

The Blue Mountain EAGLE

Grant County's newspaper since 1868



Wednesday, March 10, 2021

153rd Year • No. 10 • 16 Pages • \$1.50

MyEagleNews.com



Jim Spell takes a box of pears March 4 at the Grant County Food Bank.

The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

DELIVERING HOPE

Request for peanut butter leads to 15,000 pounds of food for Grant County Food Bank

By Rudy Diaz
Blue Mountain Eagle

A simple request for peanut butter turned into 15,000 pounds of food for the Grant County Food Bank.

Grant County resident George Sintay said peanut butter got expensive, and the food bank was unable to obtain the popular item from their provider. He knew, however, that his church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, made their own peanut butter in Texas.

He made a request to George Chadwick of La Grande, who is the local leader of the church in Northeast Oregon, and Chadwick secured a donation from the church to the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank.

Chadwick found the food bank was in need of a boost and helped get an entire shipment of food. The shipment was delivered to the Northeast Oregon Regional Food Bank to boost supplies throughout the region.

Chadwick said his role in the large donation was a minor one.

"The Stake (church leadership)



George Sintay, left, and Jim Spell begin to unload 15,000 pounds of food delivered to the Grant County Food Bank on March 4.

The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

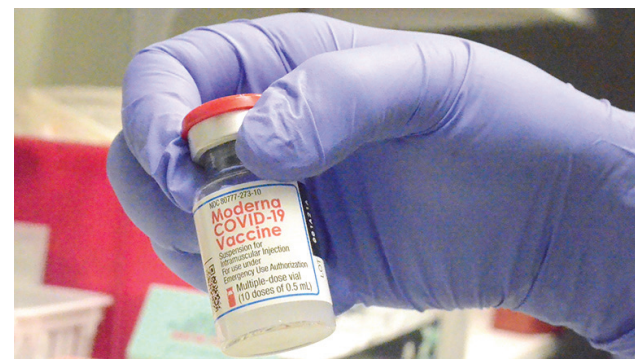
decided that the John Day Food Bank would get 40% of the 38,000 pounds of food," Sintay said. "They said when the truck comes it would come with more than just peanut butter. It would come with commodities that would be useful anywhere, but the neat thing about the peanut butter is that they sent strawberry jam with it."

Sintay rode along March 4 with John

Day Mayor Ron Lundbom, who donates his time and resources to pick up the food monthly for the food bank, and they came back with 15,000 pounds of food.

"I was really pleased at the amount of food we got, and President Chadwick said he was dumbfounded at the amount of food the region received," Sintay said.

See Food, Page A16



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine.

A shot in the arm

Grant County encouraging people to join COVID-19 vaccine waitlist

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

As the state's supply of the COVID-19 vaccine increases, county health officials anticipate receiving between 200 and 400 doses for the next couple of weeks.

Kimberly Lindsay, the county's public health administrator, said those 65 and older on the county's vaccine waitlist received shots recently. Lindsay said the Oregon Health Authority encouraged the health department to formally reach out to people in groups six and seven of Phase 1b of distribution.

Group six consists of adults between 45 and 64, with underlying health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity and cancer.

The group also includes seafood, agricultural, migrant farm and food processing workers. OHA also lists wildland firefighters, those impacted by wildfire and seniors in low-income, group and independent living situations, as well as anyone experiencing homelessness, according to OHA's website.

Group seven, referred to as frontline workers, are defined by the Centers for Disease Control as grocery, retail, restaurant workers, kitchen staff, bartenders, postal workers, bus drivers and other workers who are in frequent contact with others.

Lindsay encouraged anyone interested in the vaccine to get on the waitlist, but especially people in groups six and seven.

'False sense of safety'

After the county saw an uptick in COVID-19 after a two-week lull in

See Vaccine, Page A16

Dr. Bailey answers questions about vaccines

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County's health officer, and a longtime physician at Strawberry Urgent Care, Dr. Zach Bailey spoke to the Eagle Thursday to talk about some common concerns and questions about COVID-19 vaccines. This interview has been edited for clarity and space.

How do vaccines work, and why are they important?

The concept of vaccination is that, when someone is exposed to a portion of the virus, their immune system recognizes a foreign memory of that virus. It can sometimes kill it off, sometimes even before they become symptomatic.

Why should someone who had the coronavirus get vaccinated?

The vaccine has the potential to give you immunity in a way that your body has not seen before. And so, getting the vaccine further protects you from catching the virus a second time. It is by no means a guarantee, but it is an easy price to pay when you consider the pros and cons and the risks and benefits.

Analogous to chickenpox, later on down

See Q&A, Page A16



Dr. Zach Bailey

Oregon counties oppose new timber tax despite revenue potential

New severance tax would amount to \$25 per thousand board-feet of timber, based on current prices

By Mateusz Perkowski
EO Media Group

Oregon's county governments are opposing a proposed timber severance tax due to its economic impacts even though they'd stand to get money under the proposal.

Lawmakers are considering re-imposing a 5% severance tax on the value of harvested timber to replace the existing forest products privilege tax, which is currently 90



Contributed photo/U.S. Forest Service

Logs are loaded onto trucks after a thinning operation. Oregon counties oppose a new severance tax on timber despite the potential to gain revenue.

cents per thousand board-feet.

Legislative analysts haven't yet calculated the financial impacts of House Bill 2379, which would impose the severance tax, but it's expected to steeply increase

revenues and taxes on logs.

Based on current log values, the new severance tax would amount to \$25 per thousand board-feet of timber, compared to the current tax of about \$4 per thousand board-

feet — more than a six-fold increase, said Roger Beyer, lobbyist for the Oregon Small Woodlands Association.

The Association of Oregon Counties has come out against HB 2379, despite the potential for counties to receive 25% of the new tax revenues for wildfire and emergency preparedness.

Though county governments require tax dollars to provide crucial services, the need for revenues must be balanced against the economic prosperity of their communities, according to AOC.

Rural areas have already suffered from a downturn in tourism and hospitality due to the coronavirus pandemic, the group said in submitted testimony.

Meanwhile, the timber industry is adjusting to Oregon's new corporate activity tax and is preparing for stricter regulations under a pending agreement with environmental groups and a state habitat conservation plan for protected species, according to AOC.

"As a result, the last thing our local governments need is for the state legislature to pass any new taxes on an industry that can continue to operate and provide much-needed family wage jobs with benefits to their residents during these difficult economic times," the group said.

Recent hearings on the proposed timber tax overhaul were largely dominated by

See Timber, Page A16

