

Wyden holds virtual town hall

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

WASHINGTON — Meeting with Grant County constituents via video-conference, Sen. Ron Wyden fielded questions on a variety of topics during an hourlong virtual town hall meeting on Saturday, March 12.

Speaking from his office in the nation's capital, the Oregon Democrat began by honoring two Grant County public health officials. Wyden presented American flags to Jessica Winegar, Grant County Health Department clinic manager, and Kimberly Lindsay, the Health Department's administrator and executive director of Community Counseling Solutions, and thanked them for their service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"You all are so lucky to have Jessica and Kimberly on the front lines on health care," Wyden told the audience. "Those two really are health care heroes, in every sense of the word."

Grant County Commissioner Jim Hamsher opened the questions from the audience by asking about additional federal funding for timber-dependent counties.

Wyden, who is running for reelection, started by noting that the Secure Rural Schools Act and the payment in lieu of taxes program, both of which he helped create, had brought \$3.5 billion in federal money to the state.

He added that a bill to create an additional path for federal funding to rural counties like Grant was moving through Congress.

"We're out of the Senate and we're working to get it through the House and over the finish line," he said.

Genevieve Perdue of the Blue Mountain Land Trust asked about Wyden's priorities for preserving agricultural lands, and the senator turned the conversation toward forest management and wildfire prevention.

Wyden said he had met with Forest Service Chief Randy Moore to express his support for another long-term stewardship contract on the Malheur National Forest. Wyden helped broker the original 10-year stewardship contract, which he said provided a stable supply of logs for the Malheur Lumber mill in John Day while advancing environmental goals.

Mark Webb, executive director of

Blue Mountains Forest Partners, got emotional talking about the stewardship deal.

"I'll probably start crying," he said, "because it seems you really saved the timber industry in Grant County, and I can't thank you enough for that."

Webb also asked about economic sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine and potential action to address what he called price manipulation by large meatpacking companies. Wyden said he was working on both issues.

First, he said, there would be a bipartisan vote in Congress next week to pass tough trade sanctions against Russia.

"What Russia has done with their inhumane conduct (in Ukraine) is they have forfeited their ability to get the benefits of the international trading system," Wyden said.

He also said there was a bipartisan bill in the works to promote fair competition in the meatpacking industry, which is dominated by a handful of large companies.

"I think there are some very troubling signals coming out of there in terms of anticompetitive practices," he said.

Wyden answered questions on a number of other issues as well, including:

- Medicare coverage for telehealth: "I want to get it expanded."
- Accurate country-of-origin labeling for meat: "I'm very much for it."
- Old-growth logging on public lands: "Responsible logging and responsible land management translates to strong local economies and fits Oregon values."
- Health care: Medicare should be allowed to negotiate for lower drug prices. "Everybody negotiates, but not Medicare."
- Moving Oregon's border: He's against it. "I just feel so strongly that we're all stronger when we are together. Oregon just got a sixth congressional district. Shoot, folks, why would we want to give up our influence in Congress?"
- Creating a no-fly zone over Ukraine: He thinks it could lead to a broader conflict. "I am very, very cautious about that kind of prospect. ... I think these economic sanctions, coupled with assistance to the Ukrainians, have really helped so far."



Wyden

Labhart lands open seat on council

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The odd man out in the last election for the John Day City Council is now the body's newest member.

At the council's March 8 meeting, Chris Labhart was appointed to fill the vacant Position 7 seat left open by the resignation of Paul Smith, who stepped down in January citing health reasons and "other personal circumstances."

Labhart, a retired educator, was one of four people who applied to fill the open spot on the council. The others were small business owner Brian Hubbard, retired Bureau of Land Management planner Liz Aleman and retired serviceman Chris Stauby.

Each of them filed an application listing their background and qualifications for the position and made a brief presentation at the start of the meeting.



Labhart

Labhart received four votes from the six sitting council members, with one vote going to Hubbard, one to Stauby and none to Aleman. The

appointment runs through the end of this year, and the Position 7 seat will go up for election again on the November ballot.

If the last election had turned out differently, Labhart would already have had a council seat.

The November 2020 race ended in a dead heat, with Labhart and Heather Rookstool tied at 470 votes apiece for the last remaining spot on the council. Rookstool secured the position by winning a coin toss.

Labhart took a seat at the council table immediately following his appointment, but he was already familiar with the job: He sat on the

John Day City Council previously, stepping down in 2012 after being elected to the Grant County Court. He has also served a stint as the city's mayor.

In a brief interview after the meeting, Labhart said he thought his previous experience on the council would serve him well. He said he intends to represent the interests of senior citizens and would work to increase the city's housing supply and restore the police department.

He also said he would try to get more Secure Rural Schools Act funding for the city and touted his good working relationship with Grant County Judge Scott Myers.

