

County projects could get \$2M boost

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

WASHINGTON — The county could get more than \$2 million in federal funding for infrastructure and improvement projects.

Grant County’s local projects were among a list of more than 100 included in a Senate appropriations bill for the next fiscal year, according to a Friday, July 29, press release from Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley.

The federal dollars would support water distribution system improvements in Prairie City, a remodel of Community Counseling Solutions, and a renovation project at the county’s emergency management office. According to the press release, the Senate appropriations bill needs to be included in legislation in the House of Representatives later this year.

Prairie City water system

Prairie City Mayor Jim Hamsher said the town would receive just over \$600,000 to replace its water pipes. He also said the city would replace its old water meters with cellular meters, allowing the Prairie City Public Works Department to monitor the town’s water system in real time. The upgraded system, he said, would alert Public Works immediately to leaks and busted pipes.

He said Prairie City would benefit from the funding and he was grateful for Wyden and Merkley’s support.

“Recent droughts and multiple forest fires have shown the importance of conserving

water,” Hamsher said. “The best way to conserve would be to eliminate wasting water by replacing the old pipes and meters.”

Health Department remodel

The Grant County Health Department building, which houses Community Counseling Solutions, is slated to receive \$1.25 million for remodeling.

Grant County Health Administrator Kimberly Lindsay said the remodel is “desperately needed” and would open up more spaces for counseling, primary care and developmental disability services. Overall, she said, the remodel would allow for a better integration of services and more efficient use of space.

Emergency Management Office renovation

The Grant County Emergency Management Office is slated to receive nearly \$300,000 to help renovate the former county Road Department shop on Humbolt Street in Canyon City.

The project, which began in February, involves building out a storage facility with enough space for emergency management supplies, said Eric Bush, Grant County’s emergency manager.

Some of those supplies include personal protective equipment that the county acquired to respond to COVID-19. The supplies at one point were spread over three locations, with some requiring a climate-controlled environment. Bush said county crews

have put in four shipping containers at the site on Humbolt Street, installed overhead and underground power lines and are working on building out the infrastructure. Now, he said, they will be working on remodeling the county shop building to accommodate the Emergency Management Office, which is currently run out of the L building on Main Street in John Day.

Bush said the idea behind moving the Emergency Management Office to the Humbolt Street site is to have departments with similar functions at the same location and that ultimately the plan is to bring the Grant County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue Team to the site.

Earlier this year the county commissioners voted to place the Emergency Management Office under the authority of the sheriff instead of the County Court.

Bush said emergency management and search and rescue operations would function more efficiently from the same location. Additionally, he said, the idea is to use the space and the assets the county has and consolidate the properties the county has among its various departments.

Instead of constructing a million-dollar building, Bush said, the idea is to build up the infrastructure at a property the county already owns.

“We’ve got some great space; we’ve got stuff already,” he said. “We’re trying to get ourselves a better infrastructure that is going to last a long time.”

County still weighing law enforcement bond

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — As the filing deadline to put a law enforcement bond measure on the ballot in the November general election looms, Grant County commissioners appear to be looking at other funding alternatives.

Last month, County Judge Scott Myers said he spoke to the county’s legal counsel about drawing up a bond levy to submit to the County Clerk’s Office for the Nov. 8 ballot before the Aug. 19 deadline.

Myers said he planned to meet with Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley to discuss what his office needs regarding law enforcement coverage but that meeting has not happened yet, he told the newspaper Friday, Aug. 4. However, Myers said, the need for the bond may be lesser or greater than it is right now by the time it goes out to the voters.

In June, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an appropriations bill for the next fiscal year that would increase the county’s federal payment in lieu of taxes funding to upwards of \$900,000. And at the Wednesday, Aug. 3, meeting of the Grant County Court, Commissioner Jim Hamsher said the county would receive some additional federal COVID-19 relief funds at the end of September.

