

City gets permit for sewer plant

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The city of John Day has obtained a discharge permit from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality for a new wastewater treatment plant. The current plant, built in 1949, received its last major upgrade in 1978 and is in a state of disrepair.

John Day's current sewer plant is located on the north side of the John Day River near the west end of Seventh Street and serves about 2,400 residential, business and institutional customers within the urban growth boundaries of John Day and Canyon City.

The facility has been operating with an expired discharge permit for 15 years. John Day City Manager Nick Green says obtaining the new permit now makes operating the new facility possi-

ble. With plans to build a new replacement plant having been in the works for over a decade, one of the last remaining holdups to the project is no longer an issue.

The city is now getting ready to solicit bids for the "package plant," a prefabricated sewage treatment plant that would be the heart of the new facility. Green says the funds are already on hand to improve the new site, which is located in the northwest corner of the Innovation Gateway district, roughly a mile west of the current plant.

The city also has funding to purchase the package plant, according to Green. The plant will be assembled off-site.

The budget estimate for the project is \$17.5 million. The city has \$6.5 million in grant funding for the project as well as preliminary approval for another \$11 million in funds

from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The USDA funds will be made up of a mix of grants and loans, with the ratios to be determined.

With the new sewage plant, the city plans on building a reclamation system that would allow approximately 80 million gallons of treated wastewater a year to be reused rather than discharged into the ground to eventually find its way into the John Day River.

The wastewater will be treated to Class A standards, which is the highest level of treatment. While still not approved for drinking, it can be used for almost any other purpose. "It's bottled water quality," Green said.

A planned "purple pipe" distribution system would carry the treated water from the plant to end-users. Green says uses for the reclaimed water could include fill-up stations for fire tenders, irriga-

tion for agriculture, parks and water features, log deck cooling for Malheur Lumber and even data center cooling, provided the city is able to attract that type of business to the Innovation Gateway.

Leftover treated wastewater would be discharged into underground basins, where it would eventually filter into the aquifer. The city would no longer need the percolation ponds to the north of the river that hold treated wastewater from the current treatment plant under these conditions.

Once the purple pipe system is operational, the city estimates it could generate around \$60,000 a year in reclaimed water sales, which could be used to buy down sewer rates. The current sewer rates are comparable to Portland's at \$60 a month.

Green says construction is projected to begin on the new site this fall.

John Day man faces sex crime charges

CANYON CITY — A John Day resident is facing multiple child sex crime charges in Grant County Circuit Court.

Travis James Freniere was arraigned on Friday, April 22, on a grand jury indictment charging him with three counts of first-degree sexual abuse and two counts of first-degree sodomy.

According to the indictment, the crimes occurred between May 30, 2016, and May 29, 2019, in Grant County. The alleged victim in the case was a girl under the age of 14.

Freniere has not yet entered a plea in the case, and his attorneys could not be reached for comment.

All of the crimes Freniere is accused of committing are Measure 11

offenses. The sodomy charges carry a mandatory minimum sentence of eight years and four months in prison, while the mandatory minimum for the sex abuse charges is six years and three months.

Freniere is being represented by Kathleen Erin Dunn and William Thomson of Strawberry Mountain Law, according to court records. Freniere was being held in the Grant County Jail, with bail set at \$50,000.

Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter is listed as the prosecutor in the case, and Circuit Court Judge Rob Raschio is presiding.

A plea hearing is scheduled for May 13 in Grant County Circuit Court.



Cars and vendors occupy the parking lot on Wednesday, April 20, 2022, at the Rocky Mountain Dispensary west of John Day.

Dispensary celebrates 4/20

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Rocky Mountain Dispensary held a 4/20 celebration on Wednesday, April 20, complete with local vendors and product discounts to celebrate the occasion.

The date April 20 (4/20) has come to be connected with cannabis culture, growing out of an earlier association with smoking marijuana at 4:20 p.m.

Owner Cindy Kidd says events like this year's would've taken place in the past but the COVID-19 pan-

demic canceled those plans. The event this year was the last at the marijuana dispensary's current location west of the John Day city limits before a move into town sometime in May.

Vendor booths at the event included many you'd see at the local street fair, including homemade knives by veterans Freddie Columbus and Clell Schaefer, leatherwork by Johnny Lane and various natural oils and body-works stands. All vendors at the event were from Grant County.

Kidd says all of the vendors are customers of the dis-

pensary and they all wanted to be a part of the event with it being the last 4/20 celebration at the current location.