"I felt my experience as a county commissioner and having been on or led committees throughout the county and the state would help me understand what people want in the community," he said.

Guard wraps deployment at BMH

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — With a declining number of COVID-19 patients and dwindling case counts, the Oregon National Guard ended its staffing assistance for the Blue Mountain Hospital District on March 4.

In mid-January, as the rapidly spreading omicron variant put pressure on health systems all over the country, Blue Mountain Hospital was one of a half-dozen hospitals in Eastern Oregon to receive aid from the Oregon National Guard when Gov. Kate Brown ordered a second relief mission to support strained hospitals across the state.

During the deployment, seven guard members from the Ontario area helped with non-clinical duties and assisted with non-critical tasks such as sanitation and cleaning at the hospital in John Day and Blue Mountain Care Center in Prairie City.

For Sgt. Bailey Frasch, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the mission, the deployment was just part of what the guard does.

Frasch said the deployment took the guard members away from their jobs and their families, but that is

what they signed up for.

"Everybody needs to sacrifice," Frasch said. "Like my soldiers lose time with their kids and their wives."

Frasch, who is not married and does not have any kids, said she did miss her dog.

"It sucks to leave my dog for a long time," she said, "but I'm kind of used to it. (Being away from home) is another job. It's another mission."

Frasch said guard members receive deployment pay when they go on missions, which in her case paid her more than what she earns at her civilian job at an Ontario construction company.

One thing that helped with being away from home, Frasch said, was that she had a friend in the county, Jolynn Radinovich of John Day.

Frasch said Radinovich had her over for home-cooked meals and let her do her laundry at her home instead of having to use the laundromat at the Best Western Hotel in John Day.

The whole community was very hospitable throughout the entire mission, Frasch said. For instance, the members of the John Day Elks Lodge welcomed her and the other members for Taco Tuesdays and Wednesday morning coffee with vet-

erans. Frasch, who joined the guard in 2014, said she had wanted to join the Army since she was a child and saw her Aunt Julia in her fatigues after a deployment with the Washington National Guard.

"Seeing (my aunt) in her uniform and seeing that if she could do it, anybody could do it," Frasch said.

A year into her National Guard career, Frasch said the Defense Department cleared women to serve alongside men in combat roles. Shortly after the announcement, Frasch said she was asked if she wanted to go into the tank corps after basic training.

She said she shrugged off the offer as a joke. However, later that year, Frasch said, her sergeant told her that she would be leaving her fuel attendant job to drive tanks.

Frasch said it did not make any difference to her at the time that, as a woman, the guard had promoted her to the tank battalion.

In the National Guard, Frasch said, she gets to do "cool" things that she would not have had the opportunity to do otherwise.

"Nobody wants to be a fuel attendant for their whole career," she said. "I mean, some people do. I didn't want to."

WHAT'S HAPPENING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

Lenten luncheon

• 11:30 a.m., Redeemer Lutheran Church, 627 SE Hillcrest Road, John Day

Part of a series of lunchtime services during Lent sponsored by the John Day Ministerial Association. Lunch includes choice of soup, bread and beverage, followed by a worship service at 12:15 p.m. For more information, call 541-575-5840.

Jam session

• 6 p.m., Country Preferred Realtors, 121 E. Main St, John Day

The Grant County Jammers will host a jam session every Wednesday starting at 6 p.m. All instruments welcome. The group plays mostly traditional old-time music, includ-



ing bluegrass, country-western, folk, gospel and pop tunes of the 1920-40s. The office will open at 5 for tuneup and setup. For more information, call Ron Phillips at 541-575-1927.

FRIDAY, MARCH 18

'62 Days planning meeting

• 7 p.m., Sel's Brewery, 113 Washington St., Canyon City

Regular weekly meeting of the Whiskey Gulch Gang to plan this year's '62 Days festivities. Anyone who

wants to help is welcome. For more information, call Colby Farrel at 541-620-0874.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

Lenten luncheon

• 11:30 a.m., First Christian Church, 311 NE Dayton St., John Day

Part of a series of lunchtime services during Lent sponsored by the John Day Ministerial Association. Lunch includes choice of soup, bread and beverage, followed by a worship service at 12:15 p.m. For more information, call 541-575-5840.

