

# Heppner celebrates Town & Country awards

East Oregonian

Former Morrow County commissioner Leann Rea was presented with the lifetime achievement award during the Heppner Chamber of Commerce's annual Town & Country Community Awards.

With a theme of "An Evening with the Stars," others recognized during the Feb. 7 event included Rep. Greg Smith, man of the year; Susan Hisler, woman of the year; Jason Palmer, citizen/educator of the year; and Madison Combe, youth recognition award. In addition, the Heppner Rural Fire Department and South Morrow County Health District EMS team were recognized as co-recipients of the business of the year award.

In addition to being internally driven, Rea is known for her contagious laugh and sense of humor. She is said to have a deep dedication to Morrow County and its citizens. And, she is committed to making the county a better place to live, work, recreate and conduct business.

Serving his 10th consecutive term as a state representative, Smith was referred to as the "gem" of Heppner and Morrow County. Despite all his commitments, Smith is said to be attentive, sup-

portive and approachable.

A Heppner native, Hisler gives from the heart — whether as a friend, 4-H leader or life coach. She organizing activities or efforts — from a fundraising walk to coordinating meals for firefighters — to help others.

A Heppner High School graduate, Palmer returned to his hometown and has been teaching since 2000. In addition to his classroom duties, Palmer helps with math and writing contests, coached track and volunteered with the 4-H rocket club.

Jeannie Collins, a HHS teacher, called Combe a "natural born leader" in and out of the classroom. While striving to do her best academically and in sports, Combe also participates in community service activities, such as food drives, Mustang Mop Up and hanging community Christmas decorations.

Rusty Estes and Steve Rhea, who help lead the 25-member fire department and EMS team, were recognized for their professionalism and commitment to the safety of the community. The men and women make personal sacrifices — often leaving work, getting out of bed in the middle of the night or putting family time on hold — to help local citizens during times of need.



Staff photo by Tammy Malgesini

Owner Cathy Stolz announced that after 48 years, the Chuckwagon Cafe is closing March 6. A "Farewell and Thank You Party" runs Feb. 26 through March 1 at the restaurant, located north of Hermiston.

# Chuckwagon Cafe serves up 48 years

## Cathy Stolz retires, sells restaurant

By TAMMY MALGESINI  
East Oregonian

After 48 years of providing comfort food, the Chuckwagon Cafe is closing.

Owner Cathy Stolz said people have made the endeavor fulfilling and enjoyable. She said the motto, "Serving the best since 1970," refers to the food, the guests and employees.

"You don't last 48 years in any business without a stellar staff," she said. "And we've had the best of the best."

Leading up to the Wednesday, March 6 closing, Stolz is hosting a four-day "Farewell and Thank You Party." It runs Tuesday, Feb. 26 through Thursday, Feb. 28 from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 81027 N. Highway 395, Hermiston. The celebration crescendos Friday, March 1 from 6 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Free cake will be served all four days. Featured specials include New York steaks, catfish dinners and encrusted French toast breakfasts.

Also, the Buttercreek Boys will assist in the farewell by performing toe-tap-

pin' tunes Friday from 6-7:30 p.m. The seasoned musicians have performed monthly at the cafe since November 2010.

All former staff will receive a 48 percent discount — in recognition of the cafe's 48 years. Stolz hopes to catch up with lots of familiar faces.

"I love connecting with past staff members who come in to dine or text me or post updates and photos on Facebook," she said. "They will always be family to me."

Stolz didn't initially have her sights on a career in the restaurant industry. She studied the Bible and journalism at Multnomah School of the Bible (now Multnomah University) in Portland before heading to the Chicago area. After working from 1972-79 on the editorial staff at Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, Stolz returned to Eastern Oregon.

She worked at The Nickel Classifieds, *Hermiston Herald* and *East Oregonian*

before heading to the coast in 1981 to work for *The Daily Astorian*, also owned by EO Media Group. After six months, her position was eliminated.

Dorothy and Duane Beason, her mother and stepfather, suggested she return to Hermiston to help at the Chuckwagon Cafe. The Beasons opened their first Hermiston eatery in 1970. The Chuckwagon, a drive-in, was located at the current site of Panda Inn. A couple of years later when a fire destroyed the structure, they reopened it as the Chuckwagon Cafe where The Nickel is now housed. They built the current cafe in 1979.

