

Community HEALTH BEAT



Quality Healthcare Close to Home

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August is National Immunization Month

August is National Immunization Awareness month. The world has come a long way since immunizations were developed. In 1796 Edward Jenner inoculated his 13-year-old son with cowpox, and demonstrated immunity to small pox. The small pox immunization was developed. A disease that once ravaged the world killed an estimated 3 million people was eradicated. The concept is that if we expose our immune system to inactive forms of viruses and bacteria, it can then effectively fight off the illness before it takes hold and makes us sick. Once immune from these illnesses we are not vectors that can transmit the illnesses to others. Diseases that once plagued the world such as polio, measles, tetanus and rubella have nearly been eradicated. This has been because even individuals that are and were healthy stepped up to protect not only themselves, but their communities.

We have the power to protect ourselves, our families and our community against serious illness. Immunizations save lives. Even though healthy individuals are less prone to serious consequences of some illnesses, we as a community can protect infants, the elderly and individuals are who more susceptible to diseases by getting immunized ourselves. Diseases are less likely to take hold and spread in a community as more individuals are immunized and do not serve as vectors to transmit illness to others.

I have lived in Grant County for just over 11 years. I have loved being a part of the community. Shortly after I arrived an announcement was made that a white supremacist group was considering relocating here. I was impressed by how quickly the community seemed to mobilize and make a statement that they were not welcome here. My friend and colleague Dr. Thomas wore a yellow ribbon on his stethoscope for years afterward which was a statement that started with that community response to a group that would compromise the way people are treated and cared for in Grant County. Since that time, I have been impressed with how quickly the community gathers to help when one of its members fall ill or acquires some unexpected medical bills. Benefit dinners and auctions always seem to be swiftly organized to provide financial as well as emotional support. I think it is fair to say that in Grant County we take care of our own. I hope you will join me in protecting those among whom we live and work by choosing to be immunized.

Dr. Zachary Bailey, MD



Blue Mountain
Care Center
Resident of the Month
Gordon Sindt

Gordon Sindt was born on May 20, 1938 in Whitefish, Montana to Lucille Motichka and Jack Sindt. He has a brother and 4 sisters and they were raised in the Portland, Oregon area.

Gordon has never been married but has a lot of nieces and nephews. He worked for a graphic arts place called ABDICKS and owned a bar called Dingheiser Tavern; after he sold that, he bought another bar and then had to foreclose on Dingheiser so he went between the two bars until he eventually sold them both.

He has traveled to Cairo, Egypt, England, Australia and Scotland. He specifically went to Castletown, Scotland to visit his grandmothers' birthplace. He has been all over Turkey, Istanbul, Ankara, Amasya and Sinop.

Gordon enlisted in the US Airforce in Portland, Oregon and was sent to Sheppard Airforce Base in Texas, then to Travis Airforce Base in San Francisco, California. He was then sent to Diyarbakir, Turkey and from there to McCord Airforce Base in Washington; at which point he was honorably discharged.

Gordon loves to take walks, he would walk from SE Portland, Oregon across the river into Washington Park. When he was younger, he had two bicycles - one was a Columbia with skinny tires and the other was a Schwinn with wide tires. He rode all over Portland with his friends, Mike and Rick. One time, they rode to Camas, Washington just to see what the smell was and it was a papermill. Another time, they all were riding their bikes down Mount Tabor and he didn't slow down for a hairpin corner like his friends did and crashed into the men and women's outhouses. He broke his bike and got hurt. Joe Kuhal gave him a ride home on his bike.

Gordon came to the Blue Mountain Care Center on January 5, 2018.

County purchasing robo-flaggers

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

The Grant County Road Department will soon begin using an automated flagging device, often referred to as robo-flaggers.

"With automated flaggers, you have another tool," Grant County Roadmaster Alan Hickerson said. "It's not going to replace flaggers completely."

Grant County Judge Scott Myers said the total cost for a set of automated flaggers is \$28,000.

The court also approved the road department for a \$700 expenditure to purchase an electrostatic sprayer.

County Commissioner Sam Palmer said the county could get reimbursed for the cost under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

"We have to spend that money by the end of December, or we have to send it back," he said.

