

Local

Sumpter's Heisler turns 100 years old

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The Sumpter Valley Railroad celebrated the 100th birthday of the wood-burning Heisler Locomotive Number 3 on Saturday, August 8th with cake at the McEwen Depot.

The locomotive was delivered to the WH Eccles Logging Company in Sumpter on August 10, 1915 and worked on logging lines that fed into the main line of the Sumpter Valley Railroad.

The Heisler was later sold to Boise Cascade and used as a back-up boiler at a sawmill in Cascade. She returned to Sumpter in 1971 and, after many hours of volunteer labor restoring the train and track, the Sumpter Valley Railroad officially reopened July 4, 1976 with a few thousand

feet of rail.

Today, the track is a bit over five miles long and the Heisler number 3 normally runs earlier in the season (before fire season) and for the October photo shoot and Christmas trains.

Marilyn Fullman and Linda Raney presented a cake complete with candles and LeAnn Wolf, Vice President of the Railroad, addressed a few brief remarks to the crowd.

Fullman said volunteers had been working hard to get the locomotive back together and "in steam" for the celebration.

The engine recently underwent a complete overhaul and inspection, as federally required ever 15 years. Volunteers worked until late the night before to have the engine ready to go on Saturday.

Fullman said the rail-

road is in need of working volunteers and "any skills they have, we'll make use of them."

She said her first year, she ran a paintbrush. In subsequent years, she has helped fix windows, install a solar-powered wheelchair lift, and redo some of the seats.

Sam McCloskey, the Heisler engineer on Saturday, said he is working in North Dakota and got in two days before the celebration. He went right to work helping on the engine, caught a little sleep Friday night, and was back to power the engine for her birthday celebration.

With smoke rising as the sound of her iconic (tugboat) whistle reverberates, the Heisler looks in grand shape for a century old.



Meghan Andersch / The Baker County Press

Linda Raney stretches to put a birthday hat on the locomotive.

Baker County burns

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In addition, the Cornet Fire then burned hot down the Mill Creek area on the other side of Dooley, crested and went over the hill near the junction of 245 and Bridgeport Lane. The fire moved from public lands onto private land, consuming the timber and grazing lands owned by the Bruno family, and hit a corner of private land owned by Ann "Bebe" Racey who is one of the three generations of our family making up *The Baker County Press* editorial board. Helicopters dipped water out of the section of the Burnt River running through the field behind her home.

County Commissioner Mark Bennett, and managers Jason Yencopal and Gary Timm, all of Emergency Management, were on site. Phone service and electricity were out in Bridgeport for hours with cell phone service sketchy. Meanwhile, ash, glow-

ing embers, and clumps of charred pine needles from Dooley fell in yards and on roofs and sidewalks in Baker City.

The fire continued to burn brush and timber on lands managed by Oregon Department of Forestry, United States Forest Service Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF), and the Bureau of Land Management Vale District.

Dooley Mountain road (OR Highway 245) and Burnt River Lane between Bridgeport and Durkee were closed.

Over 100 fire fighters were working early on to contain the fire August 11, a number that more than tripled by Thursday.

"Crews are working to keep the fire from reaching Little Baldy and Stices Gulch," reported Bennett on Aug. 12, shortly after attending a fire briefing at the Burnt River School. Those efforts quickly proved unsuccessful.

Resources were removed from the Windy Ridge fire

as the Cornet fire crested the Dooley Mountain Summit and evacuations began in Stices Gulch. Evacuation notices soon went out to Ebell Creek, Alder Creek, Sutton Creek and Beaver Creek.

Fighting the Cornet Fire was complicated by continued high temperatures, low humidity, and fuels listed as, "dormant brush, timber (grass and understory) and medium logging slash."

Due to the evacuations, an emergency Red Cross shelter was set up in the Baker High School gym to house those who were displaced, opening at 6:30 p.m.

On Wednesday night at 9 p.m. the shelter still had no evacuees, but the four volunteers were there all night—two from Baker and two from Union County.

Those Red Cross volunteers said they'd heard from several evacuees who let them know they were staying in motels. The volunteers reported they'd had



Brian Addison / The Baker County Press

L-R: Heather Stanhope from Summerville, Linda Hudson from Baker City, Rebecca Vaughn from Union County, and Shelter Manager David Cowan.

a large number of people calling to volunteer and those people were undergoing background checks. Also, anyone interested in providing housing for dogs and cats were encouraged to contact the Red Cross.

On Thursday, Governor Kate Brown invoked the Emergency Conflagration Act at 3:28 a.m. in response to the Cornet Fire burning in Baker County. After growing very quickly, the fire threat-

ened approximately 170 structures.

In accordance with ORS 476.510-476.610, Governor Brown determined that a threat to life, safety, and property exists due to the fire and that the threat exceeds the firefighting capabilities of local firefighting personnel and equipment.

The Governor's declaration authorizes the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to mobilize

structural firefighters and equipment to assist local resources battling the fire.

The emergency was declared for the Cornet Fire only and was effective immediately. OSFM assumed command of the fire at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, just as this issue went to print.

Editor's Note: Due to our weekly print schedule, additional wildfire coverage will be included in next week's issue.



THE RUSH LIMBAUGH PROGRAM

WEEKDAYS AT 9AM
SUNDAY AT 3PM





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