

## HERMISTON

## Nurse's aide retires after 46 years at Good Shepherd

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
East Oregonian

When she first started taking medically-related classes nearly five decades ago, Eleanor Hockensmith had no intention of working at a hospital or clinic.

"When I took the training, I didn't intend to work. I took the classes to have the knowledge to take care of my family," Hockensmith said Friday, June 16, during a retirement celebration at Good Shepherd Medical Center. Hockensmith and her late husband, Charles, had four children, Bill, Mary Lou, John and Michael.

The Hermiston woman worked longer than any other employee in the history of Good Shepherd Health Care System. Her 46 years of service, said Kelly Sanders, vice president of human resources, will likely never be exceeded. Of the 63 years Good Shepherd has been operating, Hockensmith has worked for the hospital for just over 73 percent of its existence.

Hockensmith started her employment as a nurse's aide March 27, 1971. She initially worked in the OB department in the old hospital building located on Orchard Avenue. In 1983, she transferred to the medical/surgery department, initially working the night shift, and later the evening shift. Hockensmith, Sanders said, is one of the few remaining employees who made the move from the old hospital to the current facility in 1985.

In August 1995, Hockensmith transferred to a part-time position in Good Shepherd's TLC Home Health Care department, which later combined with the Vange John Memorial Hospice. When those departments later separated in March 2012, Hockensmith remained with the hospice department as a certified home health and hospice aide until retiring June 2,



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini  
**Eleanor Hockensmith, left, shares a moment with former co-worker Luanne Brownfield June 16 during her retirement celebration after 46 years with Good Shepherd Health Care System.**

2017 — after 46 years and 68 days with Good Shepherd.

"I enjoyed taking care of people," Hockensmith said.

And, people appreciated the care she provided.

During Hockensmith's retirement celebration, which included upwards of 100 people, Ken Freeman shared about the first time he met her in 2013. Hockensmith had entered the room where Freeman's mom was.

"I watched her — that lady took such great care of my mother," Freeman said. "She was a great first face for hospice. She is one of a kind."

The nurse's aide even inspired Freeman. The Hermiston man started volunteering for hospice about a year ago.

Carolyn Robinson, hospice clinical liaison, said she always appreciated Hockensmith's willingness to help. She often came in on short notice when someone called in sick. Hockensmith, Robinson said, exhibited loyalty and dedication to the people she worked with, as well as the patients.

"Her heart is huge," she said.

Luanne Brownfield of Heppner, who worked with Hockensmith for 26 years, said the nurse's aide was like the Energizer Bunny.

"She ran us ragged," Brownfield said as many nodded in agreement.

Although frustrated at times with technology and computers, Brownfield said Hockensmith was willing to learn. Brownfield said Hockensmith is proof that "we can teach an old dog new tricks." However, Brownfield said they had to get additional help on a couple of occasions because passwords were lost.

"I didn't lose it. The computer just didn't go along with it," Hockensmith explained.

Hockensmith loves to sew and cook. In addition to many winning entries over the years at the Umatilla County Fair, she has been named Homemaker of the Year on numerous occasions. She plans to continue using her talents to help other people, including a current project of making chair backpacks at Hermiston Terrace.

## Wineries, food processors oppose proposed 72-hour limit on work week

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon's food processors and wineries are alarmed by a bill to reduce the maximum number of hours that manufacturing employees can work per week.

The proposal originated as an attempt to clarify how to calculate overtime paid to Oregon's manufacturing workers, which had recently been in dispute.

However, the most recent version of the bill being considered by Oregon lawmakers would limit the maximum work week to 72 hours for manufacturing jobs, which food processors and wineries argue will impair their ability to handle the influx of crops during seasonal peaks. Work weeks are currently limited to 91 hours.

Paying overtime is expensive, so food processors would prefer to have

enough workers as to avoid lengthy work weeks, said J.L. Wilson, a representative of the Northwest Food Processors Association.

However, such companies are often located where crops are grown, not where there's an abundance of people, so they don't have a sufficient labor pool from which to pull, he said.

As a result, these processors must rely on existing employees working longer during periods of peak production, Wilson said during a June 20 hearing on House Bill 3458.

"This is going to fundamentally disadvantage rural Oregon," he said of the proposed limit. "They wouldn't do it if they didn't have to, in many instances."

Similarly, harvest irregularities can force growers to suddenly provide wineries with larger amounts of grapes than expected, resulting in unpredictably heavy work loads, said

Ellen Brittan of Brittan Vineyards in McMinnville, Ore.

Wineries have little choice but to extend work hours to prevent the fruit from rotting, she said. "You just have to deal with it."

Some workers at Brittan Vineyards have logged as many as 86 hours per week, but they do so willingly to maximize overtime pay, she said.

"They want to be sure they can make a significant amount of money during this short window of opportunity," Brittan said. "We have people fighting for those overtime hours."

Not all Oregon employers are upset about the most recent version of HB 3458 before lawmakers.

Associated Oregon Industries, a non-profit representing businesses, believes the 72-hour work week will be challenging but is acceptable as long as overtime rules are clarified.

## BRIEFLY

## Banner Bank recognizes top employees

WALLA WALLA — Four local Banner Bank employees have been selected to receive the Banner's Best award.

The award represents the highest level of recognition within the company and the recipients are truly Banner's best, said Kelly McPhee, vice president of communications. The recipients are: Ashley Erevia, personal banker in the Hermiston branch; Gordon MacKenzie, a Hermiston branch teller; Laura Gauthier, a Pendleton Southgate branch teller; and Yadira Murillo, a Boardman branch teller.

Each of the employees surpassed individual professional goals in 2016, as well as providing exceptional customer service to the bank's clients and their fellow colleagues. Less than four percent of all Banner employees receive the award. Recipients are selected by members of executive leadership.

"Banner's Best recipients exemplify our value proposition — connected, knowledgeable, responsive — yet what truly sets them apart is how they constantly strive for a higher standard in all that they do," said Mark Grescovich, Banner Bank

president and CEO.

Headquartered in Walla Walla, Banner Bank is a Washington-chartered commercial bank that conducts business from more than 200 locations in Washington, Oregon, California, Utah and Idaho. For more information, visit [www.bannerbank.com](http://www.bannerbank.com).

## Chamber meeting features legislative update

HEPPNER — Alison Hart of the Oregon State Chamber of Commerce will provide a legislative update during the upcoming Heppner Chamber of Commerce meeting.

The gathering also features a presentation and discussion about the Aug. 21 total solar eclipse. The no-host luncheon event is Thursday, July 6 at 11:45 a.m. at Heppner City Hall, 111 N. Main St. The cost is \$10.

Those planning to attend are asked to RSVP by Monday, July 3 by contacting 541-676-5536 or [heppnerchamber@centurytel.net](mailto:heppnerchamber@centurytel.net).

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