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Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

Corum Ketchum has been hired to fill the newly created position of community development director for John Day.

John Day hires project director

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — When Corum Ketchum was studying community development in college, his mentor, Joe Marushack, told him to “find communities where awesome happens.” That mindset has led Ketchum to John Day.

Ketchum was hired to fill the newly created position of community development director. He started his duties remotely on March 8 and has since relocated to the area.

The University of Oregon graduate brings considerable knowledge and experience to John Day as he takes over the role of community development director for the city's various grant-funded projects.

City Manager Nick Green says discussions regarding the need for the position started several years ago as the number of projects increased. Green said the city can get the funds for these projects but “you still need somebody to do the work” of implementing them.

Ketchum's duties will include interfacing with the public about ongoing projects and explaining why the city is undertaking those projects as well as getting feedback from the community.

Overseeing Main Street revitalization efforts, parks development, the Kam Wah Chung infrastructure improvements, the aquatic center buildout (if approved by voters) and coordinating with the Ford Family Foundation's Grow Rural Oregon program are all things that Ketchum will be tackling as community development director.

Ketchum says the variety

of projects the city is currently undertaking is what brought him to John Day.

The 29-year-old already has two years of rural community development work under his belt, using rural community growth strategies much like those proposed for John Day in the rural town of Veneta, west of Eugene. He also has community development experience in the Salem suburb of Dallas.

Ketchum says he wants the community to know he's “here to help” and that he has experience working in rural communities.

Green says there were several qualified applicants when the position of John Day community development director needed to be filled, but Ketchum's experience and education in community development set him apart from all the other candidates for the position.

The job pays \$64,620 per year, half of which will be funded by the Ford Foundation's Grow Rural Oregon program for a five-year span. Green says that deal was “hard to pass up” considering the community has a genuine need for the position and would only be paying half the cost to fill it. Green says he was doing much of the work Ketchum is slated to undertake and hopes that the hire takes a lot of things off of his plate.

Green also expects the position of community development director to continue to be filled after the Ford Foundation's GRO funding for the position expires in five years.

“I don't see the projects stopping,” Green said. “I think the position will continue and the need for the position will continue.”

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

Trooper William Blood stands beside his patrol car on Tuesday, April 5, 2022. The Oregon State Police recognized Blood for helping a busload of stranded teenagers in Prairie City.

State trooper comes to the rescue with pizza for hungry high-schoolers

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — A broken-down school bus, hungry teenagers and a concerned Oregon State Police trooper all crossed paths on the night of Feb. 11, and the outcome was a win for all concerned.

Trooper William Blood, working out of OSP's John Day outpost, was on patrol that Friday when he came across a disabled Union High School bus on the side of Highway 26 in Prairie City and approached to check on the occupants, who turned out to be the school's boys and girls basketball teams.

The engine was still running, so the bus had heat, but Blood learned the basketball players would be stuck in the area for some time as their replacement bus made its way to their location from Union. He also learned the kids riding the bus were hungry and that no restaurants or convenience stores were open in the immediate area.

Blood then drove the 13 miles to John Day and found lights on in The Outpost restaurant, but the establishment was closed. But he saw a woman working inside and knocked on the door.

After he explained the situation, the



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

The Oregon State Police challenge coins awarded to Trooper William Blood.

woman agreed to turn the ovens back on and make five large pizzas for the stranded kids. Blood paid for the pizzas — two pepperonis, one Hawaiian, a meat lover's and a combo — out of his own pocket and delivered the food to the hungry kids back in Prairie City.

Blood has worked in law enforcement for 20 years. His first posting was as a police officer in Cornelius, southwest of Portland, in 2002. From there, he made his way to the Hillsboro Police Department in late 2009. In

November of 2018 Blood was hired by the Oregon State Police, and he's been stationed in John Day since early 2019.

Blood has a son on the John Day basketball team, and on Feb. 11 he combined all of his breaks for the day into one in order to go watch him play against the Union team that evening. Following the game, Blood returned to work and spotted the broken-down bus while on patrol in Prairie City.

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County opens 2022-23 budget process

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — The Grant County Budget Committee met on Monday, April 4, to start the process of creating a budget for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

County Treasurer Julie Ellison is proposing a balanced budget of just under \$93.7 million, up about \$6.2 million from \$87.4 million in the current fiscal year. The budget projects a county work force of 83.58 full-time-equivalent employees, up from 80.74 FTE in 2021-22.

Ellison's financial plan will be evaluated and discussed in detail by the budget committee, which consists of the three Grant County Court members and three citizens. Ultimately, the committee will make a final budget proposal which must then be approved



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The Grant County Budget Committee has begun meeting to determine the county's budget for 2022-23.

by the court.

While Monday's discussion did not include the topic of law enforcement funding, the issue loomed large none-

theless as the county's draft budget included a \$300,000 contribution from John Day to cover the cost of bringing on three more patrol deputies to

the Grant County Sheriff's Office — despite the John Day City Council's earlier rejection of the county's fee-for-service proposal.

Ellison said she had been told that the county could use \$700,000 in federal COVID-19 relief funding should city and county officials not reach an agreement before the budget committee finishes its work, which must be completed before the end of the fiscal year on June 30. According to County Commissioner Jim Hamsher, federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act can be used for law enforcement.

However, ahead of Monday's meeting Hamsher said he would rather the county present a counteroffer to the city that is similar to Prairie City's agreement with the Sheriff's Office.

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