

## EOC

Continued from Page A1

According to the form, the total labor costs were \$215,278.13. The county court's labor came in at \$35,268, and the EOC's labor total came to \$88,616.87.

Hamsher, the court's EOC liaison, said the \$35,268 reimbursed to the county was for

actual wages.

Both he and Commissioner Sam Palmer, who said they volunteered upwards of 1,000 hours each, were paid for their regular 13.5 hours a week at \$40.07 per hour. Hamsher said in July that, from March to mid-May, they were paid for 168 hours, and the county was reimbursed for that amount.

Hamsher told the Eagle Thursday he did not have time

to look for the daily activity reports as he was focusing the efforts of the "Hay for John Day" volunteer group that will take hay to people with livestock who have been affected by the recent fires.

The EOC, which the county court established in March amid the COVID-19 pandemic, appointed Grant County Sheriff's Office Deputy Dave Dobler as incident

commander on the recommendation of Sheriff Glenn Palmer, despite former emergency management coordinator Ted Williams' objection in an emergency meeting that the county's health department needed to be involved.

The EOC came under a barrage of criticism in June when it overspent its \$125,000 budget by almost \$75,000, spending nearly \$92,000 on supply

procurements. Without pre-approval from the court, the EOC purchased a variety of items, including at least 11 laptops and six speakerphones for \$900, plus \$90 for two-day shipping.

Dobler resigned amid the fallout. Upon Gray's hiring, the remaining employees were Klingbeil and interim incident commander Chris Rushing, who worked remotely from Portland since March.

Gray said he would be the only paid employee at the EOC, and the county will be entering into a "unified command" with the health department in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gray said the pandemic is a public health crisis, and the health department needs to be in a leadership role. Gray said he will bring on volunteers if he needs the help at the EOC.

## School

Continued from Page A1

She said that it's easier for her to learn from a teacher in person and interact with other students instead of being in her own space on a computer.

Declan Zweygardt, 17, a senior, said masks can be difficult at times but it's the rule, and he's glad to be in school for his last year.

"I'm really glad that I actually get to be in school and around all my friends and staff this year," Zweygardt said. "But the downside is that sports is on the edge right now, and that's a big thing for both me and Betty." Hallgarth said the highlight for the staff has been seeing kids back in the building and being able to teach in person.

"The common theme is that we're happy to have the kids back and trying to get some normalcy going again," Hallgarth said.

Hallgarth said this year has been a bigger year for out-of-district students coming in to start the year. So far, 183 students have enrolled this year with 20 students going online.

New teachers or changed positions at Prairie this year include Jason Murray, social studies teacher; Nick Thompson, preschool teacher; Diane Wright, day custodian; Shanna Wright, head cook; Wendy Deiter, special education assistant; Amanda Rockhill, Farm-to-School coordinator; Daniel Tremblay, Title I assistant; Emily Bernard, Title I assistant.

This is Prairie City School's first year providing an all-day preschool program thanks to the \$180,000 grant from Oregon Department of Education and the Preschool Promise Program. Ten students are currently enrolled with five spots open.

The Prairie City School gym overhaul is nearing completion, implementing seismic-retrofitted walls, new paint and more.

## Grant Union Junior-Senior High School

Principal Ryan Gerry said students have been great with the new protocols.

"They have adjusted quickly, and by the second day of school, most everyone had the routine down," Gerry said.



The Eagle/Rudy Diaz  
Cheryl Hoefler, an education assistant, and Paytin Girvin from the sixth grade enjoy the opportunity to gather together in a classroom setting at Prairie City School.

Gerry said, with the number of students in the building, the school has had to adjust to several components of what would be a "normal" day. Some of the adjustments included creating classes that met social distancing requirements and maintaining the required cohort size of 50.

Gerry said that by starting school on Sept. 8, giving five additional days of in-service, gave teachers the time needed to prepare for changes from the state guidelines.

"Teachers have worked hard to implement systems within their own classrooms to adhere to our back to school reentry plan," Gerry said. "This has been from how we do activities in the classroom to how students are entering the locker rooms."

There are 210 students attending in building with an additional 38 students online.

Some of the new staff at Grant Union this year are: Rick Callahan, who is teaching advanced math; Sharon Fritsch, who is teaching all levels of Spanish as well as middle school English; and Shanna Northway, who has been added to the GU Special Education Department. This year, GU also added an assistant principal position filled by Karen Shelton.

GU's automotive shop is now open and running with Jason Miller leading classes. GU's gym project is near completion, which includes the installation of brand new flooring and bleachers.

"Simply put, kids are back in the building," Gerry said. "This is definitely the biggest highlight as we have worked hard to create a plan and develop protocols that will enable Grant Union to provide in-person instruction. It's great to have

students in the building."

## Humbolt Elementary School

Humbolt Elementary Principal Darbie Dennison said students are responding well to having to wear masks and maintaining their physical distancing.

"I think they're very happy to be back in school," Dennison said. "I think for most of them it's been six months since they were last here, and they're happy to be here."

Dennison said it is definitely an adjustment for students to wear masks for a majority of the day and they need reminders, but the kids have been willing to wear their mask and face shields.

"I just want to say thank you to all of the parents for understanding that we do have restrictions in place," Dennison said. "For example, we can't have visitors or volunteers in the building at this time, but as soon as those restrictions are lifted, we look forward to having them again."

