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The Heppner

Morrow County's Home-Owned Newspaper

# G-T azette Times

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## Fire destroys three businesses; causes over \$900,000 in damage



Central Market in full flames in Saturday's early morning fire that started at the Wagon Wheel Restaurant. Photo by Joyce Hughes

A fire that started in the Wagon Wheel Restaurant in Heppner early Saturday morning swept through adjacent businesses, Bev's Bookkeeping and Central Market, causing damage "in excess of \$900,000," according to Heppner Fire Chief and owner of Central Market, Forrest Burkenbine.

Burkenbine said that the fire started around 4 a.m. Feb. 3. He said that Heppner, Lexington and Ione firemen battled the blaze at the Wagon Wheel for almost three hours and believed to have it contained until the wind picked up and spread the fire to the adjoining businesses. "Once it got to Central," said Burkenbine, "it was completely gutted in a half hour." Power was out in Heppner for about an hour as a result of the fire.

According to Burkenbine there were sufficient fire trucks and manpower to fight the fire, but the wind prevailed. In addition to 14 Heppner firemen, seven firefighters from Ione and five from Lexington assisted.

Burkenbine said the state fire marshal determined the cause of the fire to be a compressor above a walk-in cooler at the Wagon Wheel which shorted out. "Usually a compressor won't do what it did," said Burkenbine. "It will kick a breaker. It's rare, but not uncommon."

One person, fireman Dean Robinson, was admitted to Pioneer Memorial Hospital and treated for smoke inhalation. Burkenbine said that Robinson was released Saturday evening.

Burkenbine estimates that destruction of the three businesses will directly affect 32 people, 17 of whom were employed at Central. It is estimated that Central Market alone lost \$650,000 in the fire.

"People who already use delivery service will be taken care of by

Court St. Market," said Burkenbine. He said that someone from either Central or Court St. will deliver the groceries. He said that people who had been using locker space at Central should contact their own homeowner's insurance first to recover damages, but that Central does have some insurance coverage

for those losses. Burkenbine was able to remove all cash receipts and charge account statements and has all statements on computer discs. He said that Central Market's phone is still in operation and anyone having questions may call 676-9614. Central and Bev's Bookkeeping have established an of-

fice at Jim Farley Motors at 126 E. May Ave., and are open to accept payments on statements. "Anyone with a credit balance may come in and receive payment," he added.

Burkenbine said that he will rebuild the market "as soon as possible, but it's going to take a while." In the meantime, "Court Street (Market) is attempting to do their very best and we're giving them all of our support," he said.

Burkenbine said he must remove food debris for sanitary reasons, but he said the insurance company will cover removal of the building debris. "We're insured," he said. "But not near full of coverage."

Burkenbine owns the building occupied by Bev's Bookkeeping. He and former Central owner Clint McQuarrie, Portland, each own half of the market building.

The Burkenbines will still attend a grocers' convention in Maui, Hawaii, and Australia, that they had been planning for several months, he said.

Bev's Bookkeeping was operated by Beverly Gunderson and the Wagon Wheel Cafe and Lounge was owned by Dick Rice.

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce office, located at Bev's Bookkeeping has relocated its office to Heppner TV.



In the aftermath of the fire Bev's Bookkeeping sign still stands. More fire pictures on page 6.

## Briggs files suit against city in 1987 drowning of their son Robbie

Bob and Stacie Briggs have filed a suit against the city of Heppner over the death of their son, Robbie, on Aug. 19, 1987, at the Heppner Swimming Pool.

The suit, filed July 21, 1989, charges wrongful death and negligence against the city. The Briggs, formerly of Heppner and now living in Waldport, Ore., are represented by Portland attorney J. Randolph Pickett, P.C. The city is represented by the law firm, Schulte, Anderson, DeFranco, Downes and Carter, P.C.

The case will be tried in circuit court by a 12-person jury on April 20, with Judge Richard Courson presiding.

The Briggs are asking \$200,000 for "reasonable compensation," in addition to money for loss of the decedent's society, companionship and services, and money for the "decedent's medical, hospital and burial expenses."

