



Photo by Tylynn Cimmiyotti
Shannon Boor poses for a family portrait with her husband, Doug, and their four children.

Postponing goodbye

Family and friends wait for closure after COVID-19 causes delay

By KATHY ANEY
East Oregonian

HEPPNER — When a person dies young, it’s a shock.

And when, because of COVID-19, friends and family can’t gather to hug and mourn and say goodbye, it’s almost unbearable.

Shannon Boor, of Heppner, died suddenly of cardiac arrest the night of March 8 at the age of 46. In this small, close-knit community, most everyone knew Boor.

She had helped grow Community Counseling Solutions, a mental health agency where she worked for more than 20 years and served as business operations manager. She was an EMT and a mother of four, who rarely missed a local sporting event.

She lived on a ranch just outside town with her husband, Doug Boor said the first week without Shannon was a blur and he remembers almost nothing. He had always assumed he would go first. The two met on a blind date to Lehman Hot Springs and never looked back. They lived on a ranch where he raises cattle, sheep and alfalfa. Doug marveled at the compassionate and forgiving way Shannon navigated life.

“She liked to help others,” he said. “She just did it.”

While Executive Director Kimberly Lindsay was the visionary for Community Counseling Solutions, Boor was a nuts-and-bolts

person and the friendly face at the front desk. Over the years, the staff grew from 11 employees to around 150. Once a small mental health agency, CCS now serves four counties, operates a warm line and provides school-based counseling, residential treatment and other programs to help people improve their mental health.

Rita Martin, now a CCS employee, was a recovering addict coming to CCS for help when she first met Boor.

“She had every reason in the world to judge me,” Martin said. “She was always kind.”

Boor was good at multi-tasking. She was a longtime EMT. She earned a degree in business from Eastern Oregon University while continuing to work.

Those who knew Boor well say she continued to be an anchor for her oldest son, Andrew Bara, who was diagnosed with severe autism as a youngster. He had walked at only 8 months, but would eat only four foods and melted down at loud noises. When she learned his diagnosis, the single mom dropped out of Blue Mountain Community College to focus on his treatment.

Andrew made steady growth. By high school, he wrestled, played football and ran track. He got good grades, participated in 4-H, taught himself to play piano and walk on his hands. By his sophomore year, he played five instruments and had penned more than 70 musical compositions. He now works at CCS.

Boor, like all of us, wasn’t perfect. In her kind way, though, she served as a motivator and sounding board for

the people in her life.

“She held me accountable,” said colleague and friend Matt Bergstrom. “She did a million things. When she had her mind set on something, she got it done. She was one of the most loyal, down-to-earth people I’ve ever met.”

“She was the person always taking care of everyone,” said friend and former colleague Katy Stinchfield. “She was the ultimate pay-it-forward person.”

Boor’s memorial was originally scheduled for March 21 in the Heppner High School gym with room for an overflow crowd at the nearby St. Patrick Catholic Church parish hall. In light of COVID-19 and the state restrictions for gathering, the family decided to wait.

It was a blow. Many of her family members and friends felt adrift. Katie Sargent, who became fast friends with Boor when they were both 15, would have come from North Dakota to attend.

“I am heartbroken,” she said. “It’s hard to move on. It feels like it’s not the end of the process.”

Another close friend and co-worker, Alita Nelson, struggled when she learned of the postponement.

“It was very hard for me,” Nelson said. “I have to remind myself she’s gone because there’s no closure.”

Boor’s mother, Donna Smith, who also lost her husband, James, in November, called the delay “devastating.” She worries about the people who loved her daughter.

“All of them are wanting closure,” Smith said. “They really want a chance to say goodbye.”

VA campus posts screening, closure updates

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — Starting Wednesday, the Walla Walla VA Medical Center will move into Phase 3 for initial health screenings and campus closure changes. The Chestnut Street entrance of the Walla Walla VA main campus will be closed indefinitely and all traffic entering the campus will be via the Poplar Street entrance.

