

BMW riders roll into John Day

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The Chief Joseph Rally returned to the Grant County Fairgrounds this year following a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Camping tents and a plethora of BMW motorcycles of all types and ages once again filled the grassy area beside Trowbridge Pavilion over the course of the three-day event. The rally started Thursday, June 16, and concluded the night of Saturday, June 18, with riders leaving town the following day.

The event was sponsored by BMW Riders of Oregon and drew riders from all over the Western United States and parts of Canada. Guided rides, riding instruction, speakers, seminars and nightly motorcycle movies were some of the activities the rallygoers participated in over the course of the event.

BMW Riders of Oregon



Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

A BMW R50/5 motorcycle with sidecar sits at the Grant County Fairgrounds on Saturday, June 18, 2022. John Day was the headquarters for the BMW Riders of Oregon's annual Chief Joseph Rally.

rally chair Alice LeBarron said the group is passionate about BMW bikes, but owning one isn't necessary to join their club.

"Our club and this rally are really open to having other brands of bikes," she said. "It's people who are of the same mindset, basically."

LeBarron said she thinks a lot of people have moved to BMW motorcycles over the

years due to the number of different models the company makes that cater to different riding styles and preferences.

LeBarron said she's been coming to the rally in John Day since 2012 and that she even came over the two years that the rally was canceled due to COVID: "The two years that we didn't have our rally ... I came here with a few friends

and we camped out and had an unrally."

While LeBarron said there isn't much interaction between the rally and the community, she added that anybody who is curious about riding or anything concerning BMW Riders of Oregon is always welcome to attend the rally and have their questions answered.

LeBarron said there were 277 people registered to attend the rally but that the overall number of attendees was a "bit lower than normal" due to the national BMW rally in Springfield, Missouri, being held over the same weekend as Chief Joseph.

She added that Grant County is always a place she looks forward to visiting every year and that she enjoys working with Mindy Winegar and her staff at the fairgrounds.

"We'll keep coming here," LeBarron said. "There is such great riding here, and the location just works for us."

Murals planned for John Day

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — Downtown John Day is headed for a makeover.

The Grant County Art Association and various unaffiliated artists are looking to paint a number of murals on the sides of downtown businesses in a project they're calling "Paint the town." That proposal is in addition to the city's ongoing efforts to revitalize and update the look of downtown John Day.

The Grant County Art Association is a nonprofit entity that has existed since 1968. Association President Louise Boren said the association "has been strong in the community, but we've been silent."

Boren presented a proposal for murals to the John Day City Council during its June 14 meeting. The proposal calls for between seven and 10 murals to be painted on the sides of various businesses along Main Street.

Designs for the murals will focus on people and events relevant to the history of Grant County, including logging, ranching, gold prospecting, Native Americans, cattle drives, rodeo and the exploits of Long Un and Doc Hay.

Boren approached the City Council seeking financial support so her team of artists can begin work on the murals as soon as possible. The council unanimously approved \$750 in funds that will cover paint and

other materials the artists need to begin the work.

Grant County Art Association Secretary and Treasurer Kathy Kite said the group has already been in contact with a number of local business owners about painting murals on their buildings and the response has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Of course, we need building owner permission before we started in, and we would have our compositions put together for review before we started in," she said. "We thought it could be a fun enhancement for the town."

Kite said the idea to paint murals on businesses came up during talks between various artists and that everyone "perked up" when the idea was presented.

"It sounds like the City Council is trying to get tourism to be an attraction to bring people into the area, and we thought that would fit right in; also to keep our town looking Old West, which seems to be more important all the time," she said. "As time goes on, those things fade away."

The artists would complete work on one mural before starting another project, according to Kite. "We aren't going to just start drawing all over town and painting here and there."

Any businesses along Main Street that are interested in having a mural painted on their buildings can contact Boren at 541-388-4698 or Kite at 541-520-3143.

Iron Triangle lands biomass grant

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

SENECA — The U.S. Forest Service has awarded Iron Triangle upwards of \$500,000 to process non-saw biomass more efficiently at its post and pole facility in Seneca.