There are 240 students enrolled with at least 36 of them enrolled online with the Baker Web Academy.

Some of the new staff at Humbolt this year are: Mikayla Luttrell, second-grade teacher; Mykal Weissenfluh, second-grade teacher; Shawna Oates, kindergarten teacher; Bobbee Hickman, instructional assistant; Melissa VanLoo, cook; Mandie Mcquown, cook; Ty Baker, custodian; Colleen Lindley, behavior interventionist.

This year, Humbolt will soon have high-speed broadband internet, which will improve the online teaching experience. Humbolt also purchased 150 Chromebooks so they could provide more access to technology for kids.

"The fact that we have them back in person is the best thing," Dennison said. "It's the best thing to see their smiling faces and have an opportunity to interact with them."

## Seneca School

Office Manager Laura Stinnett said both staff and students are adjusting pretty well to the state guidelines with 22 students in a spacious school building.

"We've come through this week with flying colors," Stinnett said. "I think everybody is happy to be back in school."

Stinnett said their enrollment is 22 with two online students. The school hired a new custodian, Skip Ryder, coming up from Humbolt. Stinnett said activities like the Christmas program this year will be taped and then be made available digitally.

COVID-19 guidelines have modified life in class, but fourth- to sixth-grade students at Seneca continue the tradition of taking turns in pairs in the morning to hook the flag, raise it and then take it down and fold the flag at night. The activity began a couple years ago, thanks to suggestions from teachers, and continues every school day.

"They have a schedule of whose turn it is in pairs and do it whether it's warm like today or 20 below," Stinnett said. "It's pretty impressive, and it's a great respectful tradition that teaches them patriotism, and even that small job is not as easy as it looks."

The school has also been keeping up to date the electronic reader board that the Portland Trailblazers grant provided.

## Dayville School District

Superintendent Kathryn Hedrick said students have been cooperative and are adapting to the changes presented by the guidelines.

"They know we are all in this together so they can have in-person school," Hedrick said. "It is

different, but when we talk about teaching resilience, we realize this is the time we need to be most resilient ... putting the theory into action, so to speak."

Hedrick said teachers are working to customize students' learning to make sure all students and families have equitable access.

"The positive is the energy, the focus, getting to be a part of a young person's life and education," Hedrick said. "We teachers thrive when our students achieve, succeed, overcome obstacles, just like their parents."

Hedrick said she could not definitively say but estimates there are about 54 students enrolled in person and five through distance learning.

Stephanie Breazile is the new science and agricultural science teacher and FFA advisor. Lonnie Dickens obtained a special career and technical education teaching license to teach ag mechanics and will remain as the maintenance coordinator.

The school is hopeful that the repairs and renovation project funded by the May 2019 bond measure and the state matching grant will be finished in October. This project includes a new roof on the main building, ADA access to the main building and across the campus, a new electrical system in the elementary school and more.

The school board also named CB Construction as the general manager/construction manager of the seismic upgrades to the gym scheduled to be completed in spring 2021, according to Hedrick. The school received a \$2 million grant from Business Oregon for the project.

## Monument School District

Superintendent Laura Thomas said students and staff have done wonderful coming back and adjusting to the new guidelines related to COVID-19.

"Everyone is so happy to be back in school with each other, and no one minds the masks, extra distance and extra cleaning," Thomas said. "The highlight for us is being back together as our Monument School family. Despite the changes due to COVID, we are excited to be here learning together."

Monument currently has 49 students enrolled K-12 and 12 preschoolers with 4% of their students being online. Thomas said all of Monument's teaching staff is back this year, and the district recently filled an open bus driving position with Ally Muhleman.

Thomas said they have shifted some schedules and classes and are offering response to instruction and English language learner services from the certified staff this year.

In the spring of 2020 Monument received a grant for just under \$2.5 million to do seismic revitalization work to their elementary building and gymnasium, according to Thomas.

"We will spend the school year designing and planning for the work that will be completed in the summer of 2021," Thomas said.

## Long Creek School District

Long Creek School District decided to go with distance learning to start the school year, and Office Manager Jennifer Garinger said the transition has been going well.

Long Creek decided to do a soft start and give kids easy tasks the first week to help familiarize them with online work. The high school and middle school teachers also have a day where they go down to the park and kids can come and ask for help on assignments in an outdoor environment. She said masks are required.

The elementary teachers will go over to a student's house and help them outside of their home as well.

Garinger said the school district ordered iPads and hope to give them to students by the end of September. One of the challenges with distance learning in Long Creek has been the poor internet connectivity hindering access to online resources.

"We are supposed to get internet from Oregon Telephone Corporation hopefully by the spring so there is a light at the end of the tunnel, but it's a long ways off," Garinger said. "That's why we decided to go with Verizon data packages because it will give our kids a slightly better internet connection, and the school is providing that to our students."

Long Creek has 38 students enrolled with eight of them being foreign exchange students. A new staff member this year is Joan Walczyk, teaching middle school and high school electives along with social studies.

This year, Long Creek, through the Preschool Promise Program, is expanding their preschool program to four days per week and discussions are ongoing about full-day sessions, according to Garinger. The program will start once school is in person again.

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