Grant County Web site launched

Tuesday, November 9, 2010

By Lynne Lynch
Herald staff writer

MOSES LAKE - The Grant County Trends Web site was launched Monday night for a group of about 50 community members at Big Bend Community College.

The site, grantcountytrends.org, features unique information about Grant County, such as the traffic counts on the state Route 2 corridor and the number of graffiti incidents in Grant County and Moses Lake, said Mark Wagner, a policy analyst with Eastern Washington University (EWU), which created the site.

Other featured areas include education, business and economics, housing, health, agriculture, recreation and tourism.

The information will be very useful for grant writers and people generating business plans.

Colleen Long, of Ephrata, said she was interested in seeing Grant County's trends.

She was excited the area has fiber to offer such a wonderful thing.

Cindie Conklin, a branch manager with Windermere Ephrata, served on one of the community committees to select real estate information for the site.

"I think it's good information to send clients," she said. "It's a very useful tool."

Clients are interested in the price of homes, information about hospitals and schools, and job/employment rates, she said.

Connie Bell, of Moses Lake, is new to the area, and was invited to the event by Linda Cheatwood, of Alsted Real Estate.

Cheatwood said she was curious to see how the site would look.

Terry Brewer, executive director of Grant County Economic Development Council, explained they worked for the past nine months with EWU on the grant-funded project.

He thanked the event's many sponsors and community members with the focus group steering committees for their efforts.

"I think we have a good product for Grant County," Brewer said.

Patrick Jones, executive director of EWU's Institute for Public Policy and Economic Analysis, said similar projects were done in Boston, Jacksonville, Denver, Spartanburg and the state of Oregon.
EWU's role was mundane. Work was started to build a better database for Spokane and soon became an echo for other agencies.

He called the Web site a platform from which Grant County residents can stand to see themselves better.

Moses Lake School District Superintendent Michelle Price said it was great to have one spot to visit online for all of the various information.

She called the site easy to read and easy to understand.

The site shows where strengths and weaknesses are, she added.

Joy Reese, of the Grant County Health District, said the site helps show the public the facts about health issues in Grant County.