

SHOOTING THE BREEZE Shooting with iron sights

A wise man told me at a very young age, "you can only shoot as good as you can see." Hence, most of my serious hunting rifles are equipped with some sort of telescopic sight. A few, however, are equipped with the simpler, more rudimentary iron sights.

There are two basic types of iron sights, the open sight (buckhorn is another moniker) and the peep sight. The open sight requires lining up the front sight into the center of a v-shaped notch in the barrel-mounted rear sight, and then once you're on target, you let fly. The peep sight is a bit easier as you must only "peep" through an aperture in the receiver mounted rear sight and then superimpose the front sight against your target.

Iron sights could be likened to vehicles equipped with a manual transmission. If you learn first how to drive a "stick shift," then learning to drive an automatic is no big deal. However, the inverse is seldom true; those who learn to shoot with a scope first typically have difficulty learning to shoot irons, as a rule. All factory rifles used to come standard with iron sights. If you wanted a telescopic sight, it was an aftermarket acquisition to get your rifle drilled, tapped and outfitted for such use. Today, the inverse is true as very few factory hunting rifles come outfitted with open sights while nearly all are ready out of the box to have a scope mounted.

Most average folks consider iron sights to be a close-range setup at best. This simply isn't so. Ask any of the black powder cartridge rifle shooters (who regularly ring steel out to 1,000 yards with peep sights) if they think irons are only for the brush.

While I'm nowhere near that same level of marksman with iron sights, I do have a similar classic taste. My first .22 still wears only buckhorn sights, and a few family heirlooms are likewise oriented. One such, a very old Winchester Model 1894 in .25-35 WCF is one of my very favorite rifles featuring open sights. I've taken multiple coyotes with iron-sighted lever guns over the years but have yet to take a deer or elk with a rifle thusly outfitted. It's definitely on my hunting bucket list.

Per my opening statement, I will easily concede that telescopic sights make hitting long distance targets much easier as a rule simply because you can see those targets better with magnification. However, if your rifle is equipped with quality iron sights, you're hardly handicapped to only super close ranges. Practice is a must for any good shooting, but mastery is possible. So before you go and hock the family heirlooms for a 6.5 Creedmoor with a Nightforce 5-25x scope to shoot deer out of your ground blind at 100 yards, at least give the old iron sights a try. You may be surprised!

Do you use iron sights? Write us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com!

Dale Valade is a local country gent with a love for the outdoors, handloading, hunting and shooting.



Dale Valade

Prairie City School now offering full-day preschool

\$180,000 grant will fund full-time teacher and aide for 15 students

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Thanks to a grant from the Oregon Department of Education, Prairie City School will be able to provide an all-day preschool program starting this school year.

Funding for the grant is being provided through the Preschool Promise Program.

Prairie City Superintendent Casey Hallgarth said, when he submitted the grant, he was not sure if the program was going to be funded due to cuts happening in the state, but the program received funding.

While Prairie City previously provided a half-day preschool program, the \$180,000 awarded from the grant will fund all-day preschool for 15 students and pay for a full-time teacher



Eagle file photo

Prairie City School District Superintendent/Principal Casey Hallgarth.

and aide.

The stipulation with the grant is that the school needs to hire somebody who has a bachelor's degree, according to Hallgarth.

"We're looking for someone that has teaching experience, especially in the preschool area," Hallgarth said.

Jill Wright, who is the current preschool instructor and cheerleading coach, does not have a bachelor's

degree, but has 25 year's worth of experience and will continue to work as the preschool moves to full time.

"Our vision here at Prairie City is that we want to combine someone that's going to work well with Jill, and they're pretty much going to co-teach the class," Hallgarth said.

As long as the child is 3-4 years old, parents can apply for the program from anywhere in Grant County.

Hallgarth said some of the benefits of transitioning to a full-time preschool class is having higher enrollment numbers for the growing school, helping kids develop a routine and giving teachers more time to identify how some of the kids learn.

"Going full-day preschool is going to help us identify quicker the kids that learn quicker, or for the kids that are struggling, we can start identifying there struggles and help them out sooner," Hallgarth said.

