

Louis Dix set to replace outgoing superintendent

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle



Dix

CANYON CITY — Louis Dix, the principal of Roosevelt Elementary School in Klamath Falls, is set to replace retiring Grant School District Superintendent Bret Uptmor. Dix becomes the head administrator to the 496-student in district in taking the position.

The hire was announced at the March 16 Grant School Board meeting in Canyon City. Dix will assume his new duties on July 1, the day after Uptmor officially retires.

Compensation for the position is \$142,000 annually.

Dix comes to Grant County from Klamath Falls but has had a connection to the community for many years.

“From my earliest memories as a child, I’ve been in the John Day area. Our hunting camp is just outside Prairie City, and I’m an avid fly fisherman and I love to fish the Logan Valley area just outside Seneca,” Dix said.

“I love the area and the whole county is just beautiful. I’m really excited for this opportunity and to get a chance to move there and become a part of the community,” he added.

Dix has been in education for 30 years, starting his career in 1992 in Sweet Home at Hawthorne Elementary. Dix later moved on to Sweet Home Middle School and began teaching leadership and English before becoming the assistant principal.

Dix was a coach for the wrestling team at Sweet Home High School, helping lead the team to state championships

in 1997, 1998 and again in 2007. Dix was also the head boys soccer coach for Sweet Home High.

Following his time in Sweet Home, Dix was recruited to Medford and took over as the assistant principal at North Medford High School for three years. Dix later transitioned to the role of head principal at the elementary level in Medford and held that position for nine years.

Dix’s final stop before taking the job as superintendent of Grant County Schools is his current role as principal of Roosevelt Elementary in Klamath Falls.

Dix has been in his current position for three years.

“I’m excited for this opportunity,” Dix said when speaking of the superintendent post in Grant County. “I wasn’t searching for superintendent jobs across the state, but when this one popped up, my wife and I talked about it and we decided if I was going to move for a job, this would be it.”

Dix says throughout the past five years he’s been called for multiple superintendent jobs but none of them fit him and his family in the way the Grant School District one did.

Grant School District set to hire resource officer

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Grant County Sheriff’s Office and Grant School District have tentatively agreed on a contract to bring a new student resource officer, or SRO, to the district.

The hire will give the district its first SRO since the John Day Police Department was abolished in October. The new officer would start working at Grant Union Junior/Senior High School, Humbolt Elementary and Seneca School at the beginning of the 2022-2023 academic year.

Speaking at a school board meeting on March 16, 2022, Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley said the program involves more than just placing an officer in schools and policing students. Citing his own experience as a resource officer at Grant Union, McKinley said the new SRO would also serve as a teacher and mentor to students. The SRO is a police officer first, so the safety of students and staff both at schools and school-sanctioned events is the priority.

According to an inter-governmental agreement between the Sheriff’s Office and Grant School District, the first year of the contract would be a trial run that would automatically be extended into the 2023-2024 fiscal year if the program proves to be mutually

beneficial, financially sustainable and neither party wishes to alter the initial agreement.

The new school resource officer would come from the ranks of the Grant County sheriff’s deputies. The district has agreed to pay the Sheriff’s Office the sum of \$80,000 per year for the services of the new SRO. Sheriff McKinley said he hopes that the money can be used to hire another patrol deputy and alleviate some of the strain on his already overstretched county police force.

The SRO’s duties would include being physically present on school grounds during morning drop-off, at open campus lunch periods, and when students are leaving campus for the day. The resource officer would also attend home athletic events and other large student gatherings such as homecoming and prom.

The resource officer would also need to leave campus to respond to emergency calls throughout the county if necessary. School officials and the Sheriff’s Office are still working out details regarding pay and compensation should county law enforcement duties take the SRO away from schools for extended periods of time. A final, complete agreement between the county sheriff and school district is expected to be presented and voted on during the next school board meeting on April 20.

Pool bond survives court challenge

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — The \$4 million bond measure to raise funds for a new community pool in John Day has withstood a legal challenge from two local residents.

A request for a ballot title was filed on Feb. 23 by Lisa Weigum of the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District and was approved by County Clerk Brenda Percy to appear on the May 17 election ballot.

