

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE



Grant County's newspaper since 1868

Wednesday, October 28, 2020

152nd Year • No. 44 • 18 Pages • \$1.50

MyEagleNews.com



## Treasurer recommends sending back \$15K in COVID-19 reimbursement

Request appears to include county judge time not spent on pandemic response

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County Treasurer Julie Ellison said Thursday she plans to recom-

mend that Grant County Court members return \$15,481 of the \$35,268 received from the state in reimbursement for COVID-19 county court labor expenditures.

Ellison said the county should keep \$19,787.

She said the original reimbursement request did not include the correct hours for County Judge Scott Myers, nor did it cover health insurance or

other benefits.

Ellison said she provided COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center Deputy Finance Section Chief Jodi Cook with one month of payroll figures so Cook could use it to calculate a dollar amount to submit for reimbursement.

"She didn't know what they were going to do with it either," Ellison said. "But she gave it to them, and so I figured out that they just went ahead and

(multiplied) it by three and used that. It didn't include the correct hours for Scott (Myers), insurance or other benefits."

Grant County officials appear to have requested reimbursement for 25% of their full annual salaries, which would be 13 weeks of county court wages, for the 11-week reimbursement

See COVID-19, Page A18



Eagle file photo

Grant County Treasurer Julie Ellison during a May session of Grant County Court.

# ELECTION SECURITY



Eagle file photo

Jerry Barrow drops his ballot into a dropbox at the Grant County Courthouse in 2016.

## Checks and balances at the County Clerk's Office ensure votes are accurately counted

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Concerns over mail-in ballots have made national headlines, but Grant County Clerk Brenda Percy said the process is secure with abundant checks and balances.

Percy said Oct. 28 is the last day people should mail in their ballots, but people can still use the election drop boxes until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

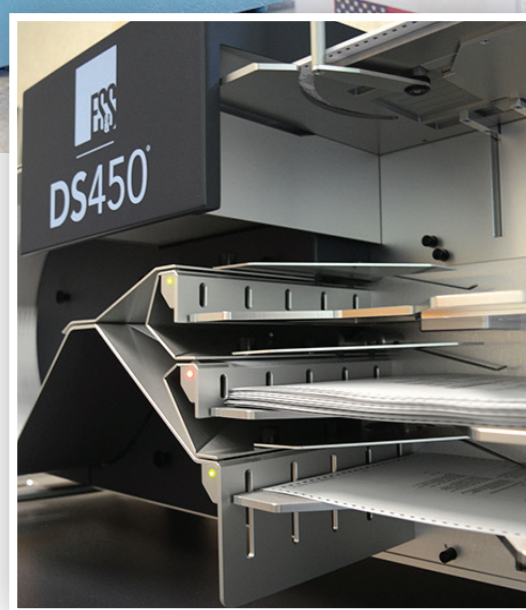
Percy said, once ballots have been submitted by mail

or through one of two ballot drop boxes in the county, they are delivered to the County Clerk's Office and each envelope is date stamped.

The barcode on each envelope is scanned, which pulls up the voter's registration card on a computer, so Percy and her team can verify the signature on each ballot.

If signatures don't match the signature on file, or if an envelope is not signed, Percy said she makes an attempt to call the person, and every person whose ballot

See Election, Page A18



Eagle photos/Rudy Diaz

Grant County recently purchased a new ballot-counting machine. The ballot machine counts the votes from a test deck as the machine records the information.

## Natural Resource Advisory Committee supports rolling back 21-inch rule

Members say Forest Service needs to establish trust

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County's Natural Resources Advisory Committee penned a letter to the U.S. Forest Service Northwest Region before the 30-day comment period ended to revise a provision that limits harvesting trees larger than 21 inches in diameter.

The 25-year-old rule dubbed the "Eastside Screens" prevents the logging of trees that exceed 21 inches in diameter at breast height in six national



Tim Rude

forests in Eastern Oregon and Washington, including the Malheur National Forest. It was adopted as a temporary set of rules to protect streams, rivers, and other wildlife habitats.

The committee talked about what they believe the economic impact would be on Grant County if the rule was rolled back.

"From my point of view, I feel it would go a long way towards turning these timber sales into a positive for the, I would say, the public versus a

### COMMITTEE SEEKS MEMBERS

The Natural Resources Advisory Committee seeks new members.

According to an advertisement, volunteers serve one- and two-year terms. Members are required to be residents of Grant County and constitute a representation of agriculture and livestock production, timber and wood products production, recreation, hunting and fishing, water resources, mining cultural resources and advocates for natural resources stewardship.

The committee meets the first Thursday of each month.

Applications are due Nov. 3. Volunteers are also needed for other committees: college, Extension and 4-H, library, mental health, senior citizens, wildlife and the planning commission.

deficit," Tim Rude said.

He said a stable pine tree over 21 inches would be worth a lot more money than a seven-inch pine tree or a

10-inch pine tree.

Bill Skinner, who spent upwards of

See Rule, Page A18

