

House destroyed in Ritter fire

By TONY CHIOTTI
Blue Mountain Eagle

RITTER — No one was injured in a fire that destroyed a house in Ritter on Wednesday, Sept. 21.

A structure fire was reported at 2:11 p.m. at the residence of Vega Nuñez on School House Lane.

Nuñez managed to escape from the residence and make her way to a neighboring ranch to call for help, according to information from the Grant County Sheriff's Office.

The structure was "a total loss," according to Sheriff Todd McKinley.



Contributed Photo

The home of Vega Nuñez was destroyed in a blaze on Wednesday, Sept. 21, 2022, but firefighters and neighbors kept a brush fire from spreading beyond the immediate area.

Long Creek Fire and several neighbors were on scene to contain the brush and grass

fire, which spread to the northeast of the structure.

McKinley wanted to thank

the members of the Ritter homeowner fire crews that showed up to fight the fire with their personal equipment.

"This is what neighbor helping neighbor is all about," McKinley said. He also said those efforts helped prevent the fire from spreading to other homes.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is investigating the fire.

While no cause has yet been reported, McKinley said that this is a good time for homeowners to do a check of their heating sources and smoke alarms as cooler weather approaches.

LOCAL BRIEFING

Malheur lowers fire restrictions

JOHN DAY — In the wake of recent rains, the Malheur National Forest has rescinded public use restrictions on the Blue Mountain and Prairie City ranger districts in the northern part of the forest effective Friday, Sept. 23, forest officials announced.

At the same time, officials reduced the industrial fire precaution levels from Level 2 to Level 1 and lowered the fire danger rating from high to moderate.

Forest visitors who want to have campfires are reminded to use existing fire pits whenever possible and keep water and a shovel handy. Chainsaw users are asked to practice safe operations, maintain their equipment, and carry a shovel and water or a fire extinguisher.

Fire danger remains high in the Emigrant Creek Ranger District, which covers the southern portion of the forest. Phase B public use restrictions and Level 2 industrial fire precautions remain in effect.

Free parenting classes start soon

CANYON CITY — A six-week series of free parenting classes is being offered to Grant County residents.

The Triple P Positive Parenting Program aims to give parents tools and strategies to enhance child development while making parenting more enjoyable.

Sponsored by Families First, Community Counseling Solutions and the Frontier Early Learning Hub, classes will be held from 5:30 to 8 p.m. on Thursdays starting Oct. 6 at the Painted Sky Center for the Arts, 118 Washington St. in Canyon City.

The weeks of Oct. 24 and 31 will be reserved for individual phone consultations, with the final class being held at the art center on Nov. 10.

Free dinner and child care will be offered with each class.

Register online at <https://tinyurl.com/bdevzm6s>. For more information, call 541-575-1006 or email ffhvkat@gmail.com.

Local student enrolls at USU

LOGAN, Utah — Max Bailey of John Day has enrolled in Utah State University for the fall semester, the university announced.

Bailey will be one of 4,500 first-year students starting college at Utah State this fall.

Ag heritage commission recruiting

SALEM — The Oregon Agricultural Heritage Commission is seeking a new member to fill an open seat representing natural resource issues.

The commission oversees the Oregon Agricultural Heritage Program, created by the Legislature in 2017 to help protect the state's working farms and ranches. Commissioners also make grant funding recommendations to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, which administers the program.

Applications will be accepted until Oct. 31. To apply, visit the program's website at <https://tinyurl.com/mrxj5399>.

— Blue Mountain Eagle

Youngster's gift aids grief center

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A second-year 4-H'er made good on his pledge to donate the proceeds from selling his market steer at the Youth Livestock Auction in August to the John Day-based grief center Thadd's Place on Friday, Sept. 23.

The charitable gift has become something of a tradition for Tate Waddel. The 11-year-old, who has cerebral palsy and requires regular physical therapy, donated the proceeds from the sale of his 4-H steer last year to Blue Mountain Hospital's Rehabilitation Services Department.

This year, Tate gave the nearly \$12,000 brought in by his steer — donated by the Loop Ranch and purchased by Iron Triangle — to the John Day nonprofit grief center Thadd's Place.

The grief center — the only one of its kind east of the Cascades — will use the funds to pay a licensed clinical social worker, according to Tirza Shaffer, Thadd's Place's executive director.

Shaffer said the grief center saw roughly 300 people, many of them children, last year.

Tate's mother, Simmie Waddel, said it



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Tate Waddel goes up for a high five Friday, Sept. 23, 2022, at Thadd's Place, after donating the proceeds from the sale of his 4-H steer to the John Day-based grief center.

was important for their family to donate the funds to Thadd's Place this year.

For one thing, she said, Thaddeus Cowan-Thompson, who the grief center was named after, was in her 4-H club (along with Shaffer, Thadd's sister).

"It's just hard to lose somebody," she said. "We don't know how to do it sometimes. So just having some guidance (with

the grief process) is helpful."

The stigma surrounding mental health, Simmie said, is detrimental to the grief process.

"It's human nature," she said. "Until you talk about (grief), you feel alone until you can associate what you're going through with somebody else and not feel alone."

Groundwater data gaps may hinder wells

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

SALEM — As Oregon regulators hit the brakes on authorizing new irrigation wells, the decision is raising concerns that scant groundwater data may

indefinitely hinder new drilling. The state's Water Resources Department is preparing to revise its groundwater regulations, but in the meantime plans to err on the side of caution in issuing new well permits. Up to 80% of well per-

mit applications have traditionally been approved even when it's unknown whether the local aquifer is over-appropriated, but the agency recently decided to reverse that policy.

