



Eagle file photo

The Malheur Lumber Co. mill in John Day.

Crane operator hurt in explosion at lumber mill

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A crane operator was injured in an explosion at the Malheur Lumber mill shortly after 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 13.

The 46-year-old man, whose name has not been released, was operating a crane at the mill when it bumped into a power line, possibly causing an electrical charge to ground out through the big machine, Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley told the Eagle.

The operator moved the crane away from the power line and got down on the ground to check for damage, at which point one of the vehicle's tires exploded, injuring the operator. As bystanders began to gather around, a second tire blew up, but no one else was hurt, according to the sheriff.

"Everybody in town heard the booms, and those were the tires," McKinley said. "Those were big tires."

The man is employed by Boise Crane. The city of John Day contracted with the Idaho company for two cranes to place a new pedestrian bridge across the John Day River at the

Hill Family Park on North Canton Street. That work was completed on Tuesday, Oct. 12.

Malheur Lumber manager Rich Fulton said his company had also contracted with Boise Crane to move some heavy equipment at the mill before the cranes went back to Idaho.

Fulton confirmed that no one besides the crane operator was injured and said property damage from the incident was limited to the crane itself, which had a broken window in addition to the two ruined tires.

John Day City Manager Nick Green said he'd been told the injured crane operator was being treated at a Portland hospital and was expected to recover, but that information could not be confirmed by the newspaper.

Oregon Occupational Safety and Health has opened an investigation into the incident, a spokesman for the agency told the newspaper.

Calls to Boise Cascade for additional information about the incident were not returned.

The Grant County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police and John Day Ambulance responded to the incident.

City Council pulls the plug on John Day Police

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The John Day City Council has voted to suspend the city's police department starting at midnight, Oct. 31.

The unanimous vote came on Tuesday, Oct. 12, in the face of what city officials say is an insurmountable budget shortfall.

The decision follows a failed ballot measure last summer that would have raised enough money to fund the department for the next five years. The proposed local option levy actually attracted more yes votes (284) than no votes (169). But the Aug. 17 special election required a double majority for the levy to pass — a majority of votes cast plus a majority of registered voters casting ballots — and a low turnout doomed the measure.

The council referred the measure to the voters after determining that the city did not have enough money to continue funding police services and still balance its budget.

The city has asked for an agreement

with Grant County to provide law enforcement services within the city limits through the Sheriff's Office, but no agreement has yet been reached. There's also a chance the department could be revived if federal grant funding comes through (see related story on Page 1).

Suspending the Police Department was just one item on a busy City Council agenda at Tuesday's meeting. In other business, the council voted to:

- Approve a land exchange agreement with the Culley family to allow construction of a trail between the Seventh Street Sports Complex and the new Hill Family Park.
- Sell four lots at the Airport Industrial Park for \$112,000 to Burnt River Farms, a diversified cannabis company that also recently received Planning Commission approval to open a dispensary on South Canyon Boulevard.
- Renew the city's franchise agreement with Clark's Disposal for waste hauling and recycling services for the next 10 years. The new deal will run through May 23, 2031.
- Amend the financing agreement for the new water reclamation facility.

- Accept a \$60,000 state grant to pay for planning and engineering for a project to build affordable housing using 3D-printed concrete construction. The cities of Burns and Lakeview, which have similar plans, joined John Day in the grant application. The city of John Day is partnering with Alquist 3D and ECONorthwest in the project. The first phase would involve the construction of 10 to 12 dwelling units in The Ridge development to provide affordable housing for disabled veterans and other disadvantaged groups.
- Accept a \$1 million state grant to finance site improvements adjacent to the new Kam Wah Chung Interpretive Center, which the state plans to build on the site of Gleason Park and Gleason Pool. The state is in the process of purchasing the park land from the city.

The council also heard a presentation from Straw to Gold, a Portland firm that is developing a marketing campaign for the city. Principals Benjamin Ariff and Adam Mefford said they hope to have their new "Discover John Day" website up and running by March.

