

OUR VIEW Prompt, decisive response kept fire in check

This year's wet spring and slow-starting summer delayed the inevitable, but we all knew that couldn't last: Fire season arrived in Oregon at the beginning of August. Here in Grant County, the most significant wildfire we've seen so far has been the Beech Creek Fire, which started Aug. 1 along both sides of Highway 395 North between Mt. Vernon and Long Creek, burning in brush and timber. But thanks to quick, decisive action by fire management officials — along with some timely assistance from local property owners and mostly moderate weather conditions — the blaze has been held in check.

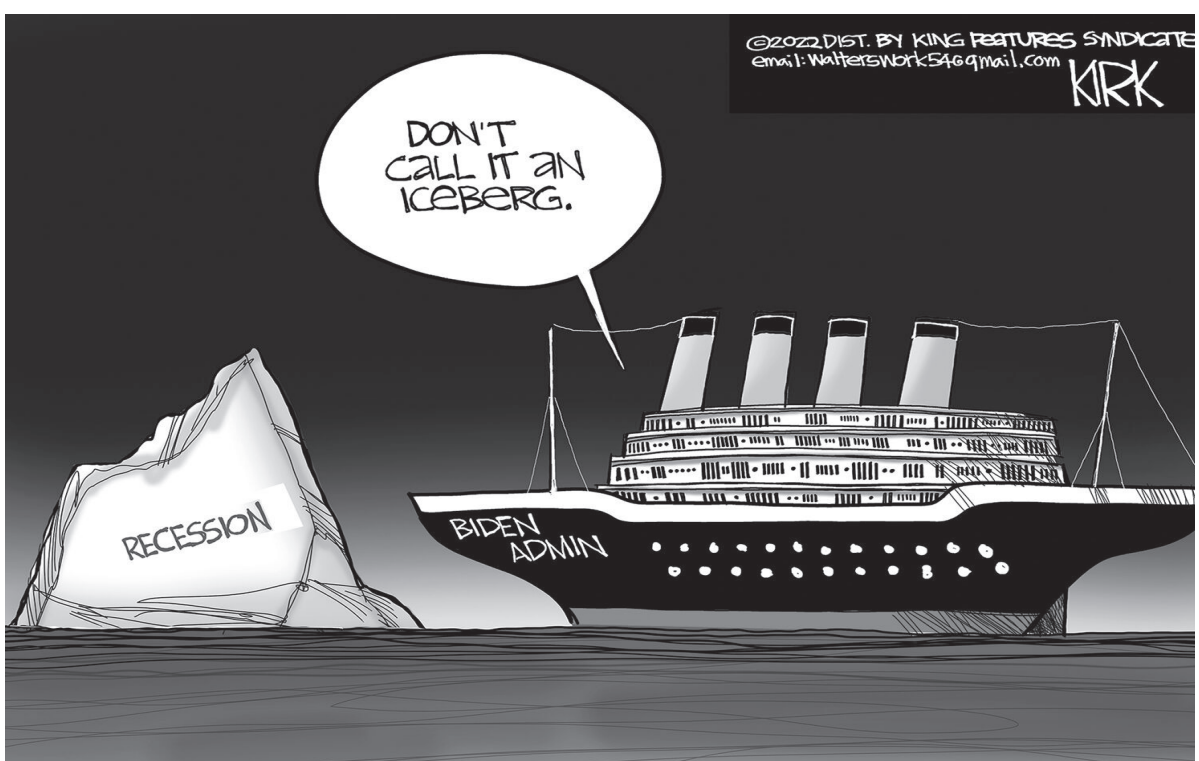
The initial response included a single-engine air tanker, two additional heavy air tankers and a helitack crew that attacked the fire from the air, while two 20-person fire crews with six engines battled the flames on the ground. Additional ground crews with bulldozers and other heavy equipment were quickly brought into play. In all, more than 200 firefighters from the U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry and Grayback Forestry have been on the job over the past eight days, putting containment lines in place and making sure the fire doesn't escape. As of Monday, Aug. 8, the fire was 69% contained and was confined to 155 acres.

Local law enforcement also leaped into the fray. In the first hours after the fire broke out, officers with the Grant County Sheriff's Office and Oregon State Police were helping with traffic control and contacting local residents in the fire zone, offering assistance in getting people and livestock to safety. Emergency dispatchers kept the lines of communication open and coordinated efforts between multiple agencies. Crews from Oregon Trail Electric Co-op worked to restore power to the area, and the Oregon Department of Transportation provided flaggers and a pilot car to ensure safe passage through the fire zone for motorists.

We thank all the firefighters and other first responders for their tireless and selfless efforts to keep us all safe.

Eagle reporter Steven Mitchell has been keeping a close eye on the Beech Creek Fire, posting daily updates at www.bluemountaineagle.com as new information becomes available. As with all of our Oregon wildfire coverage, we have placed Steven's updates outside our website's paywall so all online visitors, not just paid subscribers, can have access to this vital information. We do the same thing with stories about the COVID-19 pandemic, elections and natural disasters that directly affect Grant County residents.

