

A 'miracle' house for a birthday present

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

CANYON CITY — "It was like something out of a horror movie."

That's what Amy Hoppe said the Canyon Creek area resembled when she, her brother and a cousin drove through Saturday morning, Aug. 15, to check on the home of her 90-year-old grandmother, Dortha Hoppe.

At least they knew the home was still standing.

And Dortha was safe at that point, too, staying in John Day with her son and his wife, Wayne and Barbara Hoppe, Amy's parents.

When the area went on a Level 1 evacuation the morning before, Amy went up to her grandmother's house to get her and some of her clothes, and take her to her parents' house in John Day. But when Amy went to get a few more belongings, the police told her the area was at a Level 3 evacuation. She needed to leave immediately.

"I rushed into the home, shaking, grabbed a bunch of photo albums and snapped a picture out the window," she said.

Later that night, they were told the house was gone, but Amy said she learned from Julie and Gordon Larson, who went up to get horses, that it was the only home in the area not destroyed.

Just exactly what they found upon arrival however, took them by surprise.

The property surrounding the home and right up to its base was blackened and charred. A



Siding has melted and fallen off, but Dortha Hoppe's house is still standing.



Dortha Hoppe's house, just beyond the driveway, is mostly intact, while everything surrounding it burned.

couple of windows were blown out and vinyl siding melted in places, Hoppe said, but otherwise, it was intact.

The next day, Sunday, while she and another cousin were at the house, firefighters from the North Lincoln Fire Depart-

ment stopped by to ask a few questions and told them it was a local Oregon Department of Forestry crew who had worked that area.

According to the North Lincoln fire crew, Amy said, the forestry department crew



The shop of Amy Hoppe's late grandfather, Buck Hoppe, was destroyed in the fire.

moved brush and stuck sprinklers around, hoping to save it. They had to move on before they themselves didn't make it back out, but asked later about the houses that were still standing and about "the yellow one on the hill."

"The North Lincoln guys said they named it the 'miracle house,'" Amy said.

Ever since Dortha's husband, Buck Hoppe, died in May 2011, Amy said her parents have tried to help her grandmother stay in her home, where she has lived for over 50 years. "We all to this day have no clue how it is still there," she added.

It was also an early birthday present for Dortha, who



Contributed photos/Amy Hoppe
Dortha Hoppe celebrates her 90th birthday with cake — and a home spared from the Canyon Creek Complex fire, thanks to ODF fire crews.

turned 90 on Aug. 17.

"My family and grandmother are grateful, but our hearts are heavy for those who did lose homes," Amy said.

"We are beyond thankful for what they did," she added.

Firefighters join 6-year-old's celebration

By Angel Carpenter
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — A group of Canyon Creek Complex firefighters sang "Happy Birthday" to 6-year-old Dalia Nicodemus last Tuesday night as she shared 240 cupcakes at their fire camp dinner.

The birthday girl said her favorite part of helping her mom make the cupcakes was pouring in the mix and licking the bowls.

The whole family helped distribute the cupcakes, including Dalia's mom, Sophia; her dad, Gary; and younger brothers, Duke, 4, and Khler, 3.

Firefighters were all smiles at the gesture.

The Nicodemus kids also set up signs thanking the crews for their work on the local fire.

Sophia said the family has had a view of the fire, which has destroyed at least 39 homes, from their Canyon City residence — at a safe distance.

"Seeing the fire was pretty scary," she said. "We feel horrible for the people who lost things, but we're also very glad for these firefighters."



Eagle photos/Angel Carpenter
Birthday girl Dalia Nicodemus, 6, serves one of 240 cupcakes to firefighters at the Grant County Fairgrounds during dinnertime at the fire camp Wednesday night. Standing with her are her younger brother (bottom left), Khler, 3, her mom, Sophia, and Kim Randleas, a camp cook.



Dalia Nicodemus shows a poster she made for the firefighters who have been working on the Canyon Creek Complex fire.

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We lost our home in the Canyon Creek Complex fire and we want all of the firefighters to know how much we appreciate all you did to protect structures. So many homes saved! Thank you! No home is worth losing a life. We are so thankful no human lives were lost.

Special thanks to the crew that was on the Corral Gulch Road. They were there after the burn came through and they saved several homes and structures, I believe they saved our barn. Another special thank you goes out to the flaggers who were monitoring traffic down 395, that was a very stressful time for everyone involved. We can't thank you enough.

We cannot say thank you enough to the emergency responders, Red Cross, the Fairground's volunteers and all of the outside sources of donations for all you have done to help.

Thank you friends, family and our special "Oregon Family" and neighbors for all your support through this difficult time. Thank you to the lady (sorry I don't know your name) that brought me salami for protein. It's all been overwhelming to us. We just want to say thank you to anyone we may not have mentioned. We are strong, we are fine and we love Grant County and all the people that make Grant County what it is.

Thank you to Undersheriff Todd McKinley for your sincerity and giving us closure. Thank you to Lisa Hunter-Kennedy at Ed Staub's for listening and talking about this horrific event. Our hearts are heavy, but we feel we can move on.

Steve and Toi Ashe



Grant County Regional Airport Master Plan Kick-Off Meeting

You are invited to attend this public meeting of the Grant County Regional Airport Master Plan project.

This project will help ensuring an effective and optimal development of the Airport. The purpose of this meeting is to present and discuss the master planning process at your Airport.

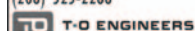
When: Monday September 14, 2015
At 5:00 p.m.

Where: Grant County Regional Airport
Terminal Building
72000 Airport Road
John Day, OR 97845

The Grant County Regional Airport serves as an important transportation link and economic resource to the County, and its residents. This Airport Master Plan will provide with the "Flight Plan" for the future development at the airport for the next 20 years.

Your participation in the process is welcome and appreciated.

For Further Information Contact:
Kevin Bissell, Project Manager, T-O Engineers
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(208) 323-2288



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