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Fire destroys old Kinzua sawmill, adjusters to assess damages

Insurance adjusters were expected to inspect the damage caused to the old Kinzua Mill in Wheeler County Wednesday by a fire Sunday night which fully destroyed the old sawmill, power and fuel house, according to Vic Wallace, caretaker for the Kinzua Corporation.

Wallace said the adjusters would assess the damage for BH and R Enterprises, a Eugene firm, which purchased the old mill from the Kinzua Corporation after its closure last year.

Saved from the fire was the green chain, dry kiln and planer building.

The caretaker said he first noticed the fire between 7:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Sunday while making rounds through the mill and company town, which was being torn down for salvage by private companies. At that point, the fire was burning at the east of the

sawmill and tin was coming off of the roof.

Initially fighting the blaze were four men, Wallace and three others who laid hose line around the fire to contain it. Within 15-20 minutes, Wallace said crews from the Department of Forestry had arrived on the scene from Fossil and by 1 a.m., a busload of Kinzua employees had arrived from Heppner.

The firefighters stopped the fire from reaching grass and heavy forests within 200 yards of the mill but were busy most of the night with spot fires started from the blaze. On Tuesday, State Dept. of Forestry crews were still patrolling the spot fires to ensure they were out.

Wallace said the sawmill fire destroyed the head rig, trimmer and other machinery.

A cause has not been assigned to the fire although

workmen were using torches to dismantle machinery in the mill Saturday morning.

By Tuesday, the burned out hulk of the mill machinery had been cooled down but according to Wallace, the building was a death trap to walk into. A bulldozer was being used to knock down the twisted wreckage left by the blaze.

Two smokestacks fell over during the firefighting effort

without causing injuries. Wallace says with all the excitement Sunday, he was unable to hear the crash amidst the crackling and popping of the fire.

In the 8 years he has lived there, this was the biggest fire Wallace has seen, though he has fought several small fires in the fuel house. Before the fire, Wallace, the only Kinzua employee left at the site, was

expecting to leave by the fall rains.

The Kinzua Corporation has retained its ownership of the property on which the mill sits. Officials could give no dollar estimate to the damage Tuesday.

The Heppner Ranger District also dispatched pumpers to the blaze, at the same time, officials were at the fire at Ukiah.

OPENING DAY AUG. 17

'Something new at fair,' Chamber members told

"There's something new at the fair this year," Delpha Jones, Morrow County Fair Board Chairman told Heppner Chamber of Commerce members Monday at their regular weekly luncheon meeting at the West of Willow Restaurant.

She urged people who have seen exhibits to come to the fair again and have fun participating in the many events and exhibits planned. "Buy your fair buttons; it helps finance the fair."

The fair starts Friday, August 17 at 9 a.m. with judging of 4-H clothing and a knitting style revue at Heppner Jr. High and each day the exhibit buildings at the fairgrounds will be open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Saturday is a big day with a Family Fun Night scheduled. Michelle Collette is ill this year and won't be able to attend but a replacement group, the Jesse Rucilez group featuring the singer, who was the 1978 Male Vocalist of the Year in Country Music, will perform. Also featured during Saturday night's family fun night is a parade of antique cars staged by Bob Harrison.

Harold Peck's 1907 International Harvester automobile won't be there but will be in the parade the following weekend.

Hungry fair appetites will be nourished by Big Jake's Kentucky Fried Chicken.

During the day Saturday and Sunday is the amateur horseshoe pitching contest. County Judge D.O. Nelson is the defending champion. Another fun event set for the fair is the women's nail driving contest which drew 30 last year with Garu Grieb as chairman. The tobacco-spitting championship won't be held this year.

In a slide show presentation, Virginia Grieb, a member of the Fair Board, pointed out some of the fun events ranging from the kid's coin hunt in sawdust (\$21 more was found by the kids than the \$35 thrown in the pile—due to parents, friends and onlookers) from 4-5 p.m. on Sunday afternoon to the many exhibits of animals.

"This is Morrow County's big celebration," said Delpha Jones, "and we have always managed to raise our own

budget. We have never been on the tax rolls."

She said fair officials say Morrow County's exhibition of chicken and bird displays and the art exhibit are exceptional and one of the greatest in the state.

"Come out this year and see some of our new exhibits," Delpha said.

There will be new competitions in open class table settings and senior citizens will judge cookies.

Mrs. Grieb said the young-

sters showing livestock and staging exhibits are learning about the good times a fair can produce and this will aid them someday in taking the reins and directing the fair activities.

Another new item at this year's fair will be a plastic beehive designed to show young people a living bee's nest.

"There's a lot of fun in this year's fair, with the theme of 'Down a Country Lane.'"

Mock disaster drill slated for lone area

A mock disaster drill will be held next Wednesday in lone by the newly-formed Quick Response Unit, according to Coordinator Linda Connor.

Connor says the mock disaster involving a car accident and fire will be held about 7:30 p.m. at an undisclosed

location. Residents are advised not to become alarmed by the practice emergency.

In Boardman, the Quick Response group recently

staged a three car pileup to give emergency teams some practice.