In other county news:

• The court moved to designate 911 dispatchers as first responders. Myers said the county's legal counsel found

no issues with the wording of the resolution that Palmer had concerns about.

• The court approved and adopted the Natural Hazard Mitigation plan.

• The court moved to purchase a new ballot machine for roughly \$50,000. Myers said the county would need it before November, and the county had the expenditure in the budget for five years.

• The court moved to appoint Thom Seals to the Natural Resource Advisory Committee with his appointment to expire on Dec. 31, 2021.

• The court approved the purchase of a new server for the Grant County Sheriff's Office. Wade Waddell of the sheriff's office said the Education Service District would assist with the installation.

• The court approved the signing of a memorandum of understanding to install repeater sites in Monument for Grant County Amateur Radio Emergency Service.

• The court reviewed and supported a \$5,000 expenditure for rent at the Grant County Regional Airport for the Emergency Operations Center.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

The John Day City Council members listened to hotel operators in John Day during the discussions on the Transient Room Tax.

John Day hotel operators weigh in on room tax discussions

City plans to add additional occupancy tax or supersede county tax

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Discussions on the Transient Room Tax in John Day continued on July 28 as hotel operators voiced their thoughts on the two options the city is evaluating: to have a city TRT in addition to the county's TRT, or to have a city TRT in lieu of the county's TRT.

John Day City Manager Nick Green said gaining residents and a stable growth rate were important. He said that the best effort to do that is through outdoor recreation and promoting tourism along with the city's culture.

"In order to do that, we've got to have a source of investment capital to put into tourism and tourism-related facilities," Green said.

He added projects like the new hotel and event center and outdoor pavilion would be eligible for TRT funding.

He said the city has done the best it can with the revenue sources currently available, but for their strategy to succeed, they need deliberate investments in tourism.

Maulin Patel, from America's Best Value Inn and Best Western John Day Inn, said that they were supportive of using occupancy taxes to fund travel and tourism-related activities in John Day, but he shared his concern about higher tax rates for occupants.

"We feel like adding an additional tax would divert customers to lower tax paying districts near John Day, specifically in the Burns/Hines area," Patel said.

He said, when people are planning a trip, they're looking at the total cost of the travel, including taxes. Patel said he would highly suggest that the city council adopt option two to avoid raising TRT taxes on their operations.

Harsh Patel from Dreamers Lodge said he talked with customers about how they would feel about John Day having a higher TRT rate and how that would impact them visiting John Day.

"A lot of them said that John Day was a stop-by town, as in they go from Bend to Boise and just want a place to

stay," Harsh Patel said. "They did say Burns would be an alternative."

Councilor Elliot Sky asked if there were any studies available on the impacts of raising TRT rates and if it negatively affects somebody coming to a hotel in John Day. He said it was hard for him to believe that somebody would turn around and drive 75 minutes south to Burns to save 4% on their hotel bill.

Greg Astley, from the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association, said there was nothing specific, but anecdotally, in Beaverton when they increased their TRT by 4% for the center of the arts, they were right in line with Portland rates.

Some of the hotel operators in the Beaverton area said that business travelers still stayed in the city, but when looking at larger groups, like a tourist group or a Little League regional tournament, travelers begin to look at the TRT rates because it adds up.

"When you're talking about a couple dozen of rooms over a period of a couple nights or a week, it can have an impact on that," Astley said.

Councilor Dave Holland said he still finds it hard to believe somebody would drive over 70 miles for the increase in TRT rates. He said people will book a room or when they pull in and don't like the room rate they can go down the street and find another hotel with a rate that might be \$20 less. He said he doesn't see the tax rate being a bigger issue than the overall room rate.

Maulin Patel said he thinks putting more investment into Main Street and re-evaluating how the TRT is used would be more beneficial than adding an additional tax.

He also noted that the growth of the TRT funds provided in the information for the work session was based on hotels charging higher rates.

"From what we've seen since my father built it in 1985, we've seen about the same number of people stay in our hotel, and two months of the year we're busy and the rest is completely dead," Maulin Patel said. "So, trying to find types of activities that would bring people more than two months of the year would help support our economy."

No decision can be made in a study session, but Green plans to bring up the matter at the next council meeting.