Upon entrance, veterans/visitors will be directed to the right at the checkpoint and initially screened in their cars at the drive-thru area of Building 145 (the Specialty Clinic). Employees will bear left at the checkpoint and follow the directional signs around the campus to their respective parking areas.

The main campus is now closed Monday through Thursday from 6 p.m. until 8 a.m. the following morning. And the campus will be closed on the weekend starting at 6 p.m. on Friday, reopening on Monday morning at 8 a.m., via the Poplar Street entrance.

The campus will be accessible during the weekdays starting at 8 a.m. for veteran appointments. Veterans are also urged to consider changing from face-to-face appointments to virtual care options, such as telephone and VA video connect appointments. Veterans can also use My HealtheVet to order prescriptions refills and use secure messaging to send a message to their provider team or pharmacy.

BRIEFLY

The VA office will help veterans sign up.

UEC to distribute \$2.5 million to members

HERMISTON — Umatilla Electric Cooperative announced on Tuesday that its board of directors approved the distribution of \$2.5 million to the cooperative’s members in April.

The distribution is part of UEC’s Capital Credits program, and refunds will be based on the amount of power customers consumed in 2018. According to a news release, a member consuming an average amount of energy during 2018 will receive a check for about \$70.

The refunds apply to all classes of customers — 9,905 accounts overall. Checks should appear in mailboxes in mid-April. Refunds of less than \$10 will be retained in the customer’s account and added to future refunds.

Because UEC is a not-for-profit, member-owned company, the cooperative operates at cost and returns its net operating revenues to members through the Capital Credits program. According to UEC, they have returned more than \$80 million to members since 1960.

In a statement, CEO and General Manager Robert Echenrode said employees’ hard work and fiscal responsibility have a positive effect on the bottom line, making such distributions possible.

“We are proud to be able to make this distribution in a time of need to help stimulate a por-

tion of the economy,” he said.

For questions, call 541-567-6414 or email customer.service@umatillaelectric.com.

Milton-Freewater cancels council meeting

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Milton-Freewater City Council meeting scheduled for April 13 has been canceled, the city said in an announcement Monday.

The city previously closed its public buildings and offices to the public on March 30 and postponed its monthly planning commission meeting with the hopes of convening on May 4. All other city commission or board meetings have been postponed “until further notice,” according to the city’s website.

While these closures include the city’s public works offices, recycling yards will remain open as usual but without staff there to assist the public. Residents are asked to drop off their recyclables in the appropriately marked bins.

The city has also postponed all pretrial municipal court proceedings until at least June 25, and those with questions for specific citations should contact the city court clerk at 541-938-8203.

Milton-Freewater’s public bus and taxi programs are continuing to operate on their usual hours and routes, and residents can ask their driver about changes in rules to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

— EO Media Group

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Umatilla County restructures staff schedules to fight spread of COVID-19

By ALEX CASTLE
East Oregonian

UMATILLA COUNTY — After calling an emergency meeting on Monday, Umatilla County is restructuring the schedule of its staff in an attempt to further reduce the risks of spreading COVID-19.

For at least the next four weeks, staff of each county department have been split into two teams and will alternate between working at the office and having the week off at home.

“The goal is to minimize the amount of people and foot traffic in the building,” said Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer.

The precautionary switch should reduce the risk of one staff member being infected with COVID-19 and expos-

ing an entire department to it, Shafer said, and county staff will continue to be paid during their off weeks.

While working remotely would be ideal, Shafer said each employee’s access to the internet and county programs necessary for their work differs at home and poses too many logistical challenges.

Shafer added that there are “no real changes” for

the public, who may still access the county offices at the courthouse in Pendleton with an appointment.

The switch is planned for the next four weeks but is subject to change as any new information is made available or policies are enacted.

“Just like everyone else right now, we don’t know what’s coming down the pike next,” Shafer said.

FINAL NOTICE

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ALL PENDLETON ROUND-UP STOCKHOLDERS

We recently tried contacting all of our stockholders to keep coordination with our updated bylaws. We are seeking confirmation from all stockholders in order to validate those stock certificates currently on record.

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