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Tate Wadell, 10, brushes his steer, 'Bam Bam.' He plans to donate the sale proceeds to Blue Mountain Hospital's Rehabilitation Services Department.

Mad about masks

Parents push back against Gov. Brown's mandate for masks to be worn in schools

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Parents railed against Gov. Kate Brown's decision to mandate masks for students in kindergarten through 12th grades during Grant School District's Aug. 3 school board meeting.

Grant School Superintendent Bret Uptmor said the governor's directive went into effect on Aug. 2 and would be subject to enforcement on Aug. 12.

John Day dentist Dr. James Klusmier read a statement urging the board to resist the mandate.

"Over 100 years of our virology informs us that this virus is going to do what it is going to do," he said. "A mask is not going to stand in its way."

Klusmier said he wears a mask every day at his dental practice and emphasized that he is not "anti-mask."

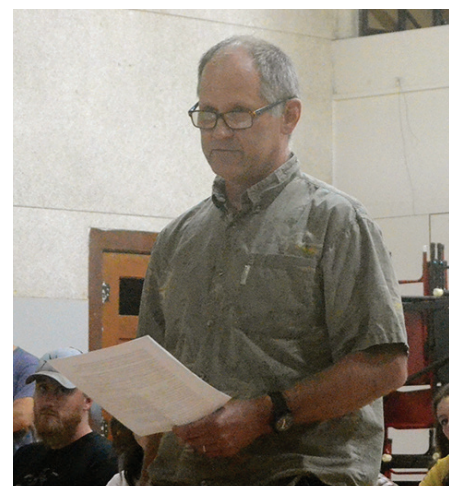
He said vaccines, natural immunity, handwashing and staying home when sick stem the spread of the virus.

Uptmor said the district faces potential consequences for failing to comply with the new state mandate, including Oregon's Occupational Safety and Health Administration fines, civil penalties, personal liability and teachers putting their licenses at risk.

He told the audience that the rule comes from the Oregon Health Authority, not the state's education department.

One of the parents in the audience asked when the board would decide on mask mandates. The person said a group of parents would pull their kids out of school if masks would be required in the fall.

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The Eagle/Steven Mitchell
John Day dentist Dr. James Klusmier spoke out against a mask mandate for students in schools at a Grant school board meeting Aug. 3.

Larger service

Wadell to donate proceeds from Youth Livestock Auction to hospitals rehabilitation department

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

A first-year 4-H'er is living out his pledge to service.

Tate Wadell will pay it forward by donating the proceeds of his market steer from the Youth Livestock Auction to Blue Mountain Hospital's Rehabilitation Services Department.

Tate was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, and his parents, Wade and Simmie Wadell, said because of the hospital's growing rehabilitation facility with physical therapists with pediatrics experience, they no longer have to make trips to Bend every two weeks.

According to the Megan Pass, the hospital's rehabilitation services manager, about 12% of the patients are pediatric patients — under 21 — at any given time. She said the hospital is grateful for this idea and everyone who helped make it happen.

"Our primary goal in Rehab Services is to serve all the patients of Grant County, with a specific focus in the last several years on bringing in rehab therapists that are able to treat the pediatric population," she said. "These families have so many challenges to overcome, and the best thing we can do is provide the best pediatric physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy in our own community."

Wade, a deputy with the Grant County Sheriff's Office, said they want to see the donation to the hospital to benefit other kids and their families.

The owners of Pioneer Feed, Old Hickory, Ace Hardware and Helena Agri-Enterprises each pitched in to pay for Tate's steer. Additionally, Simmie said, Associated Feed and Supply, a California-based company, donated the feed. She said 100% of the proceeds would go to the hospital.

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The Eagle/Steven Mitchell
Tate Wadell, 10, walks his steer, Bam Bam. The first-year 4-H'er plans to donate 100% of the proceeds from the sale at the Youth Livestock Auction to Blue Mountain Hospital's Rehabilitation Services Department.

Grant County holds first mandated meeting about joining Idaho

Grassroots group leader volunteers to serve on advisory committee

By Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle

Residents met with Grant County's commissioners in a packed county courtroom Aug. 4 to study a plan to flip Eastern Oregon counties into Idaho.

The meeting came after just over 60% of people who voted in Grant County approved a measure requiring county commissioners to meet three times a year to discuss a proposal to include 18 Oregon counties, including Grant, as part of Idaho.

According to the initiative, the county will meet the first Wednesday of April, August, and December,



The Eagle/Steven Mitchell
Sandie Gilson, a leader with Move Oregon's Border for Greater Idaho Grant County, during a special meeting of Grant County to discuss if it is in the best interest of the county to relocate the Oregon-Idaho border.

"to discuss whether it is in the best interest of Grant County to promote the relocation of the Oregon-Idaho border."

Shifting the borders would require

the approval of both the Oregon and Idaho legislatures and Congress.

Sandie Gilson, a county resident and one of the leaders of the grassroots group Move Oregon's Border for Greater Idaho Grant County, said Grant is one of seven counties to require county officials to study or promote joining Idaho. The others include Wasco, Malheur, Baker, Jefferson, Sherman and Union.

She said Harney County would vote on the measure in November, and Klamath County voters will see it on their ballots next year in May.

Gilson said the idea behind becoming a part of Idaho is about having the kind of government they want in the region.

She said many issues affect many people, whether schools, land use laws or homelessness.

One example she mentioned was the Oregon Legislature's law that

mandated that all municipalities, including states, cities and counties, allow homeless camping on public property.

Under House Bill 3115, local governments would be prohibited from making it a crime for people to camp or rest on public property when shelters are full and they have nowhere else to go. The bill goes into effect in July of 2023.

Commissioner Sam Palmer said during the July 28 county court session that the voters spoke, and he wanted to hear what citizens in the county have to say.

Gilson said many people had asked her what would happen to the Oregon Public Employee Retirement System for Oregon's state employees if they were to become Idaho residents.

Gilson said she would be will-

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