

The *Blue Mountain*
EAGLE
Grant County's newspaper since 1868



Wednesday, September 16, 2020

152nd Year • No. 38 • 16 Pages • \$1.50

MyEagleNews.com

Keys, laptops, receipts remain unaccounted for at EOC

Emergency manager moved supplies out of the airport amid reports of people entering the airport terminal after hours

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Keys, laptops, receipts and daily activity reports related to the nearly \$250,000 spent by the Grant County COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center remained unaccounted for Thursday.

Paul Gray, the county's new emergency management coordinator, said he moved the EOC out of the Grant

County Regional Airport.

Amid reports that people were letting themselves into the airport terminal after hours and going into offices where the county had stored recently purchased communications equipment, Gray said he moved the office sooner than he had planned. Initially, he said he wanted former EOC staffer Seth Klingbeil to go through the supplies with him to see if other departments checked out anything and if

anything was missing, but said he did not want to take the chance with the county's investment.

"I just wanted to get this stuff out," he said. "I was being told that people were up there quite a bit, and I didn't want to leave it up there and have people going through there and taking stuff."

Airport Manager Haley Walker said 14 master keys to the airport were issued, but so far, only six have

been returned. She said the airport will be changing its locks.

Gray said Klingbeil told him in an email four were locked in a safe, but Gray does not have the combination to verify whether they are there.



Paul Gray

Both Gray and County Commissioner Jim Hamscher were also waiting for Klingbeil to share passwords to the EOC finance team's computers so they could retrieve documentation

sent to the state from Witt O'Brien, the service the county contracted with to prepare reimbursement documents for COVID-19 expenditures.

In July, the Eagle filed a public records request for the electronic file the county used to determine COVID-19 expenditures to the state for reimbursement.

Paperwork sent to the state on behalf of the county from Witt O'Brien states Grant County is tracking labor costs, which include "Daily Activity Reports (214's), employee names, dates."

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County schools adjusting to a COVID-19 year

Online or in-person, the new school year is underway with something new at each building

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

Offline or online, education in Grant County valiantly persists amid COVID-19 as students and staff adapt to the changes of a new school year.

The new year also means new enrollment numbers, staff members and more for each school district.

Prairie City School

Superintendent Casey Hallgarth said the new school year presented new habits and adjustment that students are still getting used to. However, staff and faculty continue to help kids with reminders of the guidelines and providing options for students.

Hallgarth said students have three face covering options to choose from, which are face masks, face shields or face shields that go over the rim of a hat.

"Normally we don't let them wear their hats in school, but this is an adjustment. If you want to have your face shield over your hat, then you're allowed to wear a hat," Hallgarth said. "I'm not speaking for every school, but I imagine this is a learning curve for a lot of school districts, and we're doing our best to adhere to Gov. Brown's guidance for schools."

Hallgarth said it's important to note that no kid is going to be in trouble if they use one of the three options.

The school is adjusting to the higher need of cleaning and hired another person to help with the demand. The cleaning crew does the spot cleaning for the bathrooms, the door knobs, high traffic spots and wipes down the playground equipment after every recess and more.