On March 4, Charlene Morris and Shaun Robertson filed a petition in Grant County Circuit Court raising several objections to the ballot title and asking the court to change the language of the measure as it would appear on the ballot.

Both Morris and Robertson are Grant County residents and both own property in the parks and rec district, according to their court filing.

In their petition, Morris and Robertson objected to all three parts of the bond measure’s ballot title: the 10-word caption, the 20-word question and the 175-word summary.

As proposed by the parks and rec district, the caption

reads “General Obligation Bonds for Pool Facility.” The petition argued that the phrase “pool facility” was misleading because officials of the parks and rec district and the city of John Day have consistently referred to the project as an “aquatic center.”

Morris and Robertson also claimed that the caption might fool voters into believing that the bond measure would cover operations costs as well as construction expenses.

The petitioners also challenged the ballot measure’s question, which reads: “Shall John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District issue \$4,000,000 in bonds to finance a pool facility?”

As with the caption, Morris and Robertson argued that this part of the ballot title was misleading because it uses the phrase “pool facility” and fails to clarify that proceeds from the bond sales will be used for construction and not for operations.

The longer summary section, the petitioners claimed, contains additional statements that serve to “prejudicially and unfairly mislead voters,” including using the phrase “office space” to refer to multiple offices; using the phrase

“multipurpose room” instead of “party room”; and using the word “improvements” to refer to new construction. Finally, they argued, the summary violated the “single-subject rule” for Oregon ballot measures by saying there would be a citizens oversight committee to monitor how the bond funds are spent.

The parks and rec district and the city of John Day, represented by Weigum and City Manager Nick Green, defended the ballot title by arguing that it met all legal requirements and was not misleading.

Umatilla County Circuit Judge Wes Williams presided over a 90-minute hearing on the matter Wednesday, March 16. (Williams was filling in for Grant County Circuit Judge Rob Raschio, who recused himself because of a potential conflict in the case.)

After hearing arguments from both sides, Williams declined to make any changes to the ballot title’s language, saying he did not find it misleading. Citing an Oregon Supreme Court ruling in another case, he added that his role was limited to determining whether the title met the letter of the law.

“It’s not my job to rewrite the ballot (title) or find a bet-

ter way to say it,” Williams concluded.

“I am going to hold that the ballot title for the measure meets the requirements of ORS 250.037, and I am going to certify it.”

The measure will appear on the May 17 ballot for voters who live within the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District. If the measure is approved, the district will issue \$4 million in general obligation bonds to be repaid over 20 years through taxes on property within the district.

The estimated tax rate is 70 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. For the owner of a property valued at \$150,000, that would mean an additional \$105 a year in property tax payments.

The money would go toward the construction of a six-lane, 25-yard pool and adjoining structure with locker rooms, office space and a multipurpose room at the Seventh Street Sports Complex in John Day.

The overall price tag for the project is estimated at \$6 million; a \$2 million state grant would cover the difference between the bond proceeds and the total construction costs.

WHAT’S HAPPENING



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.

FRIDAY, MARCH 25
’62 Days planning meeting
• 7 p.m., Sel’s Brewery, 113 Washington St., Canyon City

of Hungary Catholic Church, 111 SW Second Ave., 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.

FRIDAY, APRIL 1
Fundraising dinner and bingo
• 5 p.m., Mt. Vernon Community Hall, 640 Ingle St., Mt. Vernon

The evening begins at 5 p.m. with a taco dinner to help cover medical expenses for Jaelyn Clarry, who is awaiting a kidney transplant. Tacos are \$6 apiece or two for \$10, with all the fixings. A bingo fundraiser for the Grant Union High School Class of 2026 starts at 6. The cost to play is \$5 per card.

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.

OREGON CAPITAL INSIDER
We’re investing in Salem coverage when other news organizations are cutting back.
Get the inside scoop on state government and politics!

Karen Shelton, Jamie Wright and all Grant Union Staff. We have fought some Battles the last two years but here we are Breathing, and Kicking!
GO Pros!
To Ryan Gerry a BIG shout out, You the Man!
GU Custodial Crew.
5286180-1

MARK WEBB FOR Grant County Commissioner
WRITE IN MARK WEBB for Grant County Commissioner
x Mark Webb
Paid for by Mark Webb for County Commissioner.
5285994-1

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.
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