



Wednesday, October 27, 2021

153rd Year • No. 43 • 12 Pages • \$1.50

MyEagleNews.com



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
The Dayville Mercantile turns 125 years old this year. It is one of the oldest continuously running general stores in Oregon.

Dayville Mercantile owner fighting to stave off foreclosure

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

DAYVILLE — The owner of the Dayville Mercantile would like to be celebrating the historic store's 125th anniversary, but instead he finds himself fighting to stave off foreclosure.

Founded in 1896, the Old West-style emporium is one of the oldest continuously operating stores in the state, but it might not hold that title much longer: Scott Knapp, who took over ownership of the Dayville Merc at the start of 2020, could be forced to close up shop after representatives of the Graves Family Trust, the store's previous owners, implemented foreclosure proceedings in July.



Scott Knapp

Up until then, according to Knapp, he had been making interest-only payments to the Graves family, an arrangement he worked out after his restaurant hood-cleaning business — which he was using to subsidize the Merc — was forced to shut down for a time because of COVID-19.

Knapp said that the Graves family chose not to renew the interest-only payment plan after June. Instead, he said they offered him \$50,000 to take the Merc back. Knapp called the offer an insult, considering he has spent \$200,000 of his own money to keep the historic general store open.

Graves Family Trust attorney Douglas J. Raab did not immediately respond to the Eagle's request for comment for this story.

However, the trust has been publishing a paid advertisement in the newspaper as part of the foreclosure process. The ad states that Knapp still owes \$489,258.58 on the property, plus interest and past-due payments dating back to February.

If the balance due is not paid in full, along with foreclosure costs and attorneys' fees, the ad states that the Merc will be sold at auction on the steps of the Grant County Courthouse on Dec. 3.

Knapp told the Eagle that seeing the Merc put up for sale has tested him

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Seeding the future



Eagle file photo

The Southern Blues Restoration Coalition, a joint effort of the Blue Mountains Forest Partners and the Harney County Restoration Collaborative, has applied for 10 years of additional funding to continue restoration projects on the Malheur National Forest.

Forestry partners look to extend funding for Malheur restoration

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

A coalition of environmentalists, public land managers and timber industry professionals who found common ground on hot-button forestry issues a decade ago have applied for a 10-year extension of their federal funding at \$4 million per year to continue doing restoration projects on the Malheur National Forest.

According to Craig Trulock, Malheur National Forest supervisor, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has not yet approved a list of prioritized projects to be funded under the Collaborative Federal Landscape Restoration Program, which is intended to encourage ecological and economic sustainability and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

Money for CFLRP projects — including ongoing work on the Mal-

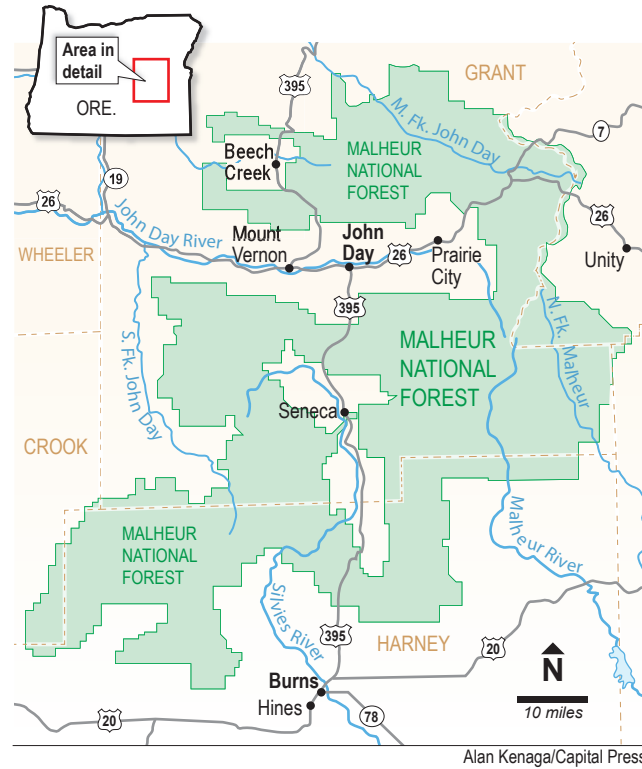
heur by the Southern Blues Restoration Coalition — is supposed to be included in the infrastructure bill working its way through Congress.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding that measure, Trulock said he is confident the funding will come through.

"The proposed appropriations are \$80 (million) to \$100 million that are floating around in Washington," Trulock said. That figure would more than double what the Southern Blues initiative has received in the past, he said.

The Southern Blues Restoration Coalition is a joint effort of Blue Mountains Forest Partners and the Harney County Restoration Collaborative. Both groups are forestry collaboratives, groups of diverse stakeholders formed to find solutions to stubborn forestry issues that satisfy environmental concerns while providing

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Alan Kenagal/Capital Press

New John Day park creates trail link

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Construction is wrapping up for the season on John Day's newest green-space, and while much work remains to be done, the property should really start to look like a park after the next round of improvements in the spring, according to City Manager Nick Green.

Located at the north end of Canton Street, the Hill Family Park sits on 5 acres at the confluence of the John Day River with Canyon and Davis creeks. The park includes significant frontage along the south bank of the river, and a narrow arm of the property follows the east bank of Canyon Creek south toward Gleason Park and the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site.

Canton Street has been extended to provide vehicular access to the new park. Work is wrapping up this week on a parking lot and sidewalks, and finishing touches are being put on the approaches to a recently installed pedestrian and bicycle bridge spanning the John Day River.

A lot of landscaping still needs to be done, and additional work on the park will proceed in phases.



Bennett Hall/Blue Mountain Eagle

John Day City Manager Nick Green stands on the new pedestrian bridge across the John Day River at Hill Family Park.

Eventually, a trail will meander under the mature trees lining the river before looping back to the parking lot, with a possible future extension along the creek to Kam Wah Chung.

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City honored for planning work

The city of John Day has picked up another honor for its community revitalization efforts.

At a conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, on Aug. 22, the John Day Innovation Gateway integrated planning team received the Western Planner President's Award for their contributions, dedication and perseverance in service to their fellow planners. The Western Planner is an organization that represents 14 state planning associations throughout the West.

The team's work included planning for the Innovation Gateway, a multifaceted project on the site of the old Oregon Pine lumber mill and adjacent properties that is envisioned as including an industrial park, hotel, conference facilities, water garden, community gathering space and other amenities. The team is also involved in planning for the city's integrated park system and other developments.

John Day's proposals for the Innovation Gateway and related parks and infrastructure improvements have been recognized before. In 2019, the city was honored with the League of Oregon Cities' Award for Excellence. The next year, John Day was one of 10 cities nationwide to receive the Environmental Protection Agency's Recreational Economies for Rural Communities Award, which came with free technical assistance and a \$4,000 grant.



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