

Welcome to Grant County

Stay safe while hunting

With eight northeastern big game units located either partially or fully within its borders, Grant County is a popular spot for bow and rifle hunters.

Prairie City is near the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness. Dayville is popular for deer, sheep and elk hunting, as well as upland game birds. Mt. Vernon has premiere mule deer and Rocky Mountain elk hunting. Monument is known for its fishing, hunting and whitewater rafting. Seneca is great for pronghorn, Rocky Mountain elk and mule deer. Long Creek is known for trophy mule and whitetail deer, along with Rocky Mountain elk.

For more information about the county, visit the Grant County Chamber of Commerce at 301 W. Main St. in John Day or online at gcoregonlive.com, or call 541-575-0547 or 800-769-5664.

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The Grant County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue team has averaged about three calls per month for the last 18 months, according to Coordinator Dave Dobler.

Based on last hunting season, Dobler said many of the problems were from miscommunication. He recommended all hunters and families follow basic safety guidelines.

1. Know the area you are hunting. "Carry a physical map and compass, and know how to use them," Dobler said. "Check out YouTube for some good training. Consider mapping applications like Topo Plus and onXmaps for your phone. Carry a battery backup for your phone and the necessary cables to charge your device. Upload base maps for offline use. Know where you are, the closest path to get out

or where someone can find you. We can't find you if we can't see you."

2. Have a plan. "Many of our calls for help came from nervous family members because they thought the hunting party was overdue when in fact they were not," Dobler said. "Several hunting camps in Grant County were contacted after nervous family called for SAR only to find out the entire incident was poor communication. SAR is not an answering/messenger service. Stick to a clear written plan, and if you need to change it, call and agree on the changes."

3. Get a satellite communicator. "Devices like SPOT and Garmin InReach work off satellites and do not require cellphone connectivity," Dobler said. "Depending on which device you choose, you can pre-program the buttons on the device and send an email or text message (depending on the device) to several people at any time. Therefore, you can let your loved ones know you are OK, need some help but not a SAR or you are in trouble and need immediate help. These devices cost about \$200 along with the annual monitoring fees for the 24/7 emergency notification. You register the device with the company with some of your information, and if you hit the emergency 'SOS' button that information is provided to the nearest 911 dispatch center. We had one activation last year, a firefighter, and we had that person identified, located and a status check on him within 30 minutes. These devices are cheap insurance and provide piece of mind to family members and hunters. Hunters pay thousands of dollars for rifles, gear and vehicles — this is a no-brainer."

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GRANT COUNTY **HUNTING** JOURNAL

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