

County posts new COVID-19 department guidelines

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

After a contentious Grant County Court session last month that saw department heads criticizing the court members for lack of leadership and communication regarding operations of its departments amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Grant County Judge Scott Myers and Commissioner Jim Hamsher established guidelines for the departments last week in light of Gov. Kate Brown's executive order requiring face masks in indoor public spaces statewide.

Myers said departments are encouraged, but not required, to close their doors to the public. The email suggested departments also post contact numbers and see members of the public by appointment only. She said, if an office remains open to the public, then a sign needs to be posted indicating how many persons can be in the office at a time. Employees who cannot maintain the 6-foot social distancing requirement in non-public places are required to wear face coverings/masks, Wright said. Myers said an example of a non-public space is when he works in his office unmasked, but then

invites a member of the public into his office, thus requiring them both to wear a mask. Wright said the departments will be expected to sanitize frequently touched surfaces within their respective offices. "This will free up some of the custodian's time to focus on the common public areas and restrooms," she said. Myers said the courthouse is still open, but the offices will post whether they have decided to stay open to the public. Wright said she encourages people to call ahead of time before coming to the courthouse.



County Commissioner Jim Hamsher.

The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

County plans to decide EOC's future in special session soon

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

The future of Grant County's Emergency Operations Center is uncertain as the number of positive cases continue to increase at a breakneck pace. County Commissioner Jim Hamsher, the EOC liaison, said he would like to see the court approve another \$125,000 in funding while County Judge Scott Myers said it would be a "tough sell" to get his vote. "I'd like to see what they're doing for me to make an intelligent decision on a budget request," Myers said. "I would like to know more than I've known for the last four months." Community members have also expressed criticism about the EOC, which was budgeted \$125,000 in March by the county court to respond to the coronavirus pandemic with the plan to reassess in 45 days. EOC officials, however, spent nearly \$200,000 in about three months. The county court also

unanimously passed a motion stating future EOC purchases over \$200 were to be brought before the court for approval, but instead, about \$90,000 of expenditures were made without advance approval. The court members signed off on the expenditures outside of court. Hamsher said Myers or anyone else could find out information regarding what the EOC has done for the last four months within the 230 pages of documents former EOC Incident Commander Dave Dobler submitted to the court during his May 27 presentation. Myers said he is concerned about the lack of oversight at the EOC surrounding the staff's time cards that have been turned in. "The only record we have of how much time they're spending has been personally prepared time cards," he said. "And I don't see those until pay time, so it's going to be a tough sell for me." Hamsher said the EOC staff reports were filled out and then verified and signed



Grant County Judge Scott Myers.

The Eagle file photo

Hamsher said, while he does not have a specific breakdown of how the newly requested \$125,000 would be budgeted, he would like to see approximately 90% of the funds be available for personnel costs. Myers said 90% of the EOC's first round of funding went to build out the infrastructure at the EOC: the \$35,000 software system, radios, laptops and wifi network. This round, he said, should "buy a lot of hours" for the staff. Hamsher said the three current EOC employees are working on an as-needed basis from home under Deputy Incident Commander Chris Rushing, who has stayed on to help the county. Hamsher said the county is in the process of hiring a new emergency management coordinator who would serve as EOC incident commander, and he wants to compile a list of approximately 12 on-call staff members to bring in should the county see an uptick in cases. Hamsher said he also

wants to amend the court's rule to bring purchases of over \$200 before the court. "You wouldn't sit there in the middle of a pandemic and have to have a court meeting to approve a \$200 purchase in the middle of an emergency," he said. "That just doesn't make any sense." He said no other department ever had to follow that rule and it was specific to the EOC. Hamsher said a year-old resolution stating the county judge can approve any pre-budgeted item is still valid. Myers said he wants to see the rule that purchases over \$200 come before the court remain in place. Hamsher said, going forward, any unexpected items not in the EOC's approved budget would be brought before the court. He said he hoped the county court would meet in a special session soon to determine the EOC's future. County Commissioner Sam Palmer did not return requests for comment.

