from downtown John Day Friday as protesters made their way down Main Street in John Day. Evan Hodge said the protesters needed to leave town.

"We are here as peacekeepers only," said Bell. "We support anybody who wants to protest. That is their constitutional right, and it is our constitutional right to bear arms."

Bell had specific guidelines for the group that included not engaging in discussions with protesters and staying in groups of two. None were to point their weapons at, or toward, any of the demonstrators.

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Dollar General submits application for store in John Day

City Manager Nick Green: 'It's real'

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Dollar General is going through the process for a location in John Day.

The Zaremba Group, on behalf of Dollar General, submitted an application to the city for a store in John Day. City Manager Nick Green said he will coordinate with the relevant parties, including Oregon Department of Transportation, and prepare a staff report based on the information the team collected, information from the application and from public comments received.

The John Day Planning Commission



Dollar General concept design.

will hold a public hearing on the proposal at 6 p.m. June 30. A notice will be sent to all property owners within 100-feet of the subject site

and will also be published in the Blue Mountain Eagle prior to the hearing.

The commission will review the staff report and have an opportunity

to make a recommendation to approve, approve with modifications or deny the application.

"Once the planning commis-

sion approves the proposal, they are authorized to go into construction," Green said. "They will need to apply for building permits and floodplain development permits before they can break ground, but the site would have been approved and the proposed design would have been approved by the city."

The Zaremba group is proposing to construct a 9,100 square foot Dollar General store in front of Napa Auto Parts at 700 W. Main St.

The Type III site design review application states under "Requested Land Use Action" that the project plans to include one freestanding sign, parking and landscape improvements with 36 parking spaces, including 2 ADA spaces, and a 36-foot-wide driveway with a new

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Grant County approved for Phase 2 reopening

EO Media Group

Grant County has been given approval to move to the second phase of reopening the county, County Commissioner Jim Hamsher said Thursday.

Grant County is one of 14 counties in Oregon that moved into Phase 2 June 5.

Friday's move lifts some of the emergency restrictions Gov. Kate Brown put in place 10 weeks ago as the COVID-19 pandemic swept around the world. Oregon has recorded 164 deaths since February, or about 4 per 100,000 people. That's one of the lowest rates in the country. About 113,000 deaths have been recorded nationwide. An estimated 6.3 million people worldwide have been infected, with 380,000 deaths since the virus first appeared at the end of 2019 in Wuhan, China. The economic shutdown caused by the



crisis has pushed the count of unemployed Americans to 40 million.

Under the new rules, the approved counties in Oregon could allow:

- Employees to return to their offices and workplaces, though telecommuting is still strongly recom-

mended when possible.

- Restaurants and bars to stay open until midnight, instead of the current 10 p.m.
- Allow outdoor gatherings of up to 100 people.
- Up to 50 people in an indoor gath-

ering, as long as there are 35 square feet of space allotted for each person. That's up from the current limit of 25 people.

- Large venues — including churches and theaters — could have up to 250 people at the same time, depending on the size of the facility.

- The return of some sports, such as bowling and swimming, but with social distancing rules in place. Equipment sharing should be minimized.

- Collegiate sports teams could begin training while limiting the number of participants and contact.

- New guidelines for reopening gardens, museums, and zoos.

Brown administration officials have said they expect to have directives involving schools ready to announce sometime next week.

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