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Two Tuesday fires keep fire department busy



The Heppner Fire Department responded to a fire at 300 Chase Street Tuesday about 1:30 p.m. The grass fire got out of control but was extinguished very quickly.



A fire behind Skaggs Auto Clinic on North Main Street about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday, was quickly extinguished. The fire had started up from a previously burning fire and caught some poplar trees near the creek.

Bill to "export" parolees passes House

A measure passed the Oregon House of Representatives on Monday requiring parolees to be released into the community in which they were arrested. The bill is designed so that communities like Baker who host a state prison do not have a disproportionate number of ex-convicts living there permanently.

The bill, HB2436, passed the House with 32 yes votes, just one more than the required 31. State Representative Mike Nelson, one of the yes votes and a co-sponsor of the bill, said that the bill's intent is to stop punishing Oregon communities who agree to site a prison.

"We agreed to take a prison in Baker," Nelson explained, "but we didn't agree to keep all of the criminals after they had been released. This bill would send them back to where they came from upon parole, and if it passes, should alleviate a lot of fears in Baker."

The issue of how prisons affect the quality of life of local communities has become an issue of statewide concern with the recent increase in prison construction in Oregon. In the ongoing discussion over the benefits of the economic development versus the local impact of building a new prison, HB 2436 should make it much easier for communities to accept prisons.

The bill, on its way to the Senate, must pass there and then receive the governor's signature before final passage.

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Protect your social security earnings record

The Social Security Administration keeps reports of your earnings if your job or self-employment is covered. Earnings records are used to determine eligibility for and the amount of future Social Security benefits, points out Carol Bennett, OSU Extension agent in Morrow County.

It is good to check your Social Security earnings record every three years. It's easy. Call the Social Security office listed under U.S. Government (1-800-234-5772) and ask for form SSA-7004. This form is the "Request for Earnings & Benefits Estimate Statement."

The earnings statement you'll receive shows the earnings reported by your employers and self-employed income reported on your income tax return. Compare the earnings in the statement with your wage record (W-2 forms, pay stubs) and your self-employment records

(IRS Schedule SE). If your records and the social security earnings record do not agree, contact the Social Security office serving your area. The statement will also project an estimate of your future Social Security benefit amount at your anticipated retirement date.

If you have changed your name because of marriage, divorce, adoption or any other reason, make sure the change is reported to Social Security. To apply for a card in your new name, use form SS5, available from any Social Security office. A new card in the new name will be issued, but the Social Security number will not change.

Take charge of your retirement benefit. Don't assume that someone else will take care of your earnings records. Mistakes do happen. Periodically check your earnings record and make certain your current name is on those records.

Art Supply Sale!

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