

The Blue Mountain EAGLE



Grant County's newspaper since 1868

Wednesday, July 27, 2022

154th Year • No. 30 • 14 Pages • \$1.50

MyEagleNews.com



CROOKED RIVER FLOWS FALLING FAST



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

The Crooked River trickles into Prineville Reservoir.

“CROOK COUNTY HAS BEEN IN EXCEPTIONAL DROUGHT FOR ALMOST A YEAR. IT'S THE ONLY COUNTY IN THE STATE WITH THIS DISTINCTION.”

Bruce Scanlon, manager for Ochoco Irrigation District

By MICHAEL KOHN
The Bulletin

PRINEVILLE — Even in times of drought, the amount of water flowing into the Crooked River from Prineville Reservoir typically hovers at or near 50 cubic feet per second. But this fall — after successive dry years and with Crook County still in the throes of severe drought — the flow is expected to drop to 10 cfs.

The lower flow out of Bowman Dam will occur after irrigation districts in Crook County run out of water this year, said Gregg Garnett, Bend field office manager for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

As of Thursday, July 21, Prineville Reservoir was just 24% full. The reservoir this year had the lowest maximum fill on record dating back to the cre-



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin
A sign at the decommissioned Jasper Point boat ramp at Prineville Reservoir.

ation of the dam in 1961, according to the Oregon Water Resources Department. The lower levels mean less water for Crook County farmers to use on their fields, as well as lower levels in the river for fish to survive.

Exactly when these low flows will trigger is up to the weather and water usage by irrigators. Hot temperatures like those expected this week will speed up the decline. Bruce Scanlon, manager for Ochoco Irrigation District, believes the district supply will be exhausted by late summer.

“Crook County has been in exceptional drought for almost a year. It’s the only county in the state with this distinction,” said Scanlon.



Dean Guernsey/The Bulletin

The extreme drawdown at Prineville Reservoir gives way to cracked earth.

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Judge drops Smith child neglect charges

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — After more than a month of deliberating, a Circuit Court judge has tossed out misdemeanor charges against a former Grant County sheriff's deputy but ruled that trial can proceed on three felony counts.

In a written ruling issued July 18, Circuit Court Judge Dan Bunch stated he would dismiss four counts of child neglect but not charges of fourth-degree assault, attempted first-degree rape

and attempted first-degree sex abuse against Tyler Smith.

The ruling comes in response to a motion by Smith's attorneys to dismiss all the charges against him, which they alleged were part of a plot by former Grant County Sheriff Glenn Palmer, other sheriff's office employees and Smith's accuser to get him fired and prosecuted.

Smith was arrested on Sept. 9, 2019, and then fired by the Grant County Sheriff's Office on Dec. 17, 2019, several months before having an opportunity to enter a not guilty plea on April 30, 2020.

Smith's trial was slated to begin in late October of 2021. However, it was abruptly put on hold to give defense attorneys time to sift through hundreds of pages of discovery materials filed just one day earlier by the prosecution.

The evidence in question included documents and internal reports from the Grant County Sheriff's Office.

Additionally, there were two recorded interviews with Smith's accuser, including one in which she acknowledged placing a tracking device on Smith's vehicle and keeping the Grant County Sheriff's Office informed of his whereabouts.

In his ruling, Bunch writes that Smith's accuser created “proof problems” for the prosecution by not disclosing the alleged assault when she was asked by law enforcement



Steven Mitchell
Blue Mountain Eagle, File
Tyler Smith appears in Grant County Circuit Court on April 20, 2022.

whether there was reason to be concerned regarding Smith's potential for violence.

However, the judge writes, it “simply strains logic” to believe that Smith's accuser and the Grant County Sheriff's Office colluded to make a false accusation of assault to further her goals and those of the sheriff's office.

Bunch adds that he stopped short of concluding that law enforcement deliberately withheld evidence that could be used by the defense to exonerate Smith.

However, in the child neglect case, the questions become more complicated.

While the judge disagreed with the defense that internal

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Justin Davis/Blue Mountain Eagle

Ron Lundbom, left, shakes hands with new owner Gary Snair on Monday, July 25, 2022, at John Day NAPA.

Lundbom sells auto parts store

By JUSTIN DAVIS
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — The NAPA auto parts store in John Day is under new ownership.

The change came with Ron and Sherri Lundbom's sale of the store to Gary and Gayln Snair of Redmond for an undisclosed amount of money. Gary Snair was previously the co-owner of the Bend, Madras and Redmond NAPA stores. The sale was finalized on July 1.

The John Day NAPA auto parts store was opened by Lundbom's father, Don, in April of 1966, and Ron Lund-

bom started working part-time at the store in 1976. He began taking on more of a hands-on role with the store in the mid-90s and took over management of the business following the retirement of his parents in the early 2000s.

Lundbom had hoped his son Stefan would take over operation of the store, but circumstances in his son's life took that option off the table. “I kind of thought my son was going to take over, and then his wife changed career fields and he followed her in her career,” Lundbom said.

Once it was clear that Lundbom didn't have a suc-

cessor lined up to take over the business, Snair reached out to Lundbom and asked him what is plans for the business were.

“The business was in a trust — my mom and dad set up a trust for us,” Lundbom said. “Once that was cleaned up and the estate was taken care of, we started talking and made the deal on July 1.”

Lundbom said he owed it to Stefan to wait until he decided he wasn't going to take over the business before deciding to make the move to sell.

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