

off page one

# Storm spotters needed for flood warning system



Katie, Joe and Jake Bacon have fun in the snow Monday

This last weekend's sudden wet weather and Monday and Tuesday cold temperatures has area residents suddenly talking about the weather. The rain provided some much needed moisture and was falling gently enough that no reports of damage from washing or flooding have been received. On other occasions, however, rainfall is less benevolent and mud slides and flash floods can cause serious damage.

Paul Duval, station manager of the Pendleton National Weather Service station in Heppner Monday to begin arranging for "storm spotters" along creeks and other drainage areas. A system in operation several years ago involved storm spotters along Shobe, Hinton, Willow, and Rhea creeks. The National Weather Service is currently drafting letters to send to former storm spotters and asks that when they receive the letter they return the self-addressed envelope to the weather station in Pendleton. Others who are interested in becoming storm spotters may contact the Morrow County Sheriff's Office for additional information. Storm spotters must have a telephone and provide a good description of their location.

To be a storm spotter, Duval explains, a person must be willing to watch a rain gauge and call the weather station's toll free number if an unusual amount of rainfall is noted. Also, if the weather service has information of a storm in the area, a storm spotter must be willing to be wakened by the weather service's phone call and to check the rain gauge or the creek level at that time. "We may need them only once in a lifetime, but when we need them, we really need them," he said.

With the construction of Willow Creek Dam, a system of river and

rain gauges with self-contained radio communication to the computer system at the Sheriff's Office were installed along Willow Creek by the Corps of Engineers. The computer assimilates rainfall and stream height data from the gauges and reports the condition in five categories. Category one reports that no problem is indicated along the streams, but when category five is noted, evacuation procedures become necessary because of flooding.

## New insurance agent in Heppner



Bob Ployhar

Bob Ployhar, 31, Heppner, is the new Farmers Insurance Agent here. Ployhar was born in Heppner and grew up here. He and his wife, Cheryl, have two sons, Jerid, 7 and Darrin, 4.

Ployhar has taken over the agency from Jim Hayes and will be open five days a week, 9 a.m. - noon and 1-5 p.m.

The system, however, can provide only a 20-minute warning of flash flooding in most areas, and the weather service hopes that by setting up a network of storm spotters, the warning can be given longer in advance.

The system, called Alert, uses a computer program tested in California and is primarily in use where homes are built at the confluence of streams. Traditionally, says Duval, people will build homes in areas convenient to water, but many times these are the worst places to be if flash flooding occurs.

The weather service has written the computer program which will allow them to better fill their function of warning residents when a storm is imminent. With the Alert system and storm spotters the weather service also will have a better idea of local weather patterns. As things are now, Duval says, it is sometimes the next day after a flash flood before the weather service knows about it.

Also in planning stages are a backup warning system should telephone service fail during a storm. Amateur radio communications are used in some areas but may not be a feasible solution in Morrow County because of the variations in elevation. Local listeners who can hear weather service broadcasts from Spout Springs at 162.4mhz are asked to notify the weather because if the broadcast can be heard locally, it will provide another option for emergency weather warnings.

When the weather service receives an alert either from a storm spotter, a rain gauge or the computer system the person on duty will be able to disseminate the warning to the sheriff's office and from there it can be spread to hospitals, schools, and by a siren warning system can alert the entire area.

# Chamber hears 4-H program

By Justine Weatherford  
Birdine Tullis, who is temporarily the acting staff chairman of the Oregon State University Extension Office in Morrow County, arranged a 4-H program on Tuesday noon, Oct. 1, for the Heppner Morrow County Chamber of Commerce.

Tullis introduced the six youthful speakers by telling of the 4-H Teen Club that was formed in 1984 to include a large group of members from the seventh through the 12th grades of the south Morrow Schools. Kevin Hughes served as the master of ceremonies, giving a brief overview of the groups' recent activities and introducing the other speakers. Benji Pearson told of activities at the county fair and at the State Fair in Salem.

Noella Rill spoke of the groups' efforts in cleaning up and landscaping the mini-park area across from the Heppner Bowl. She also reported on the exciting Canadian trip that she and others enjoyed.

Shannon McLaughlin gave a report on the counselor training and on the work that was done as counselors and leaders at the Morrow County 4-H Camp at Cutsforth Park this summer.

Jennifer Rill reviewed the Portland Waterways Exchange trip which included a stop at the Multnomah County Fair, and she told of the groups' learning experiences at the 1985 Oregon State University School.

Travis Harrison explained the leadership camp session up at Lehman Springs and told of the groups' Lake Tahoe Trip.

Kim Wright told of the experimental exchange trip to Alaska which nine persons made in an eight person van with their necessary luggage.

Kevin Hughes projected a "surprise" showing of colored slides which included glimpses of all who participated in the various summer activities which the speakers had just reviewed. As the speakers had not seen this collection of pictures, each was encouraged to speak out about his memories of the events pictured.

When the teenagers concluded their program, Tullis explained that the coming week (Oct. 7-12) is National 4-H Week and that this program was a sort of preview planned for the Chamber meeting at which the extension office secretaries Melinda West and Claudia Hughes were special guests.



## In the swing

Lonnie Rill found a way to "push" little brother Leland and get away with it while enjoying some of the new playground equipment at Heppner City Park. The boys are the sons of Cecil and Molly Rill.

New equipment purchased by the Heppner Soroptimist includes chairs, brackets and toddler and regular swings. The city of Heppner donated the actual work in putting the swings up. The Soroptimists began the on-going project to improve the city park as one way of returning to the community money which was earned from various club fundraisers. Additional funds have been set aside and the Soroptimist Service Committee is in the process of trying to interest other organizations in helping to improve the park.

A spokesperson for the Soroptimists says that although the city has the final approval of what goes into the park, they are open to suggestions from the community. Members of the Service Committee are Cindy Henderson-chairman, Molly Rill, Pat Hiatt, and Marilee McDowell.

## Drivers training class offered

By Justine Weatherford  
State of Oregon employee Teen Hansell, who is in Heppner until Nov. 1 serving as the temporary operator of the Division of Motor Vehicles office in Heppner is scheduled to conduct a drivers training class for persons over 50 years of age at the Heppner Neighborhood Center at Saturday, Oct. 26.

Hansell is giving this American Association of Retired Persons class as an AARP volunteer; however, the AARP which furnishes the materials (film, etc.) for the class has set fee

of \$7 for the 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. workshop. Persons who take this "55 Alive" class will find that they may become eligible for a 10 percent discount on their auto insurance, she says.

"Older drivers need to be aware of the physical changes they are or soon will be experiencing. They need to review their driving habits. They must become aware of new driving rules and regulations." For further information call the DMV office, 676-5165.

## School spirit



Students participate in Homecoming parade Friday.

See sports story page 6

## Insurance seminar set

Swanson Insurance Agency in Ione will be hosting the third annual Multi-Peril Crop Insurance information seminar on Wednesday, October 23 in Ione, owners Jim and Monica Swanson have announced.

The seminar will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Willows Grange hall in Ione, and is open to everyone free of charge.

Featured speaker will be Paul Gelinek, branch manager of Crop

Hail Management out of Spokane, who will address the program and changes for 1986.

"The program will be of interest to all farmers whether they have Crop Hail Management or not," says Jim Swanson.

Pie and coffee will be served at the meeting, and those who wish more information may call Swanson Insurance Agency.

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