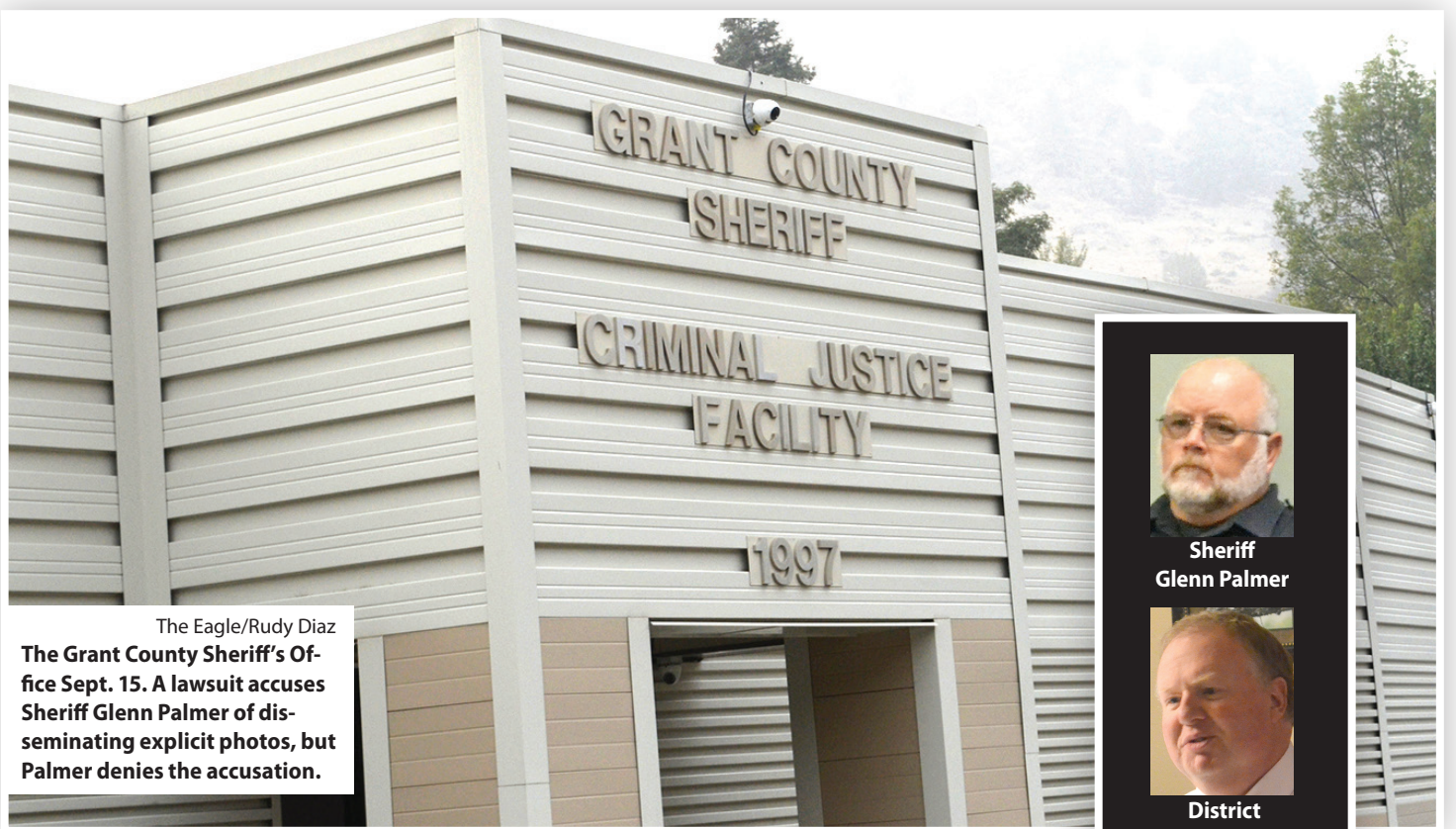
Betty Ann Wilson, 15, a sophomore, said the school year has been going well and that wearing masks hasn't been her favorite, but staff are doing a great job making sure people have masks on.

"It's not terrible, and I'm just glad to be here instead of online," Wilson said. "It's nice to be here."

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'Sex talk'

Deputy recorded on jail phone having sexual conversations with inmate paid over \$100,000 during 18-month leave



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz
The Grant County Sheriff's Office Sept. 15. A lawsuit accuses Sheriff Glenn Palmer of disseminating explicit photos, but Palmer denies the accusation.

Lawsuit, complaint claim sheriff discriminated against whistleblower, disseminated underage nude photos

By Sean Hart
Blue Mountain Eagle

"Sex talk" recorded between a deputy and an inmate, allegations another deputy faced retaliation for reporting it and that the district attorney and sheriff's office disseminated underage nude photos — a recent lawsuit and complaint allege multiple incidents of misconduct by criminal justice officials in Grant County.

John Day resident Haley Olson claims Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer and Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter violated her rights by obtaining and disseminating private materials from her cellphone in 2019, including nude photos of her when she was younger than 18, in an Aug. 28 complaint in U.S. District Court in Pendleton.

Carpenter said he reviewed the data from her cellphone, "clearly personal in nature," and deleted it without sharing it, in a Dec. 4, 2019, letter to Olson. Carpenter did not respond to

emailed questions, but his attorney has filed a motion to dismiss the lawsuit on procedural grounds.

Palmer's attorney said the sheriff "never possessed or reviewed any of the material" Olson alleges and that he intends to file a counterclaim for slander against her.

Olson said the information on her phone also indicated she was in a relationship with former sheriff's deputy Tyler Smith, and text messages between them discuss Smith reporting to the Oregon Department of Justice that Deputy Abigail Mobley was having an intimate relationship with an inmate and using drugs from the evidence locker, according to a Jan. 5 complaint Olson filed with the licensing agency for Oregon police officers.

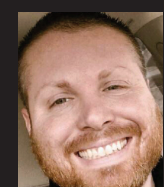
DOZENS OF PHONE CALLS BETWEEN MOBLEY AND MORTIMORE WERE RECORDED ON THE JAIL PHONE, FREQUENTLY INVOLVING 'SEXUALLY EXPLICIT DISCUSSIONS.'



Sheriff Glenn Palmer



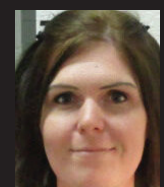
District Attorney Jim Carpenter



Tyler Smith



Haley Olson



Abigail Mobley



Darren Mortimore

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