King Williams of King-inc, a subcontractor with Iron Triangle, said the grant would help create a cleaner, more efficient debarking system and help the post and pole facility

process its non-saw biomass.

Williams said the two-year grant would also help create a more economically efficient separation of waste products from debarking and pole processing into salable and non-salable products and promote the conversion of non-salable residue to biochar and electrical power.

Williams said Iron Triangle monitors for grant opportunities and stays in contact with the regional U.S. Forest

Service personnel who handle grants. He said Iron Triangle came up with a 65% match for the project's costs.

He said Iron Triangle has hired "numerous" employees and currently offers more than 20 family-wage jobs at the Seneca Post and Pole facility.

There are two goals for this project, Williams said. The first is to use as much of the non-saw biomass removed from the forest as possible for posts, poles, firewood,

and wood-generated energy to minimize the need to chip and sell low-value chips to the pulp market. The second is to use a more economically and environmentally friendly process to manufacture the non-saw biomass, producing a cleaner and more segregated product.

He said it would create more marketable material and process and convert residual wood waste into electrical energy and biochar.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



FRIDAY, JUNE 24
Canyon City Street Fair
• 3-7 p.m., downtown Canyon City

Free event, sponsored by Oregon RAIN, with music, food, games, art and vendor booths staffed by local artisans.

"Uncovering the History of Chinese Mining in Eastern Oregon"

• 7 p.m., Canyon City Community Hall, 129 S. Washington St.

Free presentation by Donn Hann, William F. Willingham and Katee Withee on the history of Chinese mining companies in Eastern Oregon. Sponsored by the Oregon Historical Society.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25
Summer Kickoff 5K

• 8 a.m., Grant County Fairgrounds, 411 NW Bridge St., John Day

The John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District and Grant County CHIC sponsor this 5K walk/run event, which starts and ends at the fairgrounds. Registration is free for those 18 or under and \$5 for adults. To register online, go to <https://tinyurl.com/yhey33pc>.

Thadd's Place Golf Tournament

• 8 a.m., John Day Golf Club, 27631 Golf Club Road

Sign-in begins at 7 a.m., with tee-off at 8. A dinner and silent auction follow the tournament at 5 p.m. Individual registration is \$125, team registration is \$500. Dinner is by donation and is open to anyone. Proceeds benefit Thadd's Place, the grief counseling center in John Day. To register, call 541-620-2572

or email thaddspace@blue-mountainhospital.org.

Grant County Farmers Market

• 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., South Washington Street, Canyon City

Locally-grown produce and other items for sale in an open-air setting every Saturday from mid-June through mid-October.

TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28 & 29

"In a Landscape: Classical Music in the Wild"

• 6:30 p.m., Cant Ranch, 32651 Highway 19, Kimberly

Classical pianist Hunter Noack will perform two concerts on the grounds of the Cant Ranch at the John Day Fossil Beds. Tickets start at \$35 but are available free to Grant and Wheeler County residents with reg-

istration. Tickets available online at <https://tinyurl.com/52pn66w5>. More information at <https://www.inalandscape.org/>.

FRIDAY, JULY 1
Dayville Community Hall reopening

• 3:30-9 p.m., Highway

26, Dayville

This celebration marks the grand reopening of the old community hall, which has undergone a major renovation. The festivities begin with a ribbon cutting at 3:30 p.m., followed by building tours, a program at 4:30, a potluck at 5:30 and music

by the James Gang starting 6:30.

Do you have a community event you'd like to publicize? Email information to editor@bmeagle.com. The deadline is noon Friday for publication the following Wednesday.

Hill Family Park Dedication - John Day, Oregon

JUNE 8, 2022

Thank you to the City of John Day and for all of those involved that made this vision for the Hill Family Park come to life.

The Hill story in Grant County started with a family moving West for more favorable weather.