That's part of our commitment to our readers. The paywall — which limits how many pageviews nonsubscribers can have on our website each month — is there to encourage casual readers to become paying customers because, frankly, we need the revenue to continue bringing you the news. But in an emergency situation, when immediate access to accurate information is crucial, we will always put our community first.

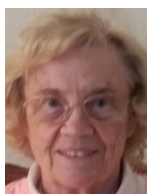


OFF THE BEATEN PATH Celebrating the county fair

The carpool group studied the fair booklet. "What to visit first?" asked a friend. The group responds to various sites offered to celebrate the innumerable options. The cause for celebration — the Grant County Fair that runs Aug. 10-13.

Some said they planned to head first to the exhibits of food, arts, gardening and crafts. Others opted for the livestock barn. Entertainment at the pavilion drew others. "When we get there," I said, "I'm heading to doilies." "Doilies?" asked my friend. "You plan to pass up monstrous vegetables, cinnamon rolls, and show-stopper heifers to see a crocheted doily exhibit?"

As a kid, we were a doily family. Mom placed doilies on end tables, the arms and headrests of the couch and cushioned chairs. She and her sisters crocheted doilies, gave doilies as gifts to each other. "With Mom's doilies on the couch and chairs, and chicken and spuds in the oven," I replied, "all seemed right in the world. It's a nostalgia thing." "Did you ever crochet a doily?" "Not really," I said. "I tried once, but the end results — a puckered mess which looked stained from my grubby, tree-climbing hands. I used my only doily I crocheted as a stocking cap for my doll." Doilies being a small bit of what to experience at the fair, I planned to



Jean Ann Moultrie

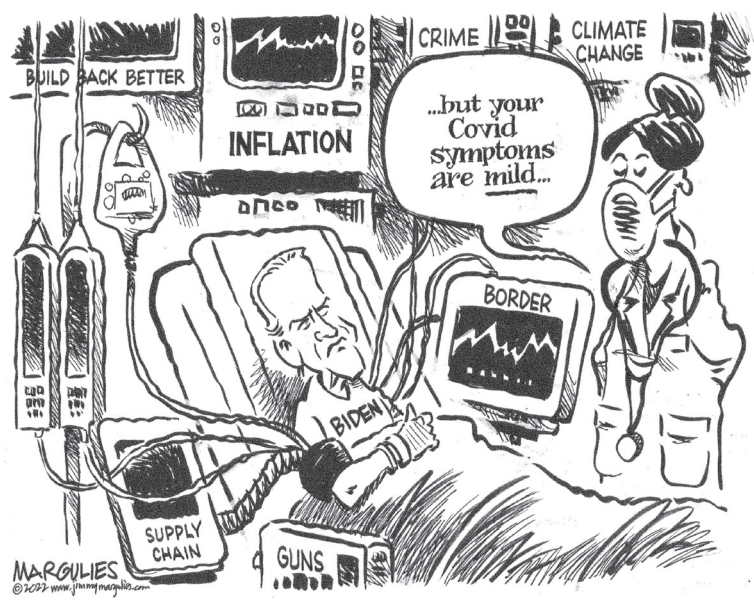
pace myself. The fair booklet listed plenty to see. Ceramics brought back memories. "Is there something fun you'd like to do together before you leave for college?" I asked a daughter. I silently hoped she didn't choose a craft activity. I lack craft skills. "I choose we take a ceramics class together," she said. I'd promised. We located a ceramics class near where we lived. (At the time, not in Grant County.) My daughter chose a couple of advanced projects to work on. I picked out a plain vase with a couple of small, swirly handles. Knowing I wasn't skilled to paint intricate designs on the vase, I chose one color for the whole piece — a container of pearlized white. I chose a brush and sloshed paint up and down on the vase. The two of us laughed and chatted as we worked. The instructor stopped by. "What are you doing?" she hollered as she pointed to my pearlized vase. "You are using the wrong paint, the wrong brush, and the wrong brush strokes. You are doing ceramics all wrong!" My daughter gave me a slight smile — she knew any "craft" I worked on probably has some part that was wrong. This time the instructor wasn't correct. My daughter and I were enjoying a fun time

together, so I wasn't doing ceramics "all wrong." Viewing all the fair exhibits options gave me ideas to try. I learned tips to improve what I'm working on. They help keep family traditions alive and motivate visitors to start new ones.

At the fair, there are moments of "WOW! Look at that!" which could be a painting, photograph, unique bread, bottled peaches, a home-sewn dress, a colorful hen, a groomed hog, etc. The livestock barn seemed to me one area that epitomizes the spirit of a fair. To raise an animal or bird isn't accomplished in a week or two — I think of winter with snow and below-freezing temperatures and summer with three-digit temps — where exhibitors persevere in providing care to their animals.

I don't want to miss 4-H/FFA exhibits and events. My county fair booklet lists pages of projects — many with challenges and service opportunities. Presentations include Impromptu Speaking, a section on Livestock Judging and Creative Writing. And there it is, in the crocheting section, items included clothing, accessories, toys — and even doilies!