Given those two factors, Myers said, the county’s financial situation may look different



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle, File

Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley

in November than it does now.

Still, Myers said the county could draw up a resolution and go through the process — which would require reading the draft resolution in two sessions of county court. Then, he said the county could call special meetings should they decide to move forward on the bond levy.

In June, the Grant County Budget Committee voted to allocate roughly \$700,000 in COVID-19 relief funding to the Grant County Sheriff’s Office to bring on two additional patrol deputies and a part-time clerical employee. But that one-time funding will expire after the 2024-25 fiscal year.

Since the John Day Police Department was shut down in October, enforcing the law within the city limits has fallen primarily to the Grant County Sheriff’s Office, which has just four patrol deputies covering the entire county, with help from

the Oregon State Police. Sheriff Todd McKinley has repeatedly told both the John Day City Council and the County Court that he needs additional deputies to provide adequate coverage.

The John Day City Council offered to pay the county \$300,000 a year to hire three deputies to provide law enforcement services in the city limits. But that proposal also called on 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.

While the County Court never formally deliberated on the city’s proposal, court members have made it clear that the idea of linking county road fund money to police services is a nonstarter.

Grant County’s draft budget included a \$300,000 contribution from John Day, but the city and county still have not come to an agreement on law enforcement funding.

County Commissioner Sam Palmer, who met informally with McKinley and elected city officials, said the talks ended after City Manager Nick Green shouted him down during a John Day City Council meeting in March. One way or the other, McKinley said, the Sheriff’s Office needs more staff.

While Myers and Palmer are for putting a bond levy out to the public, Hamsher is not.

WHAT’S HAPPENING

THURSDAY, AUG. 11 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

FRIDAY, AUG. 12 Jo Rae Perkins visit

• 3-6 p.m., Grant County Fairgrounds, 411 NW Bridge St., John Day

Jo Rae Perkins, the Republican nominee running for U.S. Senate, will spend three hours at the Grant County Fair.

SATURDAY, AUG. 13 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.

Grant Union Class of ‘82 reunion

• Noon, Clyde Holliday State Park, Highway 26 east of Mt. Vernon, and 7 p.m., John Day Golf Club, 27631 Golf Club Road, John Day

The Grant Union High School Class of 1982 will hold two gatherings for its 40th reunion. The first begins at noon at Clyde Holliday State Park. Bring a picnic lunch; water and sodas will be provided.

vided. The second will be a barbecue starting at 7 p.m. at the John Day Golf Club. The cost is \$10 per person. For more information, call Holly Edgar at 503-701-8325.

THURSDAY, AUG. 18 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SATURDAY, AUG. 20 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.

Quilt of Valor giveaway

• 11 a.m., Clyde Holliday State Park, east of Mt. Vernon on Highway 26

The Grant County Piece-makers Quilt Guild will host a cookout and quilt giveaway to honor Grant County veterans. Guild members will begin serving hamburgers and hotdogs with chips at 11 a.m. At 1 p.m., veterans will receive handmade quilts during the Quilt of Valor ceremony in gratitude for their service. The cost for lunch is \$8 for non-veterans, while veterans eat for free. Tickets will be

sold for a chance to win a quilt or a gift basket worth more than \$400. All proceeds go to the guild to help make more quilts.

Family Movie Night

• Dusk, Grant Union Junior/Senior High School, 911 S. Canyon Blvd., John Day

A free series of family-friendly movies screened outdoors on the football field at Grant Union. Tonight’s selection: “Clifford the Big Red Dog.”

