

HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

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Riding for Glory



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Riders from the Oregon Veterans Motorcycle Association though Grant County Sunday to honor POW/MIAs.

Veterans motorcycle association honors prisoners of war and those missing in action

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Roughly 60 motorcycle riders from the Oregon Veterans Motorcycle Association rolled through John Day Sunday to honor prisoners of war and service members missing in action.

At the same time, the Grant County Chamber of Commerce dedicated its flagpole to POWs and MIAs as community members lined the streets with flags to honor them.

Larry Moyer, president of the Central Oregon Chapter of the VMA and a Persian Gulf War veteran, said the group has focused on raising money for other veteran causes. This ranged from purchasing a home in Central Oregon for returning veterans to serve as transitional housing to providing financial assistance to veterans in distress.

"Every member here today is a member that started out being one of those people," he said.

Moyer said people often ask him what the group does, and he wanted to explain to the audience what they do.

The group also recognized the Grant County Chamber of Commerce and Elks Lodge members Charlie Caughlin and Bob Van Voorhis for their service to the community.

Moyer also read from former POW Oscar "Whitey" Lent's letters from when he was held captive on Wake Island during World War II. Lent, a longtime John Day resident and business owner who passed away in 1982, was one of over 1,000 civilian contractors taken prisoner in December 1941, when Japanese troops overran Wake Island in the western Pacific Ocean.

"This is why we do this," Moyer said while holding back tears.

The group honored Leslie Traylor, Lent's daughter.



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Juan Rubio, an Army veteran, stands at attention during the flag pole dedication Sunday at the Grant County Chamber of Commerce.



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Grant County's veterans line up during Sunday's flag pole dedication at the Grant County Chamber of Commerce.



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

The crowd cries 'liberty' at the countdown of three at the close of the Arise USA rally Thursday at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

Arise USA Organizers: Tour aims to unite 99% against 1% in government

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Nearly 40 people showed up to encourage people to get more involved with their government at the local level at the Grant County Fairgrounds Thursday.

The goal of the Arise USA tour, organizer Robert David Steele said, is to unite 99% of the country against the 1% in government, who he said no longer represent the people.

Steele, a former spy with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, said the group got on the road May 7 and would be at Mt. Rushmore for Independence Day with events planned throughout the country through at least August.

The group's grievances ranged from COVID-19 restrictions to alleged election fraud to satanic pedophilia and critical race theory.

Emceed by radio host Trent Loos from Nebraska, featured speakers included Kevin Jenkins, the Urban Global Health Alliance founder, and local speaker Dave Traylor.

Traylor, who spoke first, talked about local issues. He

said the county has gone from doing active forestry work and stewardship of the forest to now doing "very little of it." Traylor said devastating fires have "eaten up" a significant portion of the county.

"Now we look at fire as fire season," he said. "Unfortunately, fire has become big business. And big business requires big fires. This is happening all through the West."

In his speech, Steele said that former Donald Trump legal team member Sidney Powell is facing a million-dollar defamation lawsuit brought by Dominion Voting Systems, a voting machine company at the center of conspiracy theories related to the election.

"We want fair and honest elections," he said. "Electronic voting machines were created in order to designate the winner before the first vote is cast. And I absolutely guarantee you that my friend Sidney Powell is going to kick Dominion's ass."

He said, if he were the CEO of Dominion, he would be in Switzerland getting a



Robert David Steele

See Rally, Page A14



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell

Kevin Jenkins, founder of the Urban Global Initiative, speaks Thursday during the Arise USA rally at the Grant County Fairgrounds.

Pandemic restrictions lifted



Eagle file photo
A sign hangs in front of Dark Horse Rentals letting the community know they are open for business last year. Gov. Kate Brown announced statewide COVID-19 restrictions would be lifted on Wednesday, June 30.

Mandates on masks, social distancing and capacity limits removed

Oregon Capital Bureau

Oregon lifted the pandemic limits in place for over a year today.

"When Oregon reaches 70% or by Wednesday, June 30, we will lift the safety programs we have relied on and open our economy," Gov. Kate Brown said in a press call on Friday morning.

Mandates on masks, social distancing and capacity limits of restaurants and venues have been removed.

"Effectively, Oregon is 100% open for business," she said.

But Brown and health officials said that the crisis for the state is not over. "Some 98% of people dying from

COVID-19 are unvaccinated," Brown said.

Oregon Health Authority Director Pat Allen said the pandemic is not over, but the management of the crisis will shift to local officials.

County commissioners will be responsible for public health decisions, and the state will only compile statistics and offer assistance.

"Local officials will be responsible for those decisions and for the consequences," Allen said.

Allen warned that areas with high numbers of unvaccinated residents were in danger of infection flare-ups with the limits lifted.

"They're dry tinder," Allen said.

Setting a firm deadline was needed as the state headed into the

popular July 4 weekend.

"Obviously businesses and venues need certainty on reopening," Brown said.

Decisions on schools will also shift to local leaders.

Oregon policy intends to have "full-time, in person instruction," said Colt Gill, director of the Oregon Department of Education.

New guidance to schools will be sent by June 30 and will include summer school recommendations.

Brown said she believed the new system will work and add flexibility instead of a one-way approach across all 36 counties.

But she did not rule out statewide emergency orders if the virus makes a widespread resurgence.

"We obviously don't know what the future holds," she said.

