

County hires new emergency manager

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Grant County has a new emergency manager.

Eric Bush, a former brigadier general in the National Guard and former Prineville chief of police, has been on the job for two weeks.

Amid wildfires and a pandemic, Bush said he has “jumped into the deep end” of emergency management in Grant County.

Bush, who was Prineville’s chief of police for upwards of a decade and oversaw troops in the Oregon National Guard, said there is a lot to learn in any new job. Grant County is no different.

Bush said he is working on several things at once.

He said one of the most important things is just making sure the county has good accountability of all the property belonging to emergency management. Additionally, he said he is responsible for ensuring the county has sound systems in place when it comes to emergency management.

Part of the learning curve, Bush said, is getting to know the policies and procedures of Grant County.



Eric Bush is Grant County's new emergency manager.

Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Every jurisdiction is a little bit different, according to Bush.

Bush said another item he is working on for the long term is a capabilities assessment. He told the Eagle that the evaluation would be based on feedback from stakeholders

within the county, and it would look at where are the county’s gaps based on safety hazards. Moreover, he said, it will look at what the county can do to mitigate those gaps in the near-term and long-term future.

Bush added that he is responsible

for ensuring that all of the department heads in the county have what they need to do their job. To that end, he is conducting an inventory of all of the emergency management equipment, including the property the county acquired through the Emer-

gency Operations Center, to respond to COVID-19.

“I’ve got a good jumpstart on it,” he said. “It’s hard to tell exactly how far I am through it because I just don’t have my arms around the whole thing yet.”

The EOC, which the Grant County Court established in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, came under a barrage of criticism when it overspent its \$125,000 budget by almost \$75,000, including nearly \$92,000 on supply procurements. In addition, the EOC purchased various items without pre-approval from the court, including at least 11 laptops and six speakerphones for \$900, plus \$90 for two-day shipping.

Bush said the coordinated response to COVID-19 trickles down from the federal government, state government and counties. And, he said, there are multiple lines of effort on the county’s part in making sure that the public is doing everything correctly from the perspective of legal authority and public health.

Bush said from a county perspective, the health department is the lead in pandemic response.

“They’re the experts in health,” he said.

Eagle’s Kim Kell named Oregon ad exec of the year

Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association has honored Blue Mountain Eagle advertising representative Kim Kell with its first-ever Christine Moore Advertising Executive of the Year Award.

The recognition, announced last week, was one of 18 awards the John Day-based newspaper brought home from the ONPA’s annual Better Newspaper Contest.

Beating out ad execs from newspapers of all sizes around the state, Kell was nominated for the inaugural award by a combination of four managers and executives within the EO Media Group, the Eagle’s parent company.

Kell, a Grant County native and 13-year employee of the Eagle, serves as the only advertising rep for the weekly publication with a circulation of 1,900.

In 2020, hardly a banner year for advertising, Kell carried an average of 112 advertisers per month, 15% of the



Blue Mountain Eagle/Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle advertising representative Kim Kell has been named Advertising Executive of the Year by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association.

total businesses in Grant County. So when the pandemic hit and in-person sales calls turned into phone and email outreach, her efforts remained effective because of the relationships and the trust she had built with her clients.

All told, the Eagle picked up 18 awards in the ONPA’s annual competition, including seven first-place honors in categories such as best enterprise reporting, best government reporting and best writing.



Contributed photo

A totaled truck sits on the side of Highway 26 on Sept. 15 after striking three horses.

Three horses killed on Highway 26

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

MT. VERNON — Three horses were struck by a car and killed at Laycock Creek Road and Highway 26 on the morning of Sept. 15 after fleeing from a pasture nearly six miles away.

In a press release, Grant

County Sheriff Todd McKinley said that both lanes of Highway 26 had to be closed for roughly one hour.

McKinley’s press release also noted that one of the horses had to be euthanized at the scene after the collision.

According to McKinley’s press release, an attempt was made to locate the owners of

the horses that ran east of Highway 26 to no avail. Additionally, the press release noted that it is unknown what spooked the horses to flee the pasture.

McKinley thanked Dr. Colleen Robertson from John Day River Veterinary Clinic, Nick Steiner and the Oregon Department of Transportation for their help at the scene.

Lake Creek Camp puts out a call for volunteers

Blue Mountain Eagle

Lake Creek Youth Camp is looking for volunteers to help build a kiosk and repair a fence on Sunday, Oct. 3, and Saturday, Oct. 23.

The camp, located about 30 miles southeast of John Day

in the Malheur National Forest, is run by a private nonprofit organization.

In a Facebook post, the group’s board of directors said that they understand that this can be a busy time of year for people but asked that people with even a tiny amount

of time to spare reach out to volunteer.

“We value the efforts of our many volunteers and appreciate any time that is shared working on this beautiful property.”

The Lake Creek board can be reached at 541-575-4031

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With my wife's nursing, prayer from church, meals & support from friends & neighbors, I beat a bout with Covid 19.
The thing I missed most during my quarantine was the ability to just go to the store; so during this terrible time, if you are quarantined with Covid, give me a call & I will pick up & deliver to you fare free any small item or two you may need from Chester's or even prescriptions from Lens.
No tobacco or alcohol please, thank you.
Richie, John Day Taxi, 541-620-4255

Heartfelt thanks!
We were so blessed. Thursday evening we had a fire started by lightning on a ridge on our hill property. Thanks to the Mt. Vernon Rural fire, John Day Rural fire, the State Forestry and the many friends and neighbors that came to help, the fire was brought under control fairly quickly! Where else besides Grant County can you find such caring individuals? Our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you.
Roger and Meredith Ediger

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