David Christopher (DC) Sr. and Hattie May Hill were both born and raised in the Mississippi Delta. They grew to a family of ten with eight children. There were two girls: Eunice (Frank) Stout and Elizabeth (RJ) Davis and six boys: David Christopher Jr (Virginia Metts), Robert (Lucille Gober), William (Dessie Butler), Mack (Dorothy Morehead), Paul (Janice McKrola), and Lamar (Ernestine Silvers). DC Sr. was a farmer and owned several grocery/retail stores. The damp weather and losses from the depression eventually brought them to Eastern Oregon by way of San Diego, California in 1941. They traded their Orange and Lemon farm in San Diego for what became the Hills Auto Court at the end of Brent Street in John Day.

Only the youngest son, Lamar was still living at home. Lamar attended Grant Union High School from 1941-1943. Just before his senior year, July 1943, he enlisted in the Navy to serve in WWII along with most of his brothers. He was a seaman serving on Liberty Ships in the Pacific as an electrician. After the war he returned to John Day and worked in different aspects of construction.

DC Sr and Hattie May retired in 1951 and spent their remaining years collecting, cutting, and polishing rocks as well as entertaining travelers in their rock shop behind the Hills Auto Court on Brent Street.

Of the eight Hill siblings three made their home in the area.

In the early 1950's Elizabeth Hill Davis, the second oldest sibling, moved to John Day from Mississippi and began teaching school. In her 40 years of teaching in Grant County she is known for her Oregon History Program and as the beloved fourth grade teacher. Lamar, Robert and RJ (Elizabeth's husband) built the Davis' home along the John Day River east of town where they raised their three children: Jimmy, Judy and Patty. All graduating from Grant Union High School between 1964 and 1972.

Also, in the early 1950's Robert, the fourth oldest sibling, moved to John Day from Mississippi and helped Lamar build the Western Motel, now known as the Budget Motel. Robert and his wife Lucille eventually bought it in 1967 and ran it until 1978. This is where they raised their son Bobby who graduated from Grant Union High School in 1970. Robert was an avid golfer and spent many years as a member of the John Day Golf Club.

Lamar met Ernestine Silvers, a beautiful young woman born and raised outside of Mt. Vernon whose family immigrated from the Azores Islands at a 62 Day's dance. They dated off and on for several years and were finally married in 1955 making their home in John Day. They raised three children on property up the Canyon on Sheep Creek. Colleen, Mike, and Celeste all graduated from Grant Union in 1974 and 1980.

In 1961 Jim and Viola Lyons sold the old John Day Airstrip on Highway 26 to Lamar and DC Sr. The property ran on both sides of the John Day River for a total of approximately 40 acres extending west from the Bowling Alley to Canton Street and north to Davis Creek up on Charolais Heights and encompassing the portion donated for the Hill Family Park today. Lamar built Mobile City, now called the Riverside Trailer Park, which he owned and operated for over 45 years.

Lamar and Ernestine owned and operated several businesses in town including the Western Motel, Bowling Alley, Traveler's Motel, Hills Auto Court, the car wash next to the library and various rental properties. They were both known for their strong work ethic and love for Grant County.

DC Sr and Hattie May were members of the First Baptist Church in John Day for over 25 years and the siblings continued in their footsteps for another 45 years. Elizabeth played the piano most Sundays up until her death at 98, Ernestine sang in the choir and Lamar helped with church operations until they moved to The Dalles in 2013.

Colleen and Celeste still own property up the Canyon where they built a new home after the fire which is visited often bringing family and friends to experience all Grant County has to offer.

The other Hill family siblings have always considered John Day as their home too, returning often for family reunions bringing anywhere from 30 - 75 extended family members.

The desire for our family to donate property for a park is to continue a legacy of community connection that has been passed onto us, the next generation. This legacy also includes accepting the challenge for education, possessing good moral virtues, embracing a positive attitude, respecting truth and honesty, working hard together and most of all love for one another. We are happy to share this legacy with you today.

Story Submitted by Colleen Hill Hogan and Celeste Hill-Thomas



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Blue Mountain Eagle Office Closure

Our office will be CLOSED Monday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day.

Early Deadline for the July 6th issue: Thursday, June 30th before 3:00 p.m.

We hope you spend this day celebrating with your friends and family!

The Blue Mountain EAGLE
Grant County's newspaper since 1868