

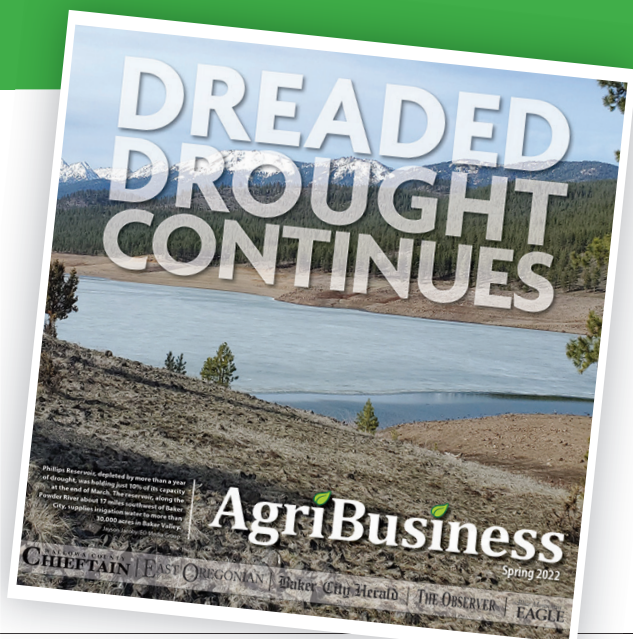
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A GREATER LEVEL OF EMPATHY



Hannah Wall, a Prairie City High School student, organized a Dig Pink volleyball game for her senior project after a cancer scare when she was 13 years old. The event raised \$3,000 to help purchase a 3D mammography machine for Blue Mountain Hospital.

WHAT IS A MAMMOGRAM?

A mammogram is like an X-ray of the breast. It can detect breast cancer up to two years before the tumor can be felt by a doctor.

3D mammography, or digital breast tomosynthesis, generates a stack of 1 mm slice images ("layers") of breast tissue.

Instead of viewing the complexities of a patient's breast tissue in one flat image, a radiologist can examine the tissue one layer at a time. As a result, fine details are more clearly visible, no longer hidden by overlapping tissue.

A near-miss with breast cancer inspires fundraising effort

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

A Prairie City High School student became passionate about fighting breast cancer through early detection after finding a lump on her breast.

While the growth was non-cancerous, Hannah Wall, a senior at Prairie City High School, was still fired up — so much so that she raised \$3,000 last fall for the Dig Pink campaign to help fund a new 3D mammography machine at Blue Mountain Hospital for her senior project.

In 2018, after recognizing what turned out to be a benign tumor, Wall — who was 13 at the time — had to have

"YOU HAVE A HEALTHY KID AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN SHE'S LIKE, 'MOM, I HAVE A LUMP,' AND IT WAS OF A SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH SIZE THAT YOU COULD SEE IT THROUGH THE SKIN."

Heather Wall, Hannah's mother

surgery to remove the lump.

The experience left a lasting impression on Hannah and on her mother, Heather, as well.

For her part, Heather said the experience was "terrifying."

"You have a healthy kid and then all of a sudden she's like, 'Mom, I have a lump,' and it was of a significant enough

size that you could see it through the skin," Heather said.

Both Hannah and Heather remember that day.

The family was carving pumpkins for Halloween. Hannah said she got pumpkin guts all over her shirt, and when she went to change, her mother came up to her and said, "What is that?"

From there, Hannah and Heather said, a month went by where the family did not know what they could be facing.

"It was very nerve-racking," Hannah said.

She said doctors had to do exams, and as soon as the lump was detected on an ultrasound, they called a specialist in Bend.

During that time, Hannah said, she kept what she was going through between just her and her family.

"I wanted to tell my friends what I was going through, but I knew that it would make me more nervous if I did," she said.

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Law enforcement dominates budget talks

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Law enforcement funding took center stage at Grant County's second budget meeting on Wednesday, April 13, with suggestions for filling the financial shortfall in the Sheriff's Office ranging from cutting a non-mandated county department to floating a bond measure.

Sheriff Todd McKinley told the county's budget committee — which consists of the three Grant County Court members



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle
Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley addresses the county's budget committee on Wednesday, April 13, 2022.

and three citizens — that he needs to add three patrol deputies and one secretary.

Citizen budget member Amy Kreger asked McKinley how he would fund the budget request if the roles were reversed.

McKinley told Kreger that he did not have the budget committee's insight.

"I don't sit and look at the county's budget and say, 'I'd like to have this department's funds,'" McKinley said.

Kreger said she did not want to bring up the "elephant in the room," but asked if the county was still in talks with the city of John Day about a law enforcement services contract.

McKinley said he did not know to what extent the county and the city were still talking, but he said the discussions were still ongoing. That said, McKinley added,

he does not know if there is going to be a contract.

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.

John Day and Grant County officials have been at loggerheads since October, when the John Day City Council voted unanimously to suspend operations of the city's police force and offered to pay the county \$300,000 a year to hire three sheriff's deputies to provide law enforcement services in the city limits.

During a heated session of Grant County Court, John Day City Manager Nick Green laid out a proposal for the county to give the city \$300,000 a year from its road fund to pay for street improvements to serve new housing developments in John Day, on the theory that housing starts in the city would broaden the tax base for the entire county.

Although the Grant County Court has not formally deliberated on the city's proposal, court members have been steadfast in their opposition to the idea

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Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

OTC Connections truck on Monday, April 18, 2022, in John Day.

OTC extends high-speed fiber lines

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Oregon Telephone Corp. is gearing up to bring high-speed fiber optic internet lines to the communities of Monument, Seneca and Long Creek after a nearly three-year planning process involving the city of John Day and Grant County Digital.

The project is being funded by an \$8 million US Department of Agriculture grant that requires a 25% match. The match funds come in the form of a \$1 million investment from Oregon Telephone in conjunction with another \$500,000 grant from the city of John Day and a separate \$500,000 loan from the city. The loan carries a 5% interest rate that will be forgiven if the project is completed in 24 months. Oregon Telephone projects that will be done by the end of the construction season this year.

Oregon Telephone Corp.'s Marcus Bott says the project was initially smaller in scale but eventually went on to encompass other small communities within the county. "We had plans to go just to Long Creek," he said. "We were going to build that ourselves. The city had

some goals they were looking at, so the USDA opened up a grant application that would allow us to meet our goals."

Later meetings with Grant County Digital — a government consortium that involves the county and the cities of John Day and Seneca — revealed some overlapping goals that led to bringing all those ideas together into one project with a larger scale.

Meanwhile, \$1.8 million in federal COVID relief funding will help patch holes within John Day's fiber optic network by extending fiber optic out to the airport, industrial park, the new Innovation Gateway business park, and Ironwood Estates. It will also connect critical community facilities in John Day to a common, shared network, capable of providing internet service between educational institutions and first responders in the event of a disaster, according to John Day City Manager Nick Green. Some of the money will pay for interior renovation of the future John Day CyberMill.

Oregon Telephone already provides high-speed internet service in John Day, Prairie City,

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