"It's really a customer appreciation day. We wanted to make sure everybody leaves here with something," Kidd said.

"It's a big thank you because the people here voted us in, and without them we wouldn't be here. On this day we try to be as generous as we can. We donate a lot to this community and we try really hard to give back."

Kidd also says she'd like to see the event get bigger with more vendors in the

coming years. "If the people want to support, let them support."

The move to the new facility is on track, according to Kidd. "We're waiting on (Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission) inspections and we have to finish our security system," she said. "The COVID stuff has been relaxed, so now they're willing to come out and check us out."

Kidd says the city of John Day has been very accommodating and the dispensary is planning on completing the move to the new facility sometime in May.

Easterday bankruptcy settlement filed

By DON JENKINS
Capital Press

YAKIMA, Washington — A tentative settlement has been reached to allocate money from the fraud-driven bankruptcy sale of Cody Easterday's farms in Eastern Washington.

The agreement between the Easterday family and creditor committees was filed late Thursday, April 14, in U.S. Bankruptcy Court. During a brief conference Friday, April 15, Judge Whitman Holt in Yakima set a hearing on the settlement for Tuesday, April 19.

"I think it's terrific news that there appears to be peace in the valley," Holt said.

Easterday filed for bankruptcy more than a year ago shortly before pleading guilty to defrauding Tyson Fresh Meats out of \$233 million. He supplied cattle to Tyson, but billed the company for more cattle than he delivered.

Easterday is set to be sentenced June 13 in U.S. District Court for wire fraud. He faces up to 20 years in prison, according to federal prosecutors.

The bankruptcy settlement provides a framework for distributing proceeds from the liquidation of Easterday Farms and Easterday Ranches. Both companies were owned and directed by Cody Easterday and his wife and mother.

The agreement "paves the

way for a 100% recovery to general unsecured creditors of Farms and a material recovery to general unsecured creditors of Ranches,"

according to the filing.

The Easterday's holdings included 22,500 acres of farmland in the Columbia Basin. Farmland Reserve Inc. bought the land, stretching over several farms in Benton County, for \$209 million in July.

Under the settlement, Easterday family members won't net any money from the sale, but will keep other property, including an onion storage shed in Pasco and land in Idaho appraised at \$9.2 million.

The agreement would shield Cody Easterday's wife and mother from being held responsible for allegedly failing to detect or stop the fraud.

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★ APRIL 29- MAY 5 ★

THE NORTHMAN (R)	
Friday	4:10, 7:10
Sat & Sun	1:10, 4:10, 7:10
Mon-Thurs	7:10

THE BAD GUYS (PG)	
Friday	4:20, 7:20
Sat & Sun	1:20, 4:20, 7:20
Mon-Thurs	7:20

FANTASTIC BEASTS SECRETS OF DUMBLEDORE (PG-13)	
Friday	4:00, 7:00
Sat & Sun	1:00, 4:00, 7:00
Mon-Wed	7:00

DR. STRANGE MULTIVERSE OF MADNESS (PG-13)	
Opens Thurs May 5th at 7:00	

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

THURSDAY, APRIL 28
County commissioner candidate debate

3-5 p.m., John Day Fire Hall, 316 S Canyon Blvd.

The Grant County Republican Central Committee will host a debate among the three candidates for a seat on the Grant County Court: Scott Knepper, Mark Webb and John Rowell. The committee will also recruit people to fill 10 open precinct committee person positions. The public is welcome to attend.

FRIDAY, APRIL 29
'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.



THURSDAY, MAY 5
Prairie City School Kindergarten Roundup

• 3 p.m., Mrs. Sharp's room, Prairie City School, 740 Overholt St.

Parents can sign their child up for kindergarten. Children must turn 5 before Sept. 1 to be eligible. Bring a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunization record.

FRIDAY, MAY 6
'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.

SATURDAY, MAY 7
Jaelyn Clarry Transplant Fundraiser

• 5-8 p.m., John Day Elks Lodge, 140 NE Dayton St.

A benefit dinner of pulled pork or chicken with beans and coleslaw, plus a silent auction, live dessert auction and raffle. Proceeds go toward medical expenses for Jaelyn Clarry of John Day, a mother of four awaiting a donor for a kidney transplant. To help with the event or donate auction items, call Bonnie Cearns at 541-571-3284 or Patty Ross at 541-620-4841.

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.

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