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Grass fire burns over 800 acres



Charred grass surrounds a burning pile of wood near where Thursday's fire started.

Investigation is underway on an out-of-control grass fire that burned over 800 acres near Kinzua Corp outside of Heppner Thursday, June 4. The fire broke out around 12:30 p.m.

The property burned is owned by Claude and Happy Graham and Fred Hoskins. The Graham land is leased by 4-C Ranches, Louis and Betty Carlson and their sons Phil and Clint Carlson. Phil Carlson estimates that the fire burned around 320 acres of CRP and 115 acres of pasture grass. Between 400 and 500 acres of grass was estimated to be burned on the Hoskins place. "We

really appreciate everyone coming out," said Carlson. "That's a lot of hard work and everybody came out and volunteered." He said the fire burned for over four hours.

"It was just about under control until the wind took it," said Heppner Fire Chief Forrest Burkenbine. "Right at first we thought we would be able to stop it." Burkenbine said he had "no idea" what caused the blaze. He said that an outside investigator has been called in to determine the cause of the fire.

The Heppner Volunteer Fire

Department, Columbia Basin Electric Co-op, Morrow County Grain Growers, Ione Rural Fire Department, Kinzua Corp and the Morrow County Road Department responded to the fire. Wayne Seitz also responded with a spray plane. Burkenbine said that 40 to 50 people volunteered their assistance.

No buildings were damaged in the blaze but two Kinzua employees, Sid Kennedy and Les Paustian, were treated and released at Pioneer Memorial Hospital emergency room. No dollar amount of damage has been set.

City finalizes sewer negotiations

After three years of struggling to comply with DEQ regulations, the city of Heppner is finalizing negotiations for a solution to the sewer effluent problem.

According to the plan effluent water will be sprayed on the Willow Creek Golf Course and adjoining property belonging to Fred Hoskins, city attorney Bill Kuhn told the city council Monday night.

DEQ regulations prohibiting effluent water from entering Willow Creek during low stream flows, resulted in a battle to acquire land for an effluent irrigation system on land below town.

It is expected that it will take three to six months for government agencies to review the engineering plans. Completion of the \$1.5 million project is estimated for the fall of 1993. DEQ has indicated that the city adhere to a construction schedule or fines will be imposed.

Both Hoskins and the golf course board have agreed to the project and easement rights are in

the process of being established, according to Kuhn.

In other business:

-LoRayne Bowman was appointed as liaison with the newly elected Oregon Trail Library District Board. The board also accepted the July 1 resignation date of the Heppner City Library board. Heppner Library contents will be transferred to the new library district.

-The 1992-93 city budget was approved as presented.

Council member Martha Doherty commented on the five percent cost-of-living raise for city employees when the city is facing cuts in the police department and elimination of the library.

-the board agreed to sponsor the Heppner Neighborhood summer program for youth for city liability insurance coverage on 12 field trips. According to Bob Kahl, the city insurance representative, premium costs will not increase.

-the board accepted the only bid for city fuel from Devin Oil Company.

-instructed city administrator Gary Marks to institute a policy regarding extra duty city police operation in the event of the absence of the two police officers who will be on staff after July 1.

City residents to vote on room tax ordinance

The referendum petition drive to submit a transient room tax ordinance to a public vote has succeeded, according to Gary Marks, Heppner city administrator.

On June 1, Thomas LaRusso, chief petitioner and co-owner of the Northwest Motel, filed petitions containing 127 signatures with Marks. On June 4, Marks received confirmation from county clerk Barbara Bloodworth that 114 signatures had been verified.

According to Oregon law, 10 percent of the registered voters in a city are required to refer a measure to the ballot. In Heppner, the required number of signatures is 86. Marks said that by law the measure would be sub-

Record crowd enjoys IUCC auction



Jean Nelson and Jean Jepsen help customers decide on which baked goodies to purchase at Ione's annual auction.

By Anne Morter

Sunny skies and soaring temperatures kept bidders searching for shade but didn't seem to slow the bidding as all departments enjoyed record sales at the Ione United Church of Christ's 30th annual barbecue and auction last Saturday.