THURSDAY, AUG. 25 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SUNDAY, AUG. 28 Silvies Sunday Slam

• 11:30 a.m., The Retreat and Links at Silvies Valley Ranch, 11 miles south of Seneca on Forest Road 3930

Couples date: Any two people play for \$50 each (husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, father/daughter, mother/son, etc.). Sunday Slams, open to all Grant and Harney County residents, include golf, cart, range balls and a hotdog lunch. Check-in at the gatehouse starts at 11:30 a.m., with the first tee time at 1 p.m. Call 800-SILVIES to sign up.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 1 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 4 Silvies Sunday Slam

• 11:30 a.m., The Retreat and Links at Silvies Valley Ranch, 11 miles south of Seneca on Forest Road 3930

Labor Day weekend: Wear your biggest, brightest belt buckle, and you and your partner play for \$50 apiece. Sunday Slams, open to all Grant and Harney County residents, include golf, cart, range balls and a hotdog lunch. Check-in at the gatehouse starts at 11:30 a.m., with the first tee time at 1 p.m. Call 800-SILVIES to sign up.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 8 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park,

Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 15 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 22 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 25 Silvies Sunday Slam

• 11:30 a.m., The Retreat and Links at Silvies Valley

Ranch, 11 miles south of Seneca on Forest Road 3930

The last Sunday Slam of the year is a couples date: Any two people play for \$50 each (husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, father/daughter, mother/son, etc.). Sunday Slams, open to all Grant and Harney County residents, include golf, cart, range balls and a hotdog lunch. Check-in at the gatehouse starts at 11:30 a.m., with the first tee time at 1 p.m. Call 800-SILVIES to sign up.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 29 Yoga in the Park

• 6 p.m., Canyon City Park, Highway 395 North at Park Street

Instructors Ashley Stevick and Amanda Moss of Namaspa Yoga Community lead this free yoga class for people of all skill levels.

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.



Hello, John Day Valley! John Day Taxi, Richie and my Australian Yorkie are at your service, celebrating our 9th year; Covid hurt, but we are still the only 24/7 transport out of the Valley that I know of – from the airport at midnight or pick up you and your groceries, usually in 10 minutes.

DELIVERY: I pickup and deliver all kinds of stuff: Alcohol to shut-ins, lost dogs to home, caged animals to the vet, even drugs from Lens but not from the pot shop yet.

FARES: Due to gas prices, now charging \$2 a mile, \$10 minimum; actually, the ride is free but I have to charge for getting my 84 year old bones in the saddle.

FYI: Only picking up regulars outside of John Day now, too many callers not there when I arrive; by the way, you are responsible for the fare if I go out to get you and you’re not there.

MAGONE: I took some kids to the lake pro-bono; I also took a 90 year old lady out there from Prairie who just wanted to sit and look at the lake.

NEW: Installed a bike rack, now able to transport you and your bike – and me and my wonderful ebike if I run out of ‘gas’. I’ve had a few pickups by riders who just didn’t feel like taking on the Mitchell Hill or Dixie.

ODD: Sandy and I drove to Seneca to pick up a lady too terrified of our mountains to drive her car to Baker.

SCAMS are increasing everywhere, have to watch those; I was involved in two with my little taxi; one in Chester’s parking lot I beat, thanks to my back-up beeper you can hear a mile away, the other one my insurance company decided it was cheaper to settle than investigate; they do that, you know.

TIP: I got a speeding ticket 10 o’clock one night in front of Timbers; I was increasing my speed from 25 to 35; you have to wait until you’re past the speed limit change sign to get up to speed. Driving before the trooper was born, I didn’t know that.

VFW: John Day Post 3597 suspended Special Meeting, Wednesday, August 17th, @ 6 p.m. Elks Lodge. Free ride to any veteran who doesn’t want to see us lose our VFW.

God bless you, love you John Day ■ Richie ■ 541-620-4255

Thadd's Place

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

We Understand the Struggle
You are not Alone

- WHEN** • Every other Tuesday of the month
- WHERE** • 635 East Main Street John Day OR
- HOW** • Group size max 15 people; cancer patients & caregivers
- DETAILS** • This group provides a supportive environment as you navigate cancer treatment.

Must register to attend

Contact Sylvia Ross
541.788.5498
sross@bluemountainhospital.org