The Briggs are charging that the city was negligent in failing to use

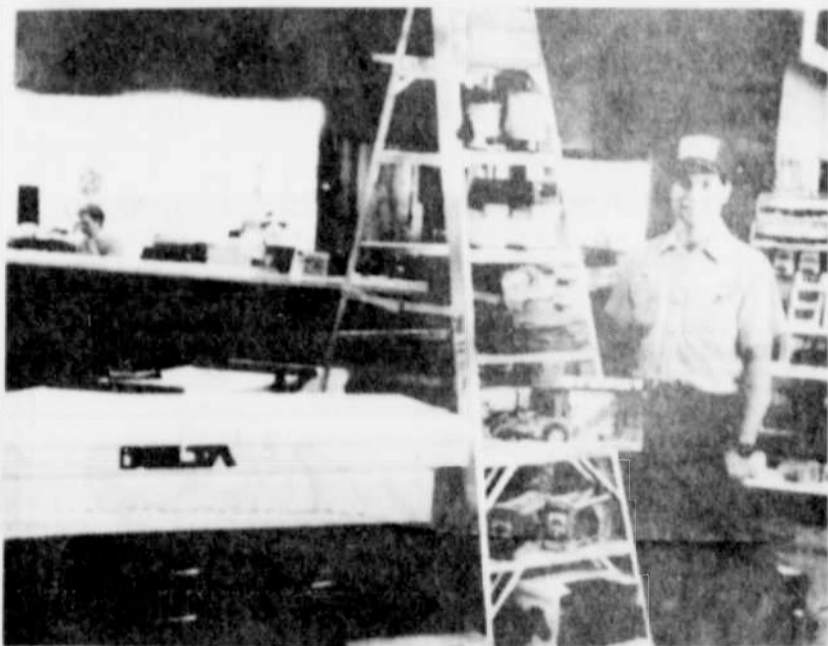
two towers provided along the sides of the pool; that the lifeguards remained in a seated position by the edge of the shallow end of the pool, which provided limited visibility of various parts of the pool; failed to refrain from unnecessary talk and visiting with spectators; engaged in activities that detracted from constant surveillance of the swimmers in the pool; failed to promptly observe the Briggs' son and rescue him when he encountered trouble while swimming; failed to adequately divide the responsibilities of the lifeguards in respect to watching the pool at the time their son encountered difficulty in the pool; failed to clearly designate and mark diving and jum-

ping safety areas; failed to post rules concerning diving and jumping in an area where the posted rules would be clearly visible; maintained the lifeguard chair at the shallow end of the pool in a dangerous condition in that it was rusted shut and would not pivot, making it dangerous for lifeguards to use; maintained both lifeguard towers on the same side of the pool.

Lifeguards on duty at the time of Robbie Briggs' death were Randy Cole, Kirsten (Green) Harrison and Dawn Palmer.

A change of venue, filed by the Briggs to move the trial to Portland was denied by Circuit Judge J.F. Olsen.

## Public invited to MCGG appreciate day Saturday



Doug Holland of the Morrow County Grain Growers, shows some of the door prizes to be given away this Saturday.

The Morrow County Grain Growers will hold their annual customer appreciation day this Saturday at the main offices and store in Lexington.

The day will start off with the traditional free pancake, ham and egg breakfast starting at 8 a.m. and serving until noon.

Lots of free door prizes will be given away, and there will be factory representatives from nine companies on hand with displays and information. In addition, the Morrow Co. CattleWomen will serve silver dollar sausage.

The public is invited to attend customer appreciation day.

## Chamber to meet at high school

Heppner Chamber of Commerce members will return to school, Tuesday, February 13. They will be guests for lunch in the Heppner High School Cafeteria, followed by an introduction to the high school's new computer lab. Information data obtained from chamber members at their recent meeting will be fed into

the computers to determine if they're suited to their current careers.

High School Principal Steve Dickenson says he is excited about the new Career Information System and the networking process. If there are others interested in filling out the questionnaire before the Chamber luncheon, contact Dickenson.

## Cub Scouts plan bake sale



Local Cub Scout troops will hold a bake sale Sat., Feb. 10 at the following locations: Wolf Den-Del's Market in Lexington; Bear Den-Miller's Mini Mart in Heppner; Webelos-Heppner High School

Colts games and the Heppner Post Office.

## Market Report

Complements of the Morrow County Grain Growers

Tuesday, Feb. 6	
Soft White	
Feb.	\$4.23/\$4.26
March	\$4.29/\$4.31
April	\$4.32/\$4.33
May	\$4.30/\$4.21
July	\$3.97
Aug.	\$3.95
Barley	
Feb.	\$110 T
March/April	\$111 T
New crop	\$1.04
Pik	\$94 1/2%

## Weather Report

By City of Heppner

Jan 30 - Feb. 5, 1990			
	High	Low	Prec Rn-sn
Tues.	46	31	0
Weds.	40	26	0
Thurs.	48	35	0
Fri.	51	40	0
Sat.	52	27	.11
Sun.	46	35	0
Mon.	51	25	0

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