The event drew people from all over the area plus many former residents returned to enjoy the gathering. "People use it as an excuse to get together," said chairman, Bob Rietmann. "Some people come every year and make it a family event," he added.

Just over 400 people feasted on the barbecued beef dinner,

besting last year's total of just under 400.

Frank and Nick Bettencourt of Triad Auctioneers conducted the auction, and according to Rietmann, the items sold well.

Rietmann was pleased with the outcome of the annual event, noting that the only downside was that it was just a bit too warm.

Voters to decide city bond issue

A ballot requesting voter approval of \$390,000 in bonds, for use by the Heppner fire and police departments, should be in the mail by Friday.

The city is asking for a 10-year bond to purchase a new pumper truck, fire fighting equipment, city automobile and construction of additional equipment bays at the fire hall.

The city's current fire truck is a 1961 International and needs to be replaced, Heppner City Manager Gary Marks told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Tuesday.

Marks said the truck is wearing out and is only capable of pumping at 65 percent capacity.

In addition, Marks said the roof on the present fire hall is "about to fall in", and needs to be fixed. If voters okay the bond measure, Marks said the city plans to tear down the building next to the present firehall and construct new facilities that would house the new fire truck and include a meeting room. The city plans to keep the old fire truck to be used as a water tanker.

"We tried to project 20 years into the future as to what the city would need, and this is what we came up with," Marks said.

To pay off the bonds, Heppner residents would pay an additional property tax of \$2.47 per thousand dollars of valuation.

Marks said the passage of Ballot Measure 5, which limits the amount of property tax the city may levy, caused a 40 percent drop in income for the city, making the bond issue necessary.

Under the bond issue plan, the city fire department will receive about 82 percent of the \$390,000. The police department will receive 15 percent and a little over two percent will go to administration.

Ned Clark elected bank director

Ned Clark, a Morrow County native, has been elected to the board of directors of the Bank of Eastern Oregon, announced G.H. Pierson, president of the bank. Clark fills the position held by Ken Walters of Arlington who retired in 1991.

Clark, a Heppner area rancher, graduated from Heppner High School and attended Linfield College and Oregon State University before returning to the family farm. He manages and is a major stockholder in Horseshoe Hereford Ranch, Inc., a Century Farm owned by the Clark family. Clark is a director of the United Heritage Mutual Insurance Company and also serves on the board of directors of Morrow County Grain Growers. He is also active in the Morrow County Private Woodland Owners Association, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and All Saints' Episcopal Church.

Ned and his wife, Kathleen, have five children.



Ned Clark

Ken Walters, served on the Bank of Eastern Oregon's Board of Directors for 17 years. "In his tenure on the board he served on a variety of committees and made a substantial contribution to the growth and health of the bank," Pierson said. Walters was honored by the directors and stockholders at a retirement dinner in his honor.

Flood warning drill successful

Heppner Fire Chief Forrest Burkenbine said that the flood warning drill held in Heppner on Tuesday, June 9 "went quite well. We had some questions arise," said Burkenbine "which is what we want."

The drill tested the flood warning system and procedures, but did not involve evacuation. A short siren blew at 10 a.m. Burkenbine said that in the event of a real flood, the siren would sound for a longer period.

Involved in the drill were the Heppner Police Department, the Sheriff's Department, the Corps of Engineers and the Heppner Fire Department.

According to Jim Williams, operations superintendent for the Army Corps of Engineers, the test was "excellent" and the response of local emergency agencies "superb." He said that

reasons for the test were three-fold, to test equipment, determine emergency vehicle response and to evaluate what took place. Both Williams and Burkenbine concurred that communication could be improved.

A flood warning system located at the Heppner pool was disconnected over eight years ago because moisture seeping into the system caused it to malfunction and sound the alarm when there was no danger of flooding. According to Burkenbine it would have cost over \$10,000 to put new lines in. The present system uses the fire warning alarm.

Burkenbine said that the system will be tested on an annual basis, hopefully in April before the onset of the rainy season. He said that the system will also be tested if the Sheriff's office moves to the location of the former Forest Service building.

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