CCS offers free counseling for first responders

Blue Mountain Eagle

Community Counseling Solutions announced a pilot program offering free counseling services to medical workers and first responders that live or work in the counties of Morrow, Wheeler, Grant and Gilliam. The Frontline Program provides up to four free counseling sessions, according to a press release. There is no lengthy assessment and no diagnosis required. The Frontline Program is based on the idea of offering brief supportive therapy. If further referrals or more in-depth treatment is desired, the clinician will work to make those connections. Employees of any clinic or hospital, firefighters, emergency medical responders, law enforcement officers and dispatchers all qualify. This program is open to all volunteers or paid staff. To access, call 541-575-1466 and ask for the Frontline Program. The David Romprey Warmline (800-698-2392) also offers a peer-run program that is free of charge to anyone needing to talk.

Olive Lake Campground partially opens

Blue Mountain Eagle

District Ranger Paula Guenther. "We appreciate the public's patience and understanding while we finish up this year's hazard tree removal and get the areas closest to the lake ready for visitors." Forest staff have been working to fall hazard trees on the road leading to and in areas surrounding the docks, boat ramp, picnic sites and campsites on the northeast side of the lake. These 14 campsites will be the only part of the campground open until further notice. A detailed map of the open portion of Olive Lake Campground is available on the Forest website at www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla. The schedule for opening other parts of the campground will be based on mitigations of hazards trees surrounding those campsites. The Umatilla National Forest is pursuing options to contract hazard tree removal along the east access road where sites 15-27 are located. Until the contract is implemented, that area of the campground will remain closed to any public access. Visitors are asked to stay on the hiking trail at the south end of the campground rather than walking along the access road. At the north end of the campground, hikers can cross the dam to access the trail that circles the lake, offering additional fishing and views of wildlife including osprey and otters. Visitors are reminded that the Olive Lake dam is an aging structure, and the headgate on the intake to the historic Fremont Power waterline is inoperable. The Forest Service has planned maintenance work around the dam this summer, including installing water level detection sensors and removing vegetation and debris in the spillway. A small portion of Olive Lake itself is closed, indicated by floating buoys that indicate the area off the dam where monitoring instruments and headgate controls are located. Visitors should be aware that late in the season, the hiking trail and spillway will be closed for public safety while contractors remove old logs and debris that threaten to block flow through the spillway. Olive Lake is a popular mountain lake and campground located 12 miles west of Granite. The natural lake was deepened by a 30 foot-high dam built in the early 1900s by the Fremont Power Company to provide hydroelectric power, generated at the Fremont Powerhouse, to the then-booming gold mining community. For more information about

the closure areas or permitted recreation activities on Olive Lake, contact the North Fork John Day Ranger District at 541-427-3231. The public is reminded that as sites reopen services may not be available. At Olive Lake, two outhouses are available at the north end of the campground. The Forest cannot guarantee restrooms that are open will be routinely serviced and those utilizing these facilities are doing so at their own discretion. Forest visitors should come prepared with personal hygiene items, including hand sanitizer and toilet paper. Additionally, be prepared to pack out any items brought on site. Many other campgrounds have already been opened on the forest. A full list of open campgrounds is available at fs.usda.gov/umatilla.

