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The centennial



Eagle file photo

Can-can girls dance in the '62 Days Parade in Canyon City in 2017.

'62 Days Celebration

Event marking discovery of gold in Canyon City in 1862 celebrates 100th year

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County's '62 Days Celebration will mark its 100th year when the two-day festival kicks off June 11 at Sels Brewery in Canyon City.

The event, which marks the discovery of gold in Canyon City in 1862, will feature vendors on both nights of the festival.

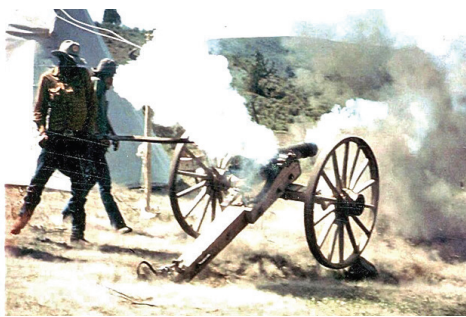
With a parade, a mock gun fight, a mock hanging in the town square, gold panning lessons for kids, the 5K Gold Rush Run and Walk and a cornhole tournament, the "spirit of 1862" and Canyon

City's unique and colorful history will be on display.

Colby Farrell, of the Whiskey Gulch Gang that organizes the celebration, said historical events like '62 Days are essential in educating younger generations about the rich history of Canyon City.

Farrell said keeping the "spirit of 1862" alive by dressing up in costumes from the mid-1800s and reenacting shootouts and hangings in the town square is about having fun and remembering how Grant County came to be — the discovery of gold in Canyon City.

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Contributed photo/Whiskey Gulch Gang
The Whiskey Gulch Gang fires off their cannon in the early 1960s.

Jack Young to lead '62 Days Celebration parade

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

As Canyon City's '62 Days Celebration turns 100 years old this week, the event organizers tapped longtime Grant County resident Jack Young to be the parade's grand marshal.

Heading up a parade will not be Young's first rodeo. He and his late wife, Merilee, served as the grand marshals of the Grant County Fair parade in 1999.

Young and his late wife's influence on the county is far-reaching. He and former partner Doug McDaniel founded Grant County-based Iron Triangle in 1982.

McDaniel, Young said, left the company a short time later, and he went on to run the business for over two decades. His youngest son, Russ Young, now runs the business.

He said Russ had done more with the company than he ever did during his tenure. Iron Triangle started as a lumber and road construction business, Jack said. He said Russ expanded the company's reach into oil, restaurants, convenience stores and several properties across the county. Moreover, Jack said Russ carried on the spirit of giving back to the community.



Jack Young

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Employers: Extra unemployment causing labor shortage

Economist: Grant County has lowest labor force participation rate in Eastern Oregon

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

As employers in Grant County and across the state scramble to fill jobs, some blame the \$300 per week supplemental unemployment benefit for keeping Oregonians from going back to work.

A group of Eastern Oregon elected officials that included County Commissioner Jim Hamsher penned a May 25 letter to Gov. Kate Brown urging her to end the federal benefits program for unemployed Oregonians.

"Current unemployment recipients, especially those

receiving additional federal unemployment benefits, are choosing to stay home rather than look for work," the letter reads.

While the Oregon Department of Employment announced last month that it would resume work search requirements, which had been suspended because of the pandemic, Oregon does not appear to have any intention of ending the supplemental federal unemployment before its scheduled end in September.

So far, nearly 25 states — all with Republican governors — ended the weekly payments.



Bill Wyllie

Impact on local employers

Chester's Thriftway Operations Manager Bill Wyllie said the company boosted its starting wage to \$15 per hour, up from \$13.50, in John Day and its two other locations June 6.

Department managers were bumped up to \$20-25 per hour

and supervisors to \$16-20 per hour.

He said the company decided on the wage hike after seeing a drop in applicants in mid-January and early February. Wyllie said the wage increase, coupled with paid vacation, health and dental insurance is intended attract workers.

Wyllie said the company received about seven applications in the month of May, and they have already received seven applications in June after announcing the increase.

Wyllie said the wage hike comes as inflation continues to raise prices on virtually everything.

"We're seeing an inflation rate beyond anything I've seen in a long time," he said.

According to the United Nations' food price index, international food prices rose for the 12th consecutive month in May, up nearly 40%.

The labor shortage for restaurant owners follows a tumultuous year as they adjusted to ever-changing shutdowns, slowdowns and restrictions.

Brian Hubbard, the owner of both Grubsteak Restaurant and the Ugly Truth Bar and Grill, said a wage increase would get passed on to the customer.

He said price increases are more burdensome in rural communities than in more densely populated areas with more money flowing into the local economies.

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