

# Scammers taking advantage of COVID-19

Fear surrounding pandemic leads to increased fraud

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Scammers continue to evolve, using the pandemic to deceive people with secret cures, fake contact tracers and more.

Oregon officials have created a website that provides details on some of the prevalent ways scammers are trying to get valuable information that authorities would not ask for if they were the real deal.

One common scam: false claims of a cure or vaccine

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—Mike Durr, John Day police chief

against COVID-19, according to the state.

“Avoid sharing your personal or financial information based on panic or fear,” the state website recommends. “There are no miracle cures or approved vaccines at this time.”

It is also important to avoid opening emails or attachments from unknown sources because this can give scammers a chance to spread mal-

ware to the devices. Malware is malicious software that can be used to gain private information from a device.

Scammers are also posing as Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance officers and attempting to issue thousands of dollars in fines with immediate payments needed, according to the state.

This is a false narrative because OSHA would never

request immediate payment from business owners since it typically takes two weeks following the closing of an inspection to issue citations or fines, according to the state. Compliance officers also present their credentials to operators in charge at workplaces.

Scammers are also making calls and sending emails posing as contact tracers, looking for Social Security or bank information or to install mal-

ware onto a device through an email.

Legitimate tracers work for the local or state public health department and contact people by phone or letter, never ask for Social Security numbers, billing information or bank or credit card numbers, according to the state.

Since scammers call from around the world, it makes them difficult to track down when they do scam people, according to Mike Durr, chief of the John Day Police Department. Scammers also change phone numbers regularly and are always on the move.

Durr said one underlying motivation for scammers persistently calling people is the fact that it only takes scam-

ming one person to make a payday.

“Scammers only have to get one or two people, and they make a couple hundred dollars in an hour,” said Durr. “It’s not about how many people they trick. It’s about how much they can get out of a person.”

There are many different ways scammers are using the pandemic to their advantage, but Durr said to always be cautious — if a phone call sounds too good to be true or sounds suspicious, then it’s probably a scam.

“Do not fall for these false claims,” the state website recommends. “Avoid sharing your personal information with anyone you do not know.”

## Application for small business grants extended to Aug. 28

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Small businesses and sole proprietors impacted by the coronavirus now have until Aug. 28 to apply for grants through Business Oregon, Stephanie LeQuieu, Grant County rural venture catalyst with Oregon RAIN, said on Friday.

LeQuieu said the Business Oregon grants are for businesses that did not receive emergency assistance under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act.

She said the federal assistance programs include the Small Business Administration’s Payroll Protection Program, Economic Injury Disaster Loans or other federal programs for emergency pandemic funding.

LeQuieu said most local businesses have received EIDL loans, which, she said, were not originally a part of the CARES Act.

LeQuieu said she has “started a conversation” with Business Oregon to change the requirements as it applies to businesses that have received EIDL loans.

“They are willing to extend our application period for those two reasons, for anyone who may have missed it (application window), but then also so we can work some of these other things out, like the EIDL restriction,” she said.

According to Business Oregon’s application, eligible small businesses must meet the following conditions: A business would need to demonstrate a decline in revenue more significant than 50% in March 2020 or April 2020 compared to sales in January or February of the same year, or the business must show that it could not operate due to the COVID-19 shutdown orders.

For more information, contact LeQuieu at [stephanie@oregonrain.org](mailto:stephanie@oregonrain.org) or 541-965-1598.



Stephanie LeQuieu



Eagle file photo

Cattle graze on the outskirts of Monument.

## Monument residents asked to not irrigate

City of Monument facing issues with pumps and well

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Residents in Monument have been asked to not irrigate as the city works on fixing the water system.

Monument Mayor Sahara Hyder said Friday the city is monitoring the water tower and the well. She said the well was getting low and the pumps weren’t keeping up, which meant the water tower was not filling up, but they are gaining water.

The city is asking residents to conserve on water, especially on irrigating, so the well has time to fill up, which gives the water tower time to replenish.

“We’re just trying to make

sure that we have enough drinking water for everybody,” Hyder said. “So we’re asking that everybody doesn’t irrigate for at least a couple days.”

Hyder said she and two of the city’s public work employees were at the city hall until 10 p.m. monitoring the water tower, the well and doing measurements every hour.

One of the public works employees and Hyder were getting up at midnight to check the water system and turning the pump on for about two hours to get the water tower filled up.

They then did the measurements and returned at 6 a.m. to turn the pump on and repeat the procedure.

Hyder said she is hoping the well is getting close to where it needs to be, and then they will be able to start pumping more water into the water tower.

“Right now we’re at a pretty good level in our water tower, but we want to give our well enough time to fill up,” Hyder said.

Hyder said she understands it is frustrating that people can’t water or irrigate, which is why the city is trying to have the problem resolved as soon as possible.

“Obviously people need to water their animals and all that, and yes, we understand that, but we’re trying to get the problem resolved as soon we can,” Hyder said.

She said she hopes the problem will be resolved in a couple of days.

## Local positions up for election

Deadline to file is 5 p.m. Aug. 25

Blue Mountain Eagle

Multiple positions around Grant County are up for grabs in the coming election in November.

The deadline for filing is on Aug. 25 at 5 p.m. Filing packets can be downloaded at [oregonvotes.org](http://oregonvotes.org) or requested from a local city official.

John Day will have three positions at large for the city council with four-year terms.

Prairie City will have the mayor’s position open for a two-year term. Three spots in the city council are at large for four-year terms.

Canyon City will have the mayor’s position open for a two-year term. Two spots in the city council are at large for four-year terms.

Mt. Vernon will have the mayor’s position open for a two-year term. Two spots in the city council are at large for four-year terms.

Dayville will have the mayor’s position open for a two-year term. Position 1 and Position 5 in the city council are open for four-year terms.

Long Creek will have the mayor’s position open for a two-year term. Position 1 and Position 2 in the city council are open for four-year terms.

Monument will have the mayor’s position open for a four-year term. Positions 1, 2 and 3 in the city council are open for four-year terms.

Seneca will have two spots in the city council at large for four-year terms.

Grant County Soil & Water Conservation District will have will have one position at large with Zone 2 and Zone 3 open as well. All three positions are four-year terms.

Monument Soil & Water Conservation District will have will have one position at large with Zone 2 and Zone 3 open as well. All three positions are four-year terms.




## THANK YOU

The Blue Mountain Eagle would like to thank the good samaritan who found our delivery man’s red money bag on August 5th and returned it to us with haste. You took time out of your day to do a good deed, and we appreciate your selfless act of kindness. Thank you.



195 N. Canyon Blvd.  
John Day, OR 97845  
541-575-0710

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## Grant County Youth Livestock Auction

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**SATURDAY AUGUST 15th**  
**DINNER 5PM • AUCTION 6PM**  
**EAST END OF THE HERITAGE BARN**  
**GRANT COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

**Options to bid on youth market animals:**

1. In person. Strict social distancing guidelines must be followed.
2. Over the phone bidding by calling into one of the sale day phones.
3. Online bidding by logging in and creating an account through LiveAuctions.TV AFTER AUGUST 5TH.

**VIEW/BID LIVE ON THE INTERNET:**

### LiveAuctions.TV

To register and follow the auction in real time on the internet, log on to the website, <http://www.liveauctions.tv>  
For more information or support call 817-725-8595

**Sale Day Phones:**  
**Ben Holliday: 541-620-0521 or MT Anderson 541.377.0030**

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