ing options to contract hazard tree removal along the east access road where sites 15-27 are located. Until the contract is implemented, that area of the campground will remain closed to any public access. Visitors are asked to stay on the hiking trail at the south end of the campground rather than walking along the access road. At the north end of the campground, hikers can cross the dam to access the trail that circles the lake, offering additional fishing and views of wildlife including osprey and otters. Visitors are reminded that the Olive Lake dam is an aging structure, and the headgate on the intake to the historic Fremont Power waterline is inoperable. The Forest Service has planned maintenance work around the dam this summer, including installing water level detection sensors and removing vegetation and debris in the spillway. A small portion of Olive Lake itself is closed, indicated by floating buoys that indicate the area off the dam where monitoring instruments and headgate controls are located. Visitors should be aware that late in the season, the hiking trail and spillway will be closed for public safety while contractors remove old logs and debris that threaten to block flow through the spillway. Olive Lake is a popular mountain lake and campground located 12 miles west of Granite. The natural lake was deepened by a 30 foot-high dam built in the early 1900s by the Fremont Power Company to provide hydroelectric power, generated at the Fremont Powerhouse, to the then-booming gold mining community. For more information about

Prepare for unexpected power outages with a Generac home standby generator
SCHEDULE YOUR FREE IN-HOME ASSESSMENT TODAY!
877-557-1912
FREE 7-Year Extended Warranty*
A \$695 Value!
Offer valid March 16, 2020 - July 12, 2020
Special Financing Available
Subject to Credit Approval

Tax Problems: RESOLVED
There are many ways we can tackle IRS or State tax relief together:
✓Tax Levies & Liens Release ✓Resolve Back Taxes
✓Wage Garnishment Release ✓Payroll Tax Negotiation
✓Stop Penalties and Interest ✓Tax Preparation & Bookkeeping Services
✓Tax Debt Negotiation & Settlement
Call us now for your FREE tax consultation & evaluation:
844-945-2056
Anthem offers a money-back guarantee designed to help you avoid wasting money on ineffective tax services. We will gather as much information from you as necessary and work with tax authorities to give you the best chance of reducing your tax debt. If for any reason that does not work out, and the government notifies us they refuse to reduce your overall tax liability or monthly payments by any amount, we will gladly refund you the fees you paid for our services in trying to reduce that debt. Money Back Guarantee does not apply to bookkeeping and Tax Preparation Services.

TOM CHRISTENSEN CONSTRUCTION
(541) 410-0557 • (541) 575-0192
CCB# 106077
REMODELS • NEW CONSTRUCTION • POLE BUILDINGS
CONCRETE EXCAVATION • SHEET ROCK • SIDING
ROOFING • FENCES • DECKS • TELESCOPING FORKLIFT SERVICES
5195791-1

dish BRING EVERYTHING YOU LOVE TOGETHER!
Blazing Fast Internet! ADD TO YOUR PACKAGE FOR ONLY \$19.99/mo. where available.
2-YEAR TV PRICE GUARANTEE
\$59.99 MO. for 12 Mos. America's Top 120 Package 190 CHANNELS Including Local Channels!
CALL TODAY - For \$100 Gift Card Promo Code: DISH100
1-866-373-9175 Offer ends 7/15/20. **dish** **ATTITUDE**
All offers require credit qualification. 24-month commitment with early termination fee and activation. Prices include Hepper Duo for qualifying customers. Hepper Duo for \$197438-1

One solution for oxygen at home, away, and for travel
Introducing the INOGEN ONE - It's oxygen therapy on your terms
No more tanks to refill. No more deliveries. No more hassles with travel. The INOGEN ONE portable oxygen concentrator is designed to provide unparalleled freedom for oxygen therapy users. It's small, lightweight, clinically proven for stationary and portable use, during the day and at night, and can go virtually anywhere - even on most airlines.
INOGEN accepts Medicare and many private insurances!
Reclaim Your Freedom And Independence NOW!
Call INOGEN Today To Request Your FREE Info Kit
1-855-839-0752
© 2020 Inogen, Inc. All rights reserved. MKT-P0108 5197441-1

Imagine The Difference You Can Make
DONATE YOUR CAR
1-844-533-9173
FREE TOWING TAX DEDUCTIBLE
Help Prevent Blindness Get A Vision Screening Annually
Heritage for the Blind
Ask About A FREE 3 Day Vacation Voucher To Over 20 Destinations!!!
5197440-1