



Eagle file photo

Paul Gray, Grant County emergency manager.

County mulling how to spend COVID-19 relief funds

Treasury rules general revenue losses can be covered by federal relief dollars

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County is mulling how it will allocate American Rescue Plan funds.

County Emergency Manager Paul Gray, who researched the U.S. Department of Treasury Guidelines, said so far roughly three departments are requesting approximately \$300,000, which include the health department, sheriff's office and fairgrounds.

He said the county has been waiting for the final ruling from the Treasury.

He said the county's qualified expenses would likely increase because the Treasury ruled that general revenue loss for the county could be covered by the federal relief dollars.

He said the county does not how much money would be allocated for those two funds.

"I'm still waiting for data from everyone that's ask-

ing about money," he said. "Then I'll be going to the commissioners, and they will make the final decision. My job is to gather the information and give it to them."

He said he would be advocating for projects that he believes would benefit the community, like the Cyber Mill, a proposal to create locations with internet access. Their request would open locations in Seneca and Prairie City.

"I'm going to advocate for it," he said. "I can't tell you what the commissioners are going to do."

He told the Eagle that he was trying to get the commissioners on board with a project to put in six new repeaters for law enforcement, emergency services and fire that would have costed \$600,000. However, he said the pandemic relief money would not qualify for the project.

He said broadband is covered under the American Rescue Plan.

"Some of the people in the community, like in Seneca, don't have good internet access," he said. "This project would give some of these communities better access."



Eagle file photo

Brandon Elliott runs the grill at the Outpost last year.

Small business grants available to local businesses June 21

Businesses must have fewer than 25 employees

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County's small businesses, sole proprietors and 501(c)(3) nonprofits still reeling from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic can apply for a small business grant starting at \$10,000 June 21-28.

Tory Stinnett, Grant County economic development director, said the grant funding is for any Grant

County-based small business — including hairstylists, estheticians, massage therapists, etc. — that were in business before the start of 2020 had less than 25 employees.

She said, in order to qualify, businesses must not have been able to operate due to one of Gov. Kate Brown's executive orders. Stinnett said businesses must be able to demonstrate a one-month decline in sales of 25% or more, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, between March 1, 2020, to May 31, 2021, compared to the previous year. Stinnett said a business

must be current on federal, state and local taxes that were due on the application date.

Grants of \$10,000 are available for sole proprietors and businesses with up to five full-time employees. Companies and nonprofits with between six and 15 employees can get \$20,000, and those 25 or fewer are eligible for \$30,000.

Stinnett said priority would go to tourism and hospitality businesses, including restaurants, bars, breweries, hotels, motels and gyms.

Priority will also be given to businesses owned by

minorities, females and service-disabled veterans.

The applications, Stinnett said, will be reviewed in a lottery-determined order by Community Lending Works, a community development financial institution that offers credit, capital and financial services to economically distressed areas.

Those interested in applying can visit communitylendingworks.org/emergency-grants-grant-county.

Stinnett can be reached at 541-575-1555 or via email at tstinnett@grantcountyoron.net to answer questions.



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