

# Malheur forest increases fire restrictions

Blue Mountain Eagle

The entire Malheur National Forest moved to an Industrial Fire Precaution Level III, limiting the use of power saws to specific hours and locations.

The Malheur Forest South Zone, which includes the Emigrant Creek Ranger District, increased its public use restrictions to Phase C, prohibiting campfires, smoking and chainsaw use.

The Malheur National Forest North Zone, which includes the Blue Mountain and Prairie City Ranger Districts, will remain in Phase B of public use restrictions and high fire danger rating.

Under Phase B of public use restrictions, the following are prohibited:

1. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, charcoal briquette or stove fire, except within a designated recreation site.

2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or build-

ing, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least 3 feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material.

3. Operating a chainsaw between the hours of 1-8 p.m. Saw operators are required to have a shovel (8 inches wide, 26 inches in length) and fire extinguisher (minimum ABC 8 oz.) in their possession. A one-hour fire watch is required after saw operations cease.

4. Operating a combustion engine without a spark arresting device.

5. Using a vehicle off of forest roads except when parking in an area devoid of vegetation within 10 feet of a road.

Phase C includes all of the restrictions from Phase B and prohibits chainsaw use at any time and smoking is only allowed within an enclosed vehicle or building.

The Umatilla National Forest also moved to Phase C of public use restrictions. Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is in Phase B.

# Lewis Rock Fire near Mitchell transferred back to local control

Blue Mountain Eagle

Due to reduced complexity, Oregon Department of Forestry's Type I Incident Management Team will hand the Lewis Rock Fire back to a local Type 4 organization Monday.

The fire remains at 368 acres and is 80% contained, according to a Sunday press release. The main responsibility of the Type 4 organization will be to complete any remaining mop-up, patrol the perimeter and finalize any suppression repair needed.

"There has been a lot of amazing work done to this point on the Lewis Rock Fire," said Incident Commander Tyler McCarty. "The local

organization staying with this fire through its completion will continue that work and put the final touches on closing out the fire. The team would like to again thank the community for their kind hospitality and support during our stay."

People may continue to see smoke coming from the fire area as interior pockets of unburned fuel burn over the next several days. Fire personnel will contend with warming temperatures throughout the week ahead and will work to make sure hotspots on the fire are extinguished.

For additional public information about the fire, call Public Information Officer Christie Shaw at 541-263-0661.

# Local radio operators support Skull 120 race in Harney County

Amateur radio operators from three counties provided communications for the offroad bicycle race

Blue Mountain Eagle

On June 19, 12 FCC-licensed amateur radio operators took a support role in an offroad bicycle race that ran from Burns to the top of Snow Mountain in Grant County.

The 120-mile course is considered one of the toughest "gravel grinder" races in the world, according to a press release from Grant County Amateur Radio Emergency Service. There were three courses spread over an area of approximately 800 square miles.

Grant County ARES took the lead in the provision of radios and planning. They were supported by Wheeler County ARES and Amateur Radio operators in Harney County. ARES did extensive propagation modeling and testing over many weeks to ensure that the communications was adequate. They set up a temporary radio repeater on the south facing slopes of Snow Mountain, which covered the 30-by-40-mile area where radio communication was required.

There were county, state, tribal, rural fire departments and federal agencies involved in providing services for the race.

Grant County residents who are interested in amateur radio communication may visit W7GCO.org for further information.



Contributed photo

Grant County Amateur Radio Emergency Service helped support the Skull 120 offroad bicycle race in Harney and Grant counties, including setting up a temporary repeater site on Snow Mountain.



Contributed photo

Riders in the Skull 120 offroad bicycle race reach the summit of Snow Mountain.



Contributed photo

Ed Elleson looks at a radio on Snow Mountain.

# OTEC, BTI partner to develop utility training center

Blue Mountain Eagle

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative and Baker Technical Institute have begun developing a utility training center in Baker City.

The long-term goal is to create a comprehensive training site for people looking to enter the trade and to provide ongoing training for current utility workers, according to a press release.

Phase one of the training center launch will focus on safety training for utility workers across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest, including OTEC.

"We're thrilled to support BTI in this

process as industry experts; we believe the partnership is mutually beneficial for BTI and OTEC's membership," said Les Penning, OTEC's chief executive officer. "BTI is a key community resource for workforce development, and economic development and the growth and success of BTI is essential to the region's economic health."

Beginning later this year, BTI will begin delivering utility specific safety training courses. Courses will include required and recommended safety trainings such as pole top rescue, hazard identification, forklift operations, traffic control, emergency medical response cer-

tification and fall protection training.

Instructional teams are being built that include current BTI trainers along with OTEC experienced professionals to help give utility specific instruction and support.

"There is a real need in the utility industry for quality comprehensive training," says Doug Dalton, BTI president. "This industry, like many of the other skilled trades, needs more people entering the field to meet the future workforce demand. The industry also needs access to high-quality training that supports employee growth and expertise. Our goal is to provide both."

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Hello Grant County,  
Well, its official, summer is here! I hope you are finding ways to stay cool. I am always amazed when I hear people say there's nothing to do around here!

Here's what's happening this month:  
July 17th – Blue Mountain Hospital Foundation Golf Tournament  
24th – Whiskey Gulch Gang Demolition Derby  
24th & 25th – Prairie City Fiber Fest

There are probably some things that I don't know about. I'd sure like to get all the events on our calendar, so if you know of any please let me know.

We have exciting plans for another event in September, so SAVE THE DATE! September 11th will be the Grant County Chamber of Commerce's "Grape and Hop". We are in the planning process now. Stay tuned for more information.

More exciting news... We have ordered more (new) Logo Merchandise. We will soon be getting some beautiful stickers, t-shirts, hoodies and hats! We'll let you know when they arrive.

The Grant County Chamber of Commerce has partnered with Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative to share information about their new member benefit – Co-Op Connections. This is a membership savings program that offers cooperative members, including OTEC members, more than 24,000 local and national deals on products and services.

To sign up today and see a complete list of participants in and outside of OTEC's service territory, please visit the official Co-op Connections website. Under the co-op tabs deals, just enter your location.

This month's Chamber Board of Director's meeting will be Thursday, July 15th at 10:30 a.m.

Stay well!  
Tammy Bremner  
Executive Director

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