Today's vote to decide fate of Morrow County hospital facilities

Thursday, August 9 is D-Day for Pioneer Memorial Hospital with county voters in north and south ends deciding the fate of the proposed \$506,474 tax levy outside the 6 percent limitation.

The loss of the levy a third time at the polls would mean loss of the entire tax base, according to Ed Dick, Hospital Board Member. In other words, the hospital budget, separated from the main county budget last year, is dependent on a simple majority of votes in favor of the tax levy.

Continued operation of the hospital and the county's remaining medical care facilities, the Pioneer Memorial Nursing Home and North Morrow Clinic are also part of the proposed hospital budget levy. County officials and hospital board members have expressed concern that the hospital might have to close should the question fail to win

a simple majority of votes. In the last levy vote, a levy of \$549,077 failed by five votes

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8 to 8**

with heavy voting against the measure in the north end of the county, where residents are used to using the Umatilla County hospital facilities.

County Judge D.O. Nelson recognized the problem recently at the Heppner Chamber of Commerce meeting and said, "I don't want it to close. We have to make a concerted effort to get out the vote." He praised the hospital



Eagle scout's project

Freedom tree plaque honors former P.O.W.

A plaque, which was given to Mr. and Mrs. Terrel Bengé of Heppner by the U.S. State Department in honor of their son, Mike Bengé, a Prisoner of War released in 1973, has been placed at the site of a freedom tree planted at Hager Park by Perry Cooper, a Life Scout working on his Eagle Project.

Before he left Heppner to join the U.S. Air Force, Perry with assistance from Glen Ward, installed the plaque in concrete at the far end of the new park.

Bengé returned to the United States March 8, 1973 as a member of the second group of POW's released from a

North Vietnamese prison camp and was honored by over 500 friends in a "Mike Bengé Day" in April, 1973. Bengé spent five years in the POW camp after being captured in 1968 in a Montagnard village of Ben Me Thout, Darlae Province.

He survived the ordeal of walking more than 600 miles barefooted when captured as a civilian working for the Agency for International Development among the Montagnard tribesmen. His capture was during the 1968 Tet offensive in the central highlands of South Vietnam.

Bengé, a graduate of lone

High School and Oregon State University, served as a member of the same Scout troop as Cooper, Troop 661.

When he returned home at the age of 37, Bengé was the recipient of the Award of

Heroism by the State Department, received keys to the cities of Lexington, Lone and Heppner and a welcome from

his friends and acquaintances. "You don't know how much it means to us to once again be

back in the free world." Bengé is an employee of the State Department in Washington, D.C.

Packwood here Thursday noon

Oregon Sen. Bob Packwood-R and Congressman Al Ullman-D will make separate visits here Thursday and Friday and speak at two different luncheon meetings at the West of Willow Restaurant.

Packwood arrives on the special election day Thursday and is scheduled to speak at a no-host luncheon at the West of Willow. He will be coming from a stopover at The Dalles and leave Heppner by 2 p.m. following a scheduled interview at the Gazette-Times

communities along the Columbia Gorge.

Congressman Al Ullman will be in Heppner at 11 a.m. and speak to another no-host luncheon meeting at the West of Willow, moves on to Condon for a 3 p.m. citizens meeting and travels to Fossil at 7:30 p.m.

His campaign tour includes trips August 8 to a Nyssa Sugar Factory, an Ontario Press conference, a Vale citizens meeting and on August 9, he travels to the John Day area.

Ullman was able to gain House-Senate conference approval of a \$3.2 million appropriation for construction of the proposed Willow Creek Dam Project and has been working with Sen. Mark Hatfield-R on the legislation.

Both men are expected to seek re-election in 1980. Ullman is chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. Packwood is a member of the Senate Finance, Commerce Science and Transportation, Budget and Small Business committees.

In 1968, Sen. Packwood was elected to the U.S. Senate as the youngest Senator of the 91st Congress.

In 1974, he was re-elected to a second term in the Senate and in October, 1978, named as "most effective Senator" in a poll taken by the news media who cover the Senate. He was one of three Senators from the West, who were voted the distinction.

He was elected chairman of the Republican Conference, the third position in the elected Republican leadership of the Senate, in January.

In November of 1962, Sen. Packwood was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives as the youngest member of the Oregon Legislature and in November, 1965, re-elected to a second term in the State Legislature and re-elected to a third term in November, 1966.

Ullman injured

Congressman Al Ullman, D-Ore., has cancelled his tour of Eastern Oregon—including a stop in Heppner this Friday—because of a fall in his home in Washington in which he cracked a knee cap.

A spokesman informed the Gazette-Times in a call from Washington that doctors had X-rayed the injury and advised Ullman to stay off his feet and in his home for the next few weeks. Two of his staff members, however, will be making the tour, and will attend a scheduled luncheon at the West of Willow Restaurant.

The Congressman's stand-ins will be Bill Robertson, administrative assistant, from Washington, and Gayle Gilmour, field representative, from Salem.

Ullman is expected to be back on his feet in the early part of September.

office. After that, it's off to La Grande.

Legislative Assistant Brad Stocks said Oregon's Junior Senator is making a visit to

Driver's license office closure

The State Motor Vehicle Division will be closed August 15 and 16 in Heppner.

The driving examiner will be in Condon and Fossil those days.