Appointments needed for COVID testing

Blue Mountain Eagle

With the most recent surge in coronavirus cases apparently starting to taper off, the Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic is making some changes in how it handles patients showing possible symptoms of COVID-19, the clinic announced in a news release.

The clinic set up a tent in the parking lot this summer to handle increased patient volume, but now that patient numbers are declining, the tent is coming down and the clinic will no longer see COVID patients on a walk-in basis.

Instead, anyone with mild to moderate symptoms of COVID-19 is asked to call 541-575-0404 to make an appointment. Patients will be instructed on where to park and will be able to remain in their vehicles for testing. Symptoms can include fever or chills, cough, mild respiratory or breathing issues, muscle or body aches, headache, recent loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

The clinic, located at 180 Ford Road in John Day, is open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday-Friday.



Contributed photo/Oregon Department of Forestry

ODF declares end to fire season

Blue Mountain Eagle

Fire season is coming to an end in this part of the state, according to the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Fire season will have officially ended at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 16, on ODF's Central Oregon District, which includes the John Day area, the agency announced in a news release.

The Grant County Fire Defense Board issued a similar announcement.

Burning of slash piles and other debris from forest operations or fuel reduction projects will not be permit-

ted on ODF-protected lands until additional precipitation is received, the agency noted.

However, burning yard debris and using burn barrels is allowed as soon as fire season ends.

In the John Day Unit, no permit is required from ODF for this type of burning, although people should check with their nearest fire department to find out about burning regulations and to see if a local permit is required.

Yard debris fires should be kept small, and any potential fuels should be cleared from the surrounding area, accord-

ing to ODF. A shovel, water or fire extinguisher should be kept handy to control the fire if need be. Fires should not be left unattended until they are dead out and cool to the touch.

Harvest festival draws a crowd

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

Upwards of 600 people came out to the Grant County Fairgrounds for the county's annual fall festival Friday and Saturday, Oct. 15 and 16.

Organizers said this year's goal was to celebrate the county's frontier heritage and the talent within the community.

The Best of the Old West Harvest Festival and Quilt Show drew 26 vendors, according to Zach Denney, one of the event's organizers. Denney, a rural catalyst with Oregon RAIN, told the Eagle that all the vendors did "incredibly well."

Local vendor Charity Courtney said her blue elderberry honey, made locally with Grant



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
A festival goer works on an embroidery project on Saturday, Oct. 16, at the Best of the Old West Harvest Festival and Quilt Show.

County's J-5 Beekeeping, had all but sold out by Saturday afternoon. Denney said more than 200 people signed up for a chance to win a Traeger barbecue grill and scores of others threw their names into the hat for the festival's cornhole tournament and pie-eating contest.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Thursday, Oct. 28
Grant County Republican Central Committee Meeting

- 3 to 5 p.m., John Day Fire Hall, 316 S. Canyon Blvd.

The meeting will include a bylaws update, presentation of the 2022 meeting schedule, a report from the state platform convention, and a Zoom meeting with Sandy Mayor Stan Pulliam, who's running for governor, starting at 3:30. The public is welcome.



Sunday, Oct. 31
Halloween Day Clay Pigeon Shoot

- 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Brad and Julie Smith's B Bar J Ranch, Highway 402 near milepost 9.

Prizes awarded for women's, men's and kids' clay

pigeon shoot, which costs \$3 per round. Bring your own pumpkin for the pumpkin chunkin' shoot. The event, a benefit for Monument High School's Flying Tigers Club, will feature concessions, a live auction and a desert auction. Halloween costumes are welcome. A meal of ribs, beans, cornbread and corn on the cob will be available for \$12 per person, or \$10 for kids 9 and younger. For more information, call 541-934-2143.

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Sat & Sun 1:00, 4:15, 7:30
Mon-Thurs 7:00

RON'S GONE WRONG (PG)
Friday 4:20, 7:20
Sat & Sun 1:10, 4:20, 7:20
Mon-Thurs 7:10

NO TIME TO DIE (PG-13)
Friday 4:00, 7:15
Sat & Sun 12:45, 4:00, 7:15
Mon-Thurs 6:45

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For more information **CALL 541-575-1006**

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