

# The Blue Mountain EAGLE

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## Three March deaths linked to care center outbreak

31 COVID-19 cases associated with outbreak include residents, staff and close contacts

By Steven Mitchell  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County's three COVID-19-related deaths in March were linked to an outbreak at a nursing home in Prairie City.

The Oregon Health Authority's weekly report, which lists outbreaks at congregate care facilities that exceed three infections and at least one death, showed 31 infections were associated to the outbreak at Blue Mountain Care Center that began March

8 and remains active.

The report's number includes all cases and deaths of residents, staff and close contacts of residents or staff who appear to have contracted the virus from them. Grant County Public Health Administrator Kimberly Lindsay said it is important to remember the number of cases and deaths include close contacts outside of the facility.

While the cases and deaths are significant regardless of where they occurred, she said she did not want the county



Blue Mountain Care Center in Prairie City.

Contributed photo

to become "unnecessarily alarmed" by assuming from the report that all 31 infections were only from the 40-bed facility.

Derek Daly, the CEO of

Blue Mountain Hospital District, which manages the care center, said that the facility had roughly 20 residents before the pandemic. However, since then, he said the



Derek Daly

limited their ability to admit certain patients they could in the past.

Rebekah Rand, BMHD director of EMS, and Lori Lane, health information manager, noted in a March 23 press release that there was no way to determine definitively how the virus entered the care center. They said it could have been in-person visits, residents

coming and going or community spread in Prairie City.

Daly told the Eagle he hopes staff members are following all the safety guidelines outside of work, but he cannot mandate what they do when they are off the clock.

"It would be my hope health care employees in the county are following guidelines in and outside of the building," he said. "That's what I try to portray outside of work, but obviously there's personal freedom and liberties that we as an employer can't get into mandating."

Daly said BMHD could

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## CAPITOL PUNISHMENT



Contributed photo/FBI

Jonathanpeter Allen Klein, 21, right, a self-described Proud Boy, with brother Matthew Leland Klein, 24, left, according to the FBI.

## FBI arrests Heppner hunting ranch employee in connection with Jan. 6 riot

By Bryce Dole  
EO Media Group

The agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation couldn't tell John Flynn too much, only that they were there because of "people that were at the Capitol," he said.

Early on March 23, agents had been snooping around the headquarters of Ruggs Ranch, a 100,000-acre hunting preserve outside of Heppner in Morrow

County that's described on its website as "Where World Class Bird Hunting & Luxurious Lodging Meet." The agents told Flynn they were waiting for a friend who was out hunting. Flynn, the ranch owner, didn't recognize the name they provided.

He asked them to leave. Shortly after, Flynn's employee called and said the agents had moved to another part of the property. Flynn drove over to tell them they were trespassing. The agents told Flynn they were awaiting orders from their boss, he said.

The FBI later told Flynn they had arrested one of his employees — Jonathanpeter Klein, who, along with his brother Matthew Klein, was accused of storming the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

The two brothers were the first Oregon residents to be charged for being directly involved in the insurrection intended to prevent Congress from certifying the election of President Joe Biden. Federal authorities say the Kleins were caught on camera storming the

**"KIDS THINK DIFFERENT AT THAT AGE. THEY'RE NOT TOTALLY MATURE. THEY HAVE DIFFERENT THOUGHTS AND IDEAS ABOUT LIFE, AND I JUST (WANTED TO) INFLUENCE HIM WITH MY OPINION."**

— John Flynn



Jonathanpeter Allen Klein

Matthew Leland Klein

building. Now they face a slew of federal charges.

The Klein brothers are among the more than 300 people who have been charged in connection with the riot. Authorities reportedly believe that at least 100 more people could be charged.

According to the FBI, Jonathanpeter Klein is a self-described member of the Proud Boys, a far-right group widely known to engage in violence at protests and whose leadership has come under scrutiny from agents and prosecutors nationwide for the group's central role in the insurrection.

Flynn was confused. In the two months Klein had worked at the ranch, not once had he mentioned anything about the Capitol, Flynn said.

### Time on the ranch

Flynn met Klein in late January. The 21-year-old came to the ranch searching for work and a change of pace. Klein had been living in Portland, where he stripped roofs by day and worked at a Domino's Pizza at night, Flynn said.

Flynn obliged. He described Klein as a hardworking and upbeat employee with "good core values" who customers complimented for his manners. Flynn said he appreciated Klein's conservative Christian upbringing.

"I think the reason he really liked it over here was because he lived in Portland and he's homeschooled and from a very conservative family of missionaries," Flynn said, adding that Klein had frequently voiced irritation at the Black Lives Matter protests in downtown Portland. "I think he had a hard time understanding that this is how people are and this is how people live. You don't have to

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The Eagle/Rudy Diaz

John Day Police Chief Mike Durr, left, and Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley, right, participate in a study session regarding the future of the John Day Police Department March 31.

## Keep JDPD or consolidate?

Local law enforcement officials provide insights into possible merger

By Rudy Diaz  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Law enforcement leaders in Grant County weighed in on options for the John Day Police Department.

JDPD Chief Mike Durr and Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley spoke to the John Day City Council on March 31.

John Day Mayor Ron Lundbom asked Durr if he had any ideas on how to keep the department going, after City Manager Nick Green previously said the city would need to request voter approval for a tax to maintain operations or consolidate with the county sheriff's office.

Durr summed it up succinctly: "You need more money."

### The price of service

Durr, who will retire later this year, said it would hurt him to see the department go away. However, he added that money will be needed to continue with operations and meet the growing expenses. He said he understands it's a tough request.

"We've got our own culture, and working here is a little different than in other places, and I am proud of the guys that work here and in our community," Durr said.

In the past year, JDPD received about 1,900 calls for service from dispatch that generated 212 cases that were investigated. The department operated with three officers most of the time because one officer was in training, Durr said. Now the JDPD is fully staffed

### TOWN HALL PLANNED APRIL 8

John Day is hosting a town hall at the Grant County Fairgrounds pavilion on April 8 at 6 p.m. This event will give community members a chance to learn about the city's budget next year and the future of the John Day Police Department.

"We will have some refreshments available with plenty of seating," said John Day Mayor Ron Lundbom. "We will also have it available by Zoom where you can write your questions beforehand. It is important that we gather as much info as possible before we put together our 2021 budget."

The city also plans to talk about the wastewater treatment plant, downtown revitalization, housing, pool and infrastructure investments.

again with four officers.

"These guys are motivated, and they love their community, and they want to do what's best for it," Durr said. "When you're done with your shift and you go home, you're just not done."

Durr said, while there are concerns at times with burnout due to the amount of calls and limited staff, they continue to focus on offering great service and helping any way they can: from investigating homicides to helping a person change a tire.

"I'm not trying to sway the council which direction you want to go, but last year, we did everything from investigating a justified homicide all the way down to assisting ambulance," Durr said. "Our

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