In retirement, Stolz plans to continue volunteering in the community. Over the years, she has given back by donating gift certificates, holding fundraisers and supporting such groups as the Boy Scouts of America, a local race car team, the Community Fellowship Dinner and Umatilla High School's first robotics team.

"They named their robot Chuck, which made me cry," she said.

Recent hip problems, Stolz said, have slowed her down. Tired and in pain, she decided to sell the cafe. In the fall she put a notice on the cafe's website and got a couple of bites. However, the parties were interested in leasing. When Stolz finally decided to list it, she received two offers in less than a week.

"I decided I wanted to sell it and walk away," she said. "I'm so amazed and I'm so grateful."

While not finalized, Stolz said a couple of sisters plan to turn the cafe into a Texas barbecue.

"I've been 'married' to the Chuckwagon. Who knows, I may start dating, get married, settle down and raise a family," she said with a laugh.

Stolz reminds people to redeem Chuckwagon gift certificates by March 6. For more information, call 541-567-6329 or visit [www.chuckwagoncafe.net](http://www.chuckwagoncafe.net).

## BRIEFLY

### Hermiston man charged with strangulation

A Hermiston man was arrested on Wednesday and charged with strangulation constituting domestic violence.

Gregory Markel, 32, was charged with the crimes against a family member or person in his household, both constituting domestic violence, as well as harassment.

Markel was lodged in the Umatilla County Jail. He has a hearing on Feb. 27.

### 2 men suspected in thefts at Pendleton business

PENDLETON — Two men were arrested for stealing tools and equipment from a Pendleton business. One was charged with aggravated theft, burglary and unauthorized use of a vehicle, and the other is believed to be involved.

Levi Reed, 35, is charged with several counts of aggravated theft and burglary. According to court documents, Reed stole merchandise, tools, and equipment valued at \$10,000 or more from Western States Equipment in Pendleton. He is also charged with driving a Ford F-150 that belonged to Western States.

He was arraigned

Thursday afternoon in Umatilla County Circuit Court. Steven Ressler, 44, is also believed to be involved in the thefts.

Police Chief Stuart Roberts said they believe there may be other people involved, and that one of the co-conspirators offered to sell some of the equipment to the wife of one of Western States' employees.

Roberts said most of the equipment had been recovered, and officers on Thursday were recovering the last two laptops that had been stolen.

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2/22-24  
**Cineplex Show Times**  
\$5 Classic Movie  
2/27 • 12pm  
**THEY WERE EXPENDABLE**  
**HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG)**  
12:10\* 2:30\* 7:20  
ED 4:50 9:50  
**ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG13)**  
1:40\* 7:00  
ED 4:20 9:40  
**ISN'T IT ROMANTIC (PG13)**  
11:50\* 2:00\* 4:10 6:30 9:00  
**THE LEGO MOVIE 2: THE SECOND PART (PG)**  
12:00\* 2:20\* 4:40 7:10 9:30  
**HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U (PG13)**  
11:50\* 2:10\* 4:30 6:50 9:10  
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**WILDHORSE RESORT & CASINO**  
2/25-26  
**Cineplex Show Times**  
\$5 Classic Movie  
2/27 • 12pm  
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February 25 – March 1, 2019  
6:45 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**No physician order required.**

<b>HEALTH FAIR PANEL</b>	\$45.00
Broad screening tool to evaluate organ function and check for conditions such as coronary heart disease, diabetes, liver and kidney disease	
<b>** 12-hour fasting required**</b>	
Comprehensive Metabolic Panel	
Lipid Panel	
TSH – Thyroid	
CBC – Complete Blood Count	
<b>HEMOGLOBIN A1C</b>	\$20.00
Determines how well your diabetes is being controlled	
<b>PSA</b>	\$20.00
A screening test for males to detect prostate cancer	
<b>TESTOSTERONE</b>	\$20.00
Screening test to measure testosterone levels	
<b>VITAMIN D</b>	\$25.00
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