



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

The Griffin family, Jason, Alicia, Ellie, Collin and Brighton, pose inside Earthly Home Natural Market in John Day.

Natural grocery store opens in John Day

Griffins provide more choices in 'food desert'

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

A family-owned natural grocery store opened in John Day Saturday.

Earthly Home Natural Market owners Jason and Alicia Griffin said they would be sharing space with Frontier Medical on Main Street.

Opening a health food store has long been a dream for the couple since Jason worked at an Apple Market in Utah.

The couple said John Day is considered a "food desert," an area where its residents' access to affordable, healthy food options are limited.

"We have people, local people, driving hours away, spending local money that needs to stay in our community," Alicia said. "And that's important to me to provide those things that people have



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Collin Griffin rings up an order Saturday during Earthly Home Natural Market's grand opening.

to drive hours away to get and keep our money here locally in our economy."

Alicia said she and Jason both asked themselves what they could do with their backgrounds and passion for nutritious, healthy food. Opening

the store, they said, made perfect sense.

Alicia said they saw a gap in the marketplace they can fill. She said they want to bring more education, provide more opportunities and offer more community choices.

The store, Alicia said, hopes to soon be certified to accept food benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

They said they are also mindful of the perception most people have of a natural grocery store.

"I always pictured a health food store like crystals and New Age music and incense," Jason said.

Alicia said their goal for the store was more of a mercantile, "grocery-feel" kind of store, where they will recognize the people coming into the store and know their needs.

The store will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays at 401 W. Main St., John Day.



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Chairs and tables line the Trowbridge Pavilion's new concrete floor at the Grant County Fairgrounds. The pavilion has been used the last month as a COVID-19 vaccination clinic.

County completes Trowbridge Pavilion repairs and improvements

\$320,000 project fixes tripping hazard

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

The county is wrapping up its repairs and improvements at the Trowbridge Pavilion at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

Fairgrounds Manager Mindy Winegar said the staff needs to paint the exterior of the building to complete the project officially.

The project included pulling large trees from the north side of the building to replace the concrete floor, which began to heave and crack, creating a tripping hazard.

The completion of the \$320,000 renovation allowed the pavilion to serve as a venue for the county's COVID-19 vaccination clinics over the last month.

Winegar said immunizing people for the virus is one of the many purposes of the fairgrounds.

"It's for everyone in the county," she said.



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The Trowbridge Pavilion's new floor at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

In addition to the fair in the summer, the fairgrounds hosts Christmas and spring bazaars, gun shows, youth benefits and weddings throughout the year.

After a scaled-back fair in 2020 due to COVID-19, Winegar said this year she is planning like usual, but she said she would be flexible should anything change.

Leading up to the fair last summer, as Gov. Kate Brown canceled large events in larger, more populated areas, Winegar held out to find wiggle room in the state's

guidelines.

Winegar said her staff, members of the Fair Board, 4-H and FFA worked on a plan to hold the youth livestock shows and auctions.

Grant County Auction Committee Treasurer Shannon Springer said the auction netted upwards of \$300,000, surpassing the 2019 amount by roughly \$25,000.

Winegar, a Grant County native, said the fair commemorates the county's heritage and culture, and it's the centerpiece of the community year-round.



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