Hallgarth said this is important because state testing begins in the third grade. He added that this will

give an opportunity to gather data and compare how students are doing and compare the testing between part-time and full-day preschool students.

Another benefit for the full-day preschool students is the chance to participate in more assemblies and embrace the culture at Prairie City School. The preschool program is planned to be taught on campus, and Hallgarth said the school is working hard to provide a safe learning environment for their students.

"When we reopen, we are going to be an on-site school, but our goal is to bring back as many normalcy and routines as we can and do it in the safest manner," Hallgarth said. "We're hiring extra staff to clean, and our goal is to work with the community."

Call Prairie City School at 541-820-3314 if interested in signing up for the class. Additional information can be found on pcsd4.com and registration can be found on <https://5il.co/isfi>.

Report recommends expanding fairgrounds camping

New RV and tent sites could double camping revenue

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

An update was given on a report providing ways the Grant County Fairgrounds could expand and remain profitable.

The report presented during the John Day City Council on July 28, co-developed by consulting firm EcoNorthwest and landscape architecture firm Walker Macy, recommends expanding the fairgrounds by increasing the number of recreational vehicle camping sites from 25 to 34, which is a 36% expansion, according to the report.

The new RV sites would be located adjacent to the existing RV park and occupy part of the orchard area. It also recommends the creation of 27 new tent camping sites along with two new bathroom buildings for the camping areas.

"Nine doesn't sound like a lot, but it is about a third more than what we have today," said John Day City Manager Nick Green. "They also came up with some really cool site plans for how they can maximize the value of the fairgrounds property."

While the feasibility analysis from the report considers only the new sites, the report proposed different ideas such as multiple river access points, two potential locations for walk-in tent camping and a 3-acre flexible event site.

Fair Manager Mindy Winegar said the designs have brought up more ideas in continuing discussions on improving the fairgrounds. She hoped the team would have worked more on Keerins Hall and the rental house, but said the overall report was a good concept.

"It (the report) wasn't a complete master plan," said Winegar. "It was more of ideas. It wasn't taking the whole grounds. If we were going to take the whole grounds and look at every single bit of it, it would have been more like \$75,000, not \$30,000, for them to look at it."

Councilor Elliot Sky asked Winegar how she felt about the conclusion of the final price tag versus the revenue it would generate and the likelihood of going through with the design.

Winegar said she could not answer that question yet since the county court and the fair board have not seen the report yet.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

Grant County Fairgrounds Manager Mindy Winegar discusses fairgrounds design plans at a John Day City Council meeting.

"It's a sticker shock a little bit, but it's doable," Winegar said.

The report states that the operating costs for the existing campground in the annual budget projection is \$77,973 for 2019-2020. The projected operating expenses for the expanded camping facilities would be an additional \$51,604, creating a total operating

cost of \$129,577.

While the operating cost would go up, the report projects an increase in revenue to cover the rise in cost.

"Recent Fairgrounds revenue data associated with the RV park show that, over the past few years, gross revenues have averaged about \$72,000 per year," according to the report. The report projects that the expansion of the RV and tent sites could potentially provide up to \$209,000 annually.

John Day Mayor Ron Lundbom said he hopes that the county will implement some of the ideas presented in the report.

"We'll have to remind the county what they agreed to when we do this ... that they would implement some of the changes that were

brought up," Lundbom said.

This joint design project was an investment between the city of John Day and Grant County, and the report will be discussed again during a Grant County Court session.

In other city news:

- The John Day City Council voted to approve a resolution adopting the 2020 Grant County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. Adopting the plan will give the opportunity to pursue FEMA funding for natural hazard mitigation.

- The city council moved to approve the city manager to sign a construction agreement with Iron Triangle for \$54,857 for the Seventh Street Phase 1 parking lot.

- John Day city councilors shared their thoughts on the fallout from the pool plans. Members of the city council focused on the importance of voting and how the citizens in the county lost a chance to vote.

"All citizens in Grant County should vote on that and the Oregon move to Idaho border," Councilor Greg Habberly said. "It's up to the citizens. It's not up to the council, the mayor. It should be up to the citizens of Grant County."





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Please have them to the Eagle by August 8.