

HEPPNER

Wind pays for \$4.2M county HQ

Building named after former judge

By **GEORGE PLAGEN**
East Oregonian

Morrow County's new government administration building is open for business in downtown Heppner.

The Bartholomew Building, named after former Judge Alba G. Bartholomew, is the new home of five county departments: administration, public health, juvenile services, special transportation and accounting.

Employees began moving offices Monday, and though there is still some unpacking left to do, Judge Terry Tallman said he has been pleased with the transition.

"The staff has responded well," Tallman said. "We've had minimal issues with getting this stuff where it needs to be."

In all, the county spent \$4.2 million on the project, including the cost of buying the land and demolishing three vacant homes. The building is located next to the historic Morrow County Courthouse, and was paid for entirely through revenue collected from local wind energy development — not from taxpayer dollars.

The building was named in honor of Bartholomew, who served as county judge during the Heppner Flood of 1903 that killed 247 people. He also



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The Morrow County government has moved into the new Bartholomew Building located next to the Morrow County Courthouse in Heppner.

oversaw construction of the original courthouse in 1902.

Officials broke ground on the building more than a year ago, and the county continues to work with Heppner and Lone FFA chapters on landscaping. Human Resources Director Karen Wolff said there will be a grand opening celebration, but it has not yet been scheduled.

"I've never worked on a project of this size before," Wolff said. "Everything went great."

The building consists of two floors, with the commissioners' offices, administration and public health

clinic on the ground floor. Previously, public health was on the second floor of the Gilliam and Bisbee Building on Main Street, forcing patients to climb a steep set of stairs or ride the chairlift to reach the clinic.

Public Health Director Sheree Smith said that could be treacherous for elderly, pregnant or disabled patients. She said residents should feel more comfortable in the new space.

"Our biggest advantage is being level with the parking lot," Smith said. "I think it will make it a lot easier for people to access."

Juvenile services, special transportation and accounting offices were set up downstairs in the Bartholomew Building. The building also has two conference rooms that can be used by the public.

Prior to breaking ground last year, Tallman said the Bartholomew Building not only consolidates departments into one new administrative center, but should also reassure residents they intend to keep the county seat in Heppner.

Contact George Plaven at gplaven@eastoregonian.com or 541-966-0825.



Photo courtesy Oregon State Police

A 2008 Dodge Avenger and an Oregon State Police patrol car sit in the median along Interstate 84 after colliding during a high-speed pursuit of the Avenger.

OSP seeks stolen vehicle after pursuits

East Oregonian

The Oregon State Police are asking for help locating a stolen vehicle after troopers from Hermiston were involved in two unrelated high-speed pursuits in 24 hours.

The first incident happened on Tuesday at about 8:30 p.m., when a trooper attempted to pull over a 1993 Chevrolet Camaro for a lighting violation on Highway 730 east of Umatilla.

According to a news release, the driver of the Camaro led the trooper on a chase east on Highway 37, also known as the Pendleton Cold Springs Highway, and Highway 334 before going off the road and "down a steep embankment" into a wheat field at the intersection of Highway 334 and 335 south of Helix.

"The Camaro continued through the wheat field and out of sight of pursuing troopers," according to the OSP statement.

The Stanfield Police Department and Umatilla County Sheriff's Office helped find the Camaro, which was abandoned a short distance away.

Early the next morning on nearby Reeder Road a 1982 GMC pickup truck was reported stolen. Police believe the two incidents are connected and are asking for help locating the GMC, which is white, has no tailgate and has an Oregon license plate of BRS869.

The second high-speed pursuit occurred on Wednesday at about 4:30 p.m. after troopers from the Hermiston office responded to a report of a 2008 Dodge Avenger, possibly involved in an earlier domestic disturbance, parked in the emergency vehicle turnaround at milepost 174 on Interstate 84 east of Boardman.

An OSP trooper made contact with the lone occupant of the vehicle who, according to the news release, "became belligerent and fled the area at a high rate of speed."

The trooper pursued the vehicle eastbound on Interstate 84 at speeds up to 100 miles per hour until the suspect slammed on his brakes.

"The trooper managed to slow considerably and make an evasive maneuver, but the vehicles still collided," according to the statement, and the Dodge Avenger came to rest in the median, where Clint D. Cureton, 22, of Grande Ronde, Oregon, was arrested without further incident.

No one was injured in the collision.