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FRIDAY, MARCH 25

'62 Days planning meeting

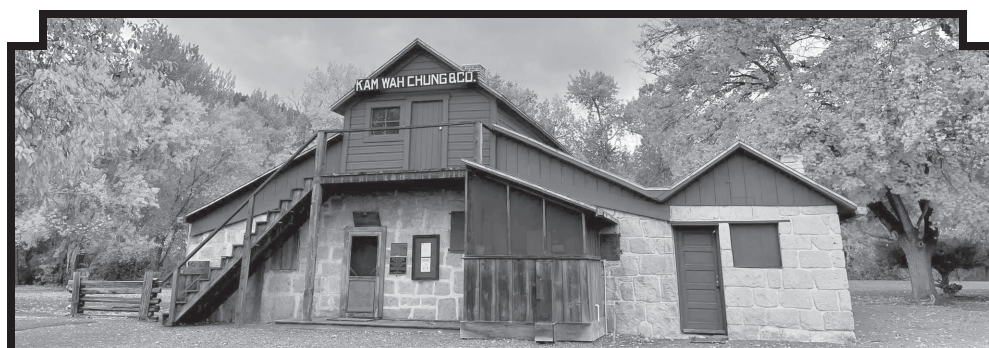
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ivities. Anyone who wants to help is welcome. For more information, call Colby Farrel at 541-620-0874.

Do you have a community event in Grant County you'd like to publicize?

Email information to editor@bmeagle.com. The deadline is noon Friday for publication the following Wednesday.



Design our LOGO

The Friends of Kam Wah Chung & Co. Museum are seeking an emblem logo design that is distinctive, appropriate, practical, graphic and simple in form.

Please refer to our website for design elements...www.friendsokamwahchung.com

This is an open and competitive process for all qualified freelance graphic designers and reputable design firms/agencies. Proposals received after April 1, 2022 will not be considered and will be returned unopened.

The proposal must contain the signature of a duly authorized officer or agent of the company submitting the proposal. If the execution of work to be performed by your company requires the hiring of sub-contractors you must clearly state this in your proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined. In your proposal please provide the name, address, and EIN of the subcontractor. The FoKWC will not refuse a proposal based upon the use of sub-contractors; however we retain the right to refuse the sub-contractors you have selected. The proposal should include the following information:

Proof of qualifications (resume, client recommendations, etc.)

Case studies/examples of work

2-3 logo design outlines/proofs/examples

Written explanation of design proofs and interpretation of the FoKWC vision

Proposal due date: 4:00pm-March 31, 2022

Decision date: April 14, 2022

Project completion date: June 1, 2022

Committee Volunteers Needed

Grant County is now Recruiting Volunteers to Serve on Active Boards and Committees
Applications are Due by WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022

Obtain an application to volunteer in person at 201 S. Humbolt, Canyon City; on the website at grantcountyoregon.net, search volunteer application; or contact (541-575-0059) GCCourtAdmin@grantcounty-or.gov

Committees are formal public bodies required to comply with Oregon Public Meetings Law ORS 192.610.

College Advisory Board

Seven members plus three ex-officio members serve a three year term and meet monthly to promote local educational opportunities and identify educational needs within the community.

Extension & 4-H Service District Advisory Council

Eleven members serve three year terms and meet semi-annually to provide guidance and assistance to local OSU Extension staff in planning, developing, and evaluating balanced educational programs directed to high priority needs of county residents. Membership is limited to one re-appointment.

Extension & 4H Service District Budget Committee

Members include two advisory members and a member-at-large serving three year terms. Annual meetings include the County Court and are held to receive, deliberate, revise and approve the annual budget as provided by the District Budget Officer. Any proposed programs are discussed and considered.

Planning Commission

Nine members serve a four year term and two alternates serve a two year term, meeting as needed to review land use and zoning applications and discuss city and county growth issues and siting new facilities. Members must be residents of various geographic areas within the county and no more than two voting members shall be engaged in the same kind of business, occupation, trade or profession with agriculture designations of livestock / forage crop production and horticulture / specialty crop production. Commissioners serving in this capacity must file an Annual Verified Statement of Economic Interest with the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. Members must re-apply to the County Court before their term ends if they wish to be re-appointed. The commission is a formal public body required to comply with Oregon Public Meetings Law ORS 192.610.

Southeast Area Commission on Transportation

The alliance provides a forum for local government agencies and the private sector to discuss, understand and coordinate long range transportation issues affecting the south east Oregon region including Grant, Harney and Malheur counties. The alliance acts as the Area Commission on Transportation. It reviews the process for determining transportation infrastructure and capital investments in the south east region, recommends priorities, and advises Oregon Transportation Commission on state and regional policies affecting the region's transportation system. Five members, plus one alternate, serve three year terms as Grant County representatives. Daytime meetings are held monthly, or as needed, at locations rotating among the three counties.

Wolf Depredation Advisory Committee

OAR 603-019-0015. Members include one County Commissioner, two members who own or manage livestock and two members who support wolf conservation or coexistence with wolves. These members agree upon two business representatives to serve as additional members. The committee oversees the procedure established by Grant County for its Wolf Depredation Compensation Program. The current vacancy is for a business representative.