New permits are now likely to be denied if such information is lacking, which is intended to prevent groundwater from being depleted — already a serious problem in some basins.

The policy shift may preclude new well permits until OWRD has enough groundwater data to make such determinations, but collecting and analyzing the information takes time and money.

During a Sept. 22 public meeting in Salem on Oregon's groundwater policy, some participants wondered whether such data gaps will become a

long-term impediment to new well drilling.

"You can't wait for decades to get enough data to make a decision," one participant said.

Questions were also raised about the geographic extent of the problem and whether OWRD will commit to increased groundwater monitoring to obtain the data.

One participant asked if farmers can access a map showing where information is insufficient, or if being denied a permit is the only way to find out.

While OWRD does have good data available through its online groundwater information system, it doesn't have a map delineating specifically where data is insufficient, said Ivan Gall, administrator of the agency's field services division.

DEATH NOTICES

Alva D. Conlee

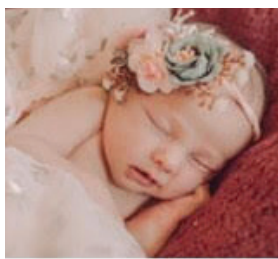
Alva D. Conlee, 90, of John Day passed away Sept. 21, 2022, with his loving family by his side. A memorial service with honors is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 8, 2022, at 11 a.m. at the Canyon City Cemetery. Following the service, a reception will be held at the John Day Elks Lodge.

To send an online condolence to the family, visit www.driskillmemorialchapel.com.

BIRTHS

Nina Kim Latelle Ensign

Nina Kim Latelle Ensign was born on Aug. 3, 2022, to Clayton and Thea Ensign of John Day. She weighed 7 pounds, 14 ounces, and measured 19.5 inches. Nina joins sisters Ava and Anna and brother James. Grandparents are Craig and Jan Ensign of Long Creek and Wes and Terry Aasness of Mt. Vernon.



4-Hers earn state honors

Blue Mountain Eagle

Grant County 4-H exhibitors brought home several awards from this year's Oregon State Fair. Each exhibitor had to first qualify at the Grant County Fair before advancing to the state fair competition.

Art

Jordan Ross: Junior Drawing (person) — Blue & Exceptional Award

Jordan Ross: Junior Multiple Media (person) — Blue & Exceptional Award

Kaila Shaffer: Junior Multiple Media (giraffe) — Blue

Abigail Humphreys: Junior Stenciling (home décor) — Blue

Mahayla Moss: Junior Stenciling (Welcome sign) — Blue

Paizley Harmon: Intermediate Drawing, wood burning (home décor) — Blue

Sophia McKinley: Senior Painting (person) — Blue

Sophia McKinley: Senior Drawing (person) — Red

Cake Decorating

Mahayla Moss: Junior Decorated Cupcake (flower) Ph. 2 — Blue

Clothing & Textiles

Audrey Colson: Junior Non-garment (pillow case) Level 1 — Blue & Exceptional Award

Container Gardening

Mahayla Moss: Junior (fairy garden) — Blue & Exceptional Award

Vegetables & Herbs

Mahayla Moss: Junior fresh cut herb (mint) — Blue

Educational Displays

Porter Adams: Junior (beef artificial insemination) — Blue

Brett Burril: Junior (beef cuts of meat) — Blue

Audrey Colson: Junior (German

shorthair pointers) — Blue

Lilly Rockhill: Intermediate (five common houseplant pests) — Blue

Food & Nutrition

Brooklyn Grassl: Junior Muffin (poppy seed) Level 1 — Blue

Parker Grassl: Junior Muffin (banana) Level 1 Red

Laynie Harmon: Intermediate Shortened Cakes Level 3 (chocolate chip cake) — Blue

Sierra Jenks: Intermediate Yeast Bread with added ingredient (herb bread) Level 3 — Blue

Food Preservation

Mahayla Moss: Junior Fruit-Based Product (strawberry butter) — Blue

Mahayla Moss: Junior Dried Fruit (cinnamon apples) — Blue

Mahayla Moss: Junior Food Preservation Gift Pack (Christmas theme) — Blue

Leathercraft

Nevin Thomas, Junior assembly techniques (knife sheath) — Blue

Presentations (live contest)

Lilly Rockhill: Intermediate Impromptu Speaking — Red

Photography

Abigail Humphreys: Junior Landscape (snow scene/tractor) — Blue

Brooklyn Grassl: Junior Landscape (sunset powerlines) — Blue

Madalynn Grassl: Intermediate Plants (yellow flower) — Blue

Madalynn Grassl: Intermediate Landscape (sunset rimrocks) — Red

Hannah McKinley: Intermediate Animals (kitten) — Red

Lilly Cave: Senior Architectural (bridge waterfall) — Blue

Lilly Cave: Senior Animals (wild dog) — White

Eggs

Kaila Shaffer: Junior Brown Eggs — Red

Last Week's Temps

John Day	HI/LO
Wednesday	68/48
Thursday	67/39
Friday	72/43
Saturday	76/44
Sunday	84/48
Monday	91/52
Tuesday	88/52

24/7 FORECAST

AUTOMATED: 541-575-1122

ROAD CONDITIONS: 511; TRIPCHECK.COM

NOAA WEATHER RADIO FOR JOHN DAY

162.500 MHz

WEATHER FORECAST FOR THE WEEK OF SEPT. 28-OCT. 4

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Partly cloudy	Partly cloudy	Mostly sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Sunny	Partly cloudy
81	64	72	76	81	81	79
46	40	41	45	47	49	48