Cureton was lodged in the Umatilla County Jail on charges of reckless driving and felony attempt to elude in a vehicle, exceeding the speed limit 100+ and driving uninsured, with further charges pending.

Morrow County Sheriff's Office assisted in the pursuit.

No people, animals injured in barn fire near Hermiston

By **SEAN HART**
East Oregonian

An outbuilding was destroyed in a fire near Hermiston on Thursday.

At 11:42 a.m., Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services personnel were dispatched to a report of a barn on fire near the 1600 block of East Punkin Center Road.

Firefighters responded and found an outbuilding ablaze at 2420 N. Townsend Road, Battalion Chief Jimmy Davis said.

"It was 12-by-30- to 35-foot outbuilding that had some chickens on one side, and the other side was just a garage with some storage stuff," he said.

Firefighters were able to keep the flames from spreading to neighboring properties, but the structure was destroyed. Davis said no people or animals were injured.

The fire most likely originated from a heat lamp in the barn that may have fallen over, Davis said, though he could not be certain.

Firefighters from Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District were called in for mutual aid to assist with the blaze. Stanfield firefighters also were turned around while en route because the fire was under control, Davis said.



Staff photo by Sean Hart

A firefighter from Umatilla Rural Fire Protection District sprays water on the charred remnants of an outbuilding at 2420 N. Townsend Road near East Punkin Center Road north of Hermiston Thursday. The structure was destroyed, but no people or animals were injured in the blaze.

Despite the loss of the barn, Davis said the quick response by emergency personnel led to a favorable outcome.

"Hermiston had a pretty good response. We didn't have any ambulances out, so we actually had the personnel in the station for once, which

is not the case very often anymore," he said. "It was not a lot of damage, not a huge dollar loss, and no one was hurt, so that's always good."

Contact Sean Hart at smhart@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4534.

BRIEFLY

Three vacancies on Hermiston budget committee

HERMISTON — Three positions are open on the city of Hermiston's budget committee.

Budget committee terms are three years long. The committee meets in the spring to go over the budget prepared by city staff before it comes to the city council for approval.

The city is also looking for applicants for an open position on the Recreation Projects Fund Advisory Committee. The committee evaluates applications for transient room tax funds for recreation projects and makes recommendations to the city council.

Preference will be given to city residents.

The deadline for submitting applications for both committees is Nov. 30. Applications can be picked up and dropped off at city hall, 180 N.E. Second St.

Umatilla County improves Pendleton courthouse security

PENDLETON — Umatilla County continues to tighten security at the courthouse in Pendleton.

The county board of commissioners Wednesday voted 3-0 to allow the purchase of a \$17,532 X-ray inspection system for court security.

Sheriff's Sgt. Dwight Johnson said staff now uses a magnetometer and physically checks packages and bags, but an X-ray machine is the industry standard and would be more efficient and effective.

A grant from the state of Oregon for security covers the costs, he said, and court security will keep its aging magnetometer as a backup.

The sheriff's office earlier this year implemented full-time security on the second floor of the courthouse. The previous practice was to use a metal detector during high-profile

court cases or when there was a possibility of violence in court, such as for hearings involving gang members.

Crossfit gym collects winter apparel

PENDLETON — No Pain Crossfit is partnering with area community outreach programs to supply needy children and adults with winter jackets and sweatshirts.

People can donate new and gently used items in the marked receptacle Monday through Friday from 5-11 a.m. or 3-6:30 p.m. at No Pain Crossfit, 421 S.E. Sixth St., Pendleton. If those times aren't convenient, call 503-949-9592 to schedule a time.

Boardman fall cleanup provides free vouchers

BOARDMAN — A community-wide fall cleanup event is planned during the month of November in Boardman.

Garbage vouchers up to \$50 are available for residents to dispose of yard debris.

Vouchers are valid at Finley Butte Landfill or the North Morrow Transfer Station. They can be picked up at Boardman City Hall, 200 City Center Circle.

For more information, call City Hall at 541-481-9252.

Briefs are compiled from staff and wire reports, and press releases. Email press releases to news@eastoregonian.com

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Live Bluegrass
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The EOscenes 50th Reunion

Pendleton Center for the Arts - 214 N. Main
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Friday Night Dinner
November 6 • 5:30 pm • \$20.00

Steak or Salmon

- Complete Salad Bar
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Proceeds to benefit Pendleton Elks' Charities

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