On that good note, I'm off to find some tasty fair food. Jean Ann Moultrie is a Grant County writer. In some circles she is known as a Doily-and-Lace Whisperer for her practice of collecting old and unwanted doilies, assuring they won't become extinct.



'Misinformation' is coming from city side

To the Editor: The July 27 letter to the editor from the mayor of John Day, Ron Lundbom, is just more hollow propaganda message. The simple fact is we have been contacting the city of John Day (CJD) since the inception of their build back better plan. He states that "over the last couple of years, you have heard and seen a lot of misinformation on display." To correct the mayor, he should have said the last six years, with the inception of the city manager he had chosen. The manager instilled the propaganda efforts using ideology to his picking as well as picking likeminded people.

The mayor was gossiping to others in the community about how my facts were "just being thrown out there." Well, I invited the mayor to set down at my house for me to show him the documentation to the facts, and he accepted. I showed him, out of the city's own papered documentation. He had no clue that they existed. Yes, Mr. Mayor, I did reach out to you personally, and received a blind ear to the problems very early on in this narrative. Another point to the citizens mentioned in this letter he wrote, "seek us out individually," referring to the city council. You will get the "feel good" lecture using the same deception that the CJD is using for "leverage," one of the terms introduced by the then-manager, as well as "creative financing."

I have documentation of their "misinformation" that was used as propaganda at one time or another

by the CJD. This misinformation is "documented" by us who are following the city's tax and levy spending plans. Do you ever hear the mayor opine on how much it is costing all the taxpayers of the county? What is the CJD's debt? Nothing about debt is stated in this propaganda opinion article published in the BME.

Yes, \$30 million can be bought, but at what price? The ones paying the bills are tired of this façade, and most of us opposing the CJD plan are reporting "documented" facts, with no spin.

Bob Pereira
John Day

PUC to ease rules on land takings

To the Editor: Electric utilities are about to get a free pass to take your land or your neighbors' land in condemnation proceedings! The Oregon Public Utility Commission is going to allow utilities to take your land before the utility has all the permits required to do so. The main reason: it takes too long. I am the only "public" at the table and have been up against PacifiCorp, Portland General Electric, Idaho Power, and the consumer-owned utilities. Will you help?

The case docket, AR 626 — certificate of public convenience and necessity, a.k.a. "condemnation" — is in its final phases. It started in September 2019 with informal rulemaking and staff recommending that condemnation be the final process after all other permits and regulatory reviews are completed. The utilities wanted a waiver in special

circumstances that mostly involve the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals and the counties. Staff stuck to their position.

Once we went into formal rulemaking, the commissioners became involved, everything changed and the pro-utility/pro-transmission mentality of the commissioners came to full light as they rewrote most of the rules. In order to accommodate the utilities' desire for a waiver and sidestep LUBA's slowness, the PUC would have to use its superpowers and cited ORS 197.180, state agency planning responsibilities. If that didn't work, the commissioners cited OAR 660-030-0065(3) to condemn your land. This looks and smells like an end-run around other state agencies and counties to serve the utilities.

I have also been pushing them to develop environmental justice filters. These include cumulative economic, health and environmental impacts and a look at demographics to ensure utilities are not putting a transmission line in economically challenged communities or communities of color.

This Thursday, Aug. 11, at 4 p.m. is the last time to submit comments before the PUC sides with the utilities and gives them what they want. I apologize for not ringing the alarm bell sooner, but I believed in the process. I do not now. Send comments to the PUC at puc.filingcenter@puc.oregon.gov and use AR 626 — Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in the subject header.

Jim Kreider
Co-Chair, STOP B2H Coalition
La Grande

WHERE TO WRITE

- GRANT COUNTY**
 • **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
 • **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: toc1862@centurylink.net.
 • **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net.
 • **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
 • **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
 • **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
 • **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.
 • **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.
 • **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.
- SALEM**
 • **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
 • **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: 503-986-1180. Website: leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
 • **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313, oregonlegislature.gov.
 • **Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: sen.lynnfindley@oregonlegislature.gov.
 • **Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane** — 900 Court St. NE, H-475, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. District address: 258 S. Oregon St., Ontario OR 97914. District phone: 541-889-8866. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: rep.markowens@oregonlegislature.gov.

Blue Mountain EAGLE
 Published every Wednesday by eMEDIA group
 MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

- Editor**Bennett Hall, bhall@bmeagle.com
ReportersSteven Mitchell, steven@bmeagle.com
 Justin Davis, jdavis@bluemountaineagle.com
Sportssports@bmeagle.com
Page DesignerRandy Wright, rwright@eomediagroup.com
Marketing RepKim Kell, ads@bmeagle.com
Office AssistantAlexandra Hand, office@bmeagle.com

- SUBSCRIPTION RATES**
 (including online access)
 One year\$51
 Monthly autopay\$4.25

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER send address changes to: Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845-1187. USPS 226-340

Copyright © 2022 Blue Mountain Eagle. All rights reserved. No part of this publication covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means — graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, taping or information storage and retrieval systems — without written permission of the publisher.