

PC seniors have a building of their own

Strawberry Grange is now the Prairie City Senior Center

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — The Prairie City seniors now have a building they can literally call their own.

The group has purchased the Strawberry Grange building at 204 N. McHaley, which is now named the Prairie City Senior Center.

The transaction was effective Jan. 1.

Weekly senior meals, open to the community, will continue to be served there at noon on Wednesdays.

The Strawberry Grange has consolidated with the Mt. Vernon Grange and will no longer exist or meet on its own. The newly formed group will maintain Mt. Vernon Grange No. 659's name and number, and will be the only grange in Grant County.

Both granges had seen dwindling membership in re-



The Eagle/Cheryl Hoefler

The Strawberry Grange building in Prairie City is now owned by the Prairie City Senior Citizens, as of Jan. 1. The grange surrendered its charter and merged with Mt. Vernon Grange No. 659.

cent years.

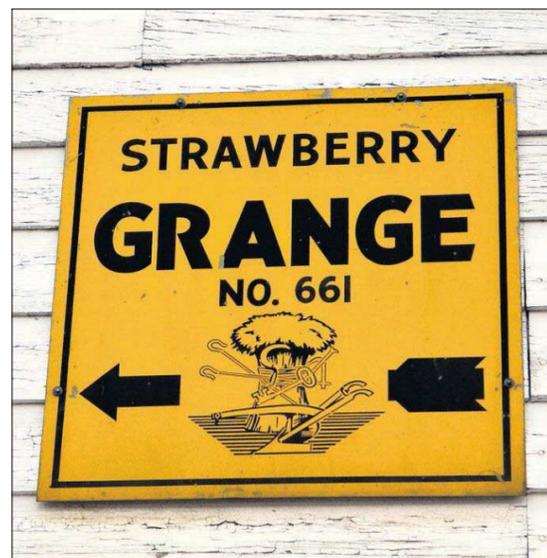
In an October 2015 letter to the Oregon State Grange master and executive committee, Ron Dowse, master of the Mt. Vernon Grange, and Bruce Kaufman, president of the Strawberry Grange, said their consensus was “the

consolidation would result in a stronger Grange presence in Grant County.” The letter continued to explain Mt. Vernon was the logical choice for the surviving grange due to its central location in the county.

The first minutes of Straw-

berry Grange No. 661 were recorded on March 17, 1925. The charter was framed on Feb. 5, 1926. The “Strawberry” name was suggested by Lottie Olp.

In 1978, the Prairie City Senior Citizens leased the grange hall for a 25-year peri-



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The sign on the Strawberry Grange in Prairie City will soon be replaced by one declaring the building as the Prairie City Senior Center.

od to use for their Wednesday meals. When that lease terminated in 2003, the agreement continued on a monthly basis until the seniors purchased the building.

For information on renting the Prairie City Senior Center, call 541-820-3780. To in-

quire about senior meals, call the center at 541-820-4100 on the day of the meal.

The Mt. Vernon Grange holds a potluck meeting at 6:30 p.m. the second Friday of the month. For information about the Mt. Vernon Grange, call 541-575-1007.

In memoriam: Strawberry Grange No. 661 in Prairie City

A look back at 90 years of grange service

By Cheryl Hoefler
Blue Mountain Eagle

PRAIRIE CITY — With a few signatures on paperwork and a financial transaction, Strawberry Grange No. 661 is now just a memory.

After a yearlong process, the grange building has been purchased by the Prairie City Senior Citizens, and the Strawberry Grange — which had dwindled in membership

over the years — surrendered its charter to merge with the Mt. Vernon Grange.

The grange was organized in 1925 by Deputy W.R. Gekler.

Here's a look back at highlights from the Strawberry Grange's 90-year history:

- March 17, 1925: First minutes were read for Strawberry Grange No. 661. Charter members were J.H. Allen, William Axe, George Hall, William Hall, Ethel Jackson, Leslie Holland, Bert Howard, William Bates, R.R. McHaley, Dona Hughs, Lottie Olp, Robert Olp, Mary Olp, L.A. Drewett, Rowena Davis and

Sherm Davis. The first officers were William Axe, master; Robert Olp, overseer; E.W. Kimberling, lecturer; George Hall, assistant steward; Ruth Nelson, lady assistant steward; Alma Kent, Pomona; Mary Olp, Ceres; Roger Kent, secretary; and Silas Barkley, gatekeeper.

- Feb. 5, 1926: The charter was framed.

- 1926: The first Grant County Fair booth constructed by the grange won first prize.

- 1927: The Carpenter building was purchased for \$500.

- 1929: Members attended

the first Tri-County Picnic.

- 1933: A building fund was started for a larger hall.

- 1936: Members with teams, plows and scrappers leveled the ground for the foundation of the new hall.

- 1938: First meeting in the new hall. Dedication was on March 26.

- 1939: The two halls were connected.

- 1942: All notes on the hall were paid.

- 1946: The hall was painted.

- 1952: New electric stove for the kitchen and floor covering for the kitchen and dining room was obtained.

- 1971: After decreasing attendance, the grange went dormant.

- 1976: The grange was re-organized by Ralph Fenton, state grange deputy. Alfred Coombs was elected master; Irma Stanbro, overseer; Margaret Coombs, lecturer; Phil Kuhl, secretary; and Mary Harmon, treasurer.

- Nov. 16, 1976: Irma Stanbro started as cook for the Senior Citizens, which was still an unorganized group at the time.

- 1978: Senior citizens formed at the state level. The group met with the Oregon State Grange master to sign a

contract for renting the hall.

- 2003: The Prairie City Senior Citizens' 25-year lease with the Strawberry Grange ended. The two groups continued on a monthly rental agreement.

- 2016: Effective Jan. 1, the Prairie City Senior Citizens purchased the Strawberry Grange building, and the facility became the Prairie City Senior Center. The Strawberry Grange surrendered its charter and merged with Mt. Vernon Grange No. 659.

Thanks to Bruce Kaufman, president of Strawberry Grange No. 661, for providing the information for this article.

To resolutions that last...



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