

Conditions fuel Crockett Knob Fire

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

GREENVILLE — The Crockett Knob Fire burning 20 miles north of Prairie City has torched upwards of 4,300 acres and remains 25% contained as hot, dry and heavy winds prompted fire managers to issue a red flag warning on Tuesday, Sept. 6.

Fire crews continued to secure containment lines along Forest Service Road 4550 and FSR 45. Meanwhile, fire managers said, heavy equipment improved a potential contingency line along FSR 45 near FSR 10, according to a press release.

A total of 623 firefighting personnel are currently deployed to battle the blaze.

Fire crews snuffed out spot fires from the previous days and doused remnant hotspots that burned while crews continued constructing handlines along the north-eastern and eastern flanks of the blaze, fire managers said.

With the increased temperatures and dry, windy conditions, fire crews will work to secure existing containment lines, the press release noted.

Meantime, heavy equipment will continue improving the potential contingency line along FSR 45, fire managers said. With that, the press added, crews are monitoring containment lines along the southern edge of the fire.

Helicopters are dumping water on the north and east edges of the blaze to cool the flames.



Blue Mountain Eagle graphic



Les Zaitz/Contributed Photo

The Crockett Knob Fire, roughly 20 miles north of Prairie City, has scorched more than 4,300 acres.

Plea deal reached in sex crimes case

By BENNETT HALL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — More than a year after his arrest on child sex crimes and other charges, a 45-year-old Ontario man has pleaded no contest to five counts in a deal that could send him to prison for more than 16 years.

James Warren Eaton entered the plea Friday, Sept. 2, in Grant County Circuit Court. He is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Rob Raschio in a hearing on Thursday, Sept. 8.

Eaton was arrested in July 2021 and lodged in the Grant County Jail. In a grand jury indictment, he was charged with 15 crimes, including three counts each of first-degree kidnapping, first-degree sexual abuse and first-degree sodomy.

All of the crimes were alleged to have taken place in Grant County during the month of June 2021, and all involved a single victim, a girl under the age of 12 who was known to Eaton.

On Friday, Eaton pleaded no contest to five counts, including three counts of first-degree sexual abuse, a Measure 11 offense that carries a presumptive mandatory minimum sentence of 75 months in prison.

If served end to end, those three sentences would add up to 225 months. Under terms of the plea agreement filed with the court, Eaton would have to serve at least 200 months, or 16 years and eight months, behind bars without the possibility of early release, followed by post-prison supervision for the rest of his life.

Eaton was represented by defense attorney John B. Lamborn of Burns. Grant County District Attorney Jim Carpenter prosecuted the case.

In 1997, Eaton was accused of five sex crimes in Jefferson County, according to court documents that listed his city of residence at the time as John Day. He was found guilty except for insanity of one count of first-degree rape and was placed under the jurisdiction of the state Psychiatric Security Review Board for up to 20 years, according to documents filed with the court.

New court focuses on addiction

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — Earlier this summer, Grant and Harney counties implemented a drug and family treatment court program to address rising addiction rates in the area.

Circuit Court Judge Rob Raschio said the drug problem in Grant County is severe and is the foundational cause of much of the criminal activity in the county, including theft and acts of violence.

Raschio said if drug addiction is not addressed in the court system, it will not get addressed anywhere else.

When Oregonians voted to decriminalize small amounts of drugs with Measure 110, voters thought it would address the drug problem. Instead, Raschio said, it hobbled the court's ability to get people into drug treatment.

Under Measure 110, if someone gets cited for possessing a small amount of drugs, they can have the violation — akin to a traffic ticket — dismissed if they call a hotline for a brief evaluation to see if they have a drug problem.

"The people of Oregon made a decision," he said. "That is what they wanted to do, and that's fine with the



Timko



Raschio

court. We just have to deal with it."

With that, the 24th Judicial District Specialty Treatment Court is now operating a drug and family court program in Grant and Harney County, Raschio said.

Raschio said Grant County used to have a drug court program and that he decided it was a good time to bring it back, given that Grant County's district attorney has been willing to put people charged with crimes that have victims into the program.

Not only that, Raschio said, but the presiding judge of Harney County's drug court program — Christie Timko, a longtime judge pro tempore — is highly trained in drug court protocol.

Raschio said Timko, who he appointed and who will work under his supervision, will oversee both programs, drug and family court.

The drug court, also referred to as judicial treatment court, is for non-violent adult offenders with a

severe drug problem who are highly likely to re-offend and facing serious consequences.

People coming into drug treatment court, Raschio said, are facing situations where they can either do a year in jail or complete the program.

"We're doing heavy, heavy consequences for people who enter into drug court," Raschio said.

Those consequences will happen to those who do not comply with the program's provisions.

"I want people to know that we're very concerned about public safety," he said. "Secondly, I think public safety is enhanced by drug courts, when they're done effectively."

Raschio said the program received just under \$550,000 in grant funding through the U.S. Department of Justice Assistance Program.

The funding will pay for a part-time probation officer for the drug court program who would work on the weekends. Grant County Sheriff Todd McKinley, who oversees the probation office, said the funding would make it possible for people to put in community service hours and come in for drug tests over the weekend. With the addition of the treatment court probation officer, the probation office will have a total of three

officers and will be able to be open seven days a week.

McKinley told the newspaper that the probation office has not yet filled the position.

During the June 1 session of Grant County Court, Timko told the court that the treatment program is evidence-based and said 90% of those who complete the program have not been re-arrested three years after graduating.

Raschio said he did not just want to have a drug court for criminal offenders, but also a family court for parents struggling with serious addiction issues that are impacting their ability to care for their children.

The model is similar to drug court. The addicted parents would have their children taken from them by the Department of Human Services placed into foster care and would enter into an intensive treatment program with strict supervision. The idea is to get the parents the services they need to address their addiction, then get the family back together.

Raschio said substance abuse was alleged in more than half of all cases in the Grant and Harney County district where DHS has taken legal custody.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 7

Grant County Court
• 9 a.m., Grant County Courthouse, 201 S. Humbolt St., Canyon City

The Grant County Court will hold its regular twice-monthly meeting.

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.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 10

Grant Union Class of '72 reunion
• Noon, Gleason Park, Ing-Hay Way, John Day

Members of the Grant Union High School Class of 1972 are invited to a 50th reunion. The festivities will begin at noon with a casual brown bag lunch at the old City Park (now part of the Kam Wah Chung State Heritage Site). There will also be a no-host gathering at 7 that evening at the John Day Elks Lodge, 140 NE Dayton St. For more information, call or



text Cathy Newbrey Hodges at 360-200-3879.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 13

John Day City Council
• 7 p.m., John Day Fire Hall, 316 S. Canyon Blvd.

The council will hold its regular twice-monthly meeting.

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.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 21

Grant County Court
• 9 a.m., Grant County Courthouse, 201 S. Humbolt St., Canyon City

The Grant County Court will hold its regular twice-monthly meeting.

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.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 24

Monument Buckaroo Festival and Harvest Auction

• Noon to 7 p.m., Monument Senior Center, 269 Main St., Monument

Food, music, games, more food and auctions mark this fifth annual fundraiser for the Monument Senior Center. The festivities begin at noon with a 4-H booth serving tacos and registration opening for the live and silent auctions. At 1 p.m. there will be live music along with horseshoes, cornhole, face painting and other diversions, with prizes for the kids. The live auction starts at 3 p.m. At 5 p.m., a dinner of salmon and elk with all the trimmings will be served, followed by a dessert auction at 6. The cost for dinner is \$20 per person or \$35 per couple. Children 6-12 are \$7.50, and kids under 6 eat free.

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.

TUESDAY, SEPT. 27

John Day City Council
• 7 p.m., John Day Fire Hall, 316 S. Canyon Blvd.

The council will hold its regular twice-monthly meeting.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 29

Parks and Rec board meeting

• 4 p.m., Parks and Rec office, 845 NW Bridge St., John Day
The John Day/Canyon City

Parks and Recreation District board will hold its regular monthly meeting.

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.

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Honor a Local Veteran For Veterans' Day
We are the home of the free, because of the brave.

Prairie City Cemetery District is selling bricks to go around the flag pole at the Prairie City Cemetery. You can honor a Veteran with three lines on a brick for \$75. This brick will be part of a memorial honoring veterans both past and present and will be a permanent fixture in our cemetery.

To order your brick or bricks:
For each brick write three lines of 20 characters each for each brick you would like to purchase. (i.e. name, branch of service, sentiment or dates)
Enclose a check for \$75.00 for each brick and mail to:

Carla Wright
PO Box 633
Prairie City, OR 97869

This year's fundraising effort ends in October in the hope that they can be installed by Veterans' Day in November.