

HEPPNER

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New 'deputy' joins department



Morrow County Sheriff's deputy Terry Harper with dog Dax

If you don't think the Oregon justice system has any "teeth" to catch and keep criminals, you haven't met the new addition to the Morrow County Sheriff's Office. He not only has teeth, but a bark and a bite.

The newest member of the department is Dax, a three-year-old, 95-pound German Shepherd trained for police work.

Dax, imported from Germany, is a Schutzhund III, trained to the third degree of difficulty and control in obedience, tracking and protection. In addition to around 2½ years of training in Germany, he underwent a four-week, 160-hour class at Salem with his new master Morrow County Sheriff's deputy Terry Harper.

While Dax has become a member of Harper's family, and sleeps at the foot of his bed, the dog also has a special make-up that makes him a good police dog--strength, power and courage. "He's kind of a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," said

Harper. "His bites are fairly severe. Anyone who wants to take on teeth like this (displays Dax's inch-and-a-half canines) has got to be in another dimension."

Dax is trained to respond only to his master's commands. "He's not a department mascot," continued Harper, "not a little Cocker Spaniel. He's basically a one-man dog. He's a trained police dog that basically should be left alone." While he is trained to attack on command, he will also attack without a command to protect himself or Harper. Dax responds in German to the commands--sit, stand, heel, stay, retrieve, run out, search, down, jump and attack. Harper said that the dog was taught in German not only because that is his place of origin, but because it is better that the public does not know the commands.

Dax is also trained in hot tracking (for example when a person jumps out of a car and runs), area



Terry Harper displays "bite suit"

searches, building searches and sniffing marijuana, methamphetamines and cocaine.

Becoming the dog's master not only takes a commitment for the initial training, but also of time. Training is an ongoing affair, said Harper, who spends around four to five hours a week providing additional training. Dax is with Harper at the sheriff's office and has a special seat in Harper's patrol car. The dog will probably have seven years of active duty since police dogs are usually retired at around 10. While Harper stresses that he is committed to the program, if he should leave the force, the dog would stay with the county. Dax would have to be retrained, if possible, with another master.

Purchased through drug forfeiture assets, not county tax monies, the dog and the training package together cost around \$9 thousand--\$5,400 for the dog and the remainder for the training and equipment, which includes a bite suit and protective gear. "I suspect that in narcotics alone, he'll replace the money that was spent on him," added Harper, who notes that the county has changed in the four-½ years since he joined the sheriff's office. Harper says he expects more change, especially with the start of street gangs in the north county.

But perhaps we'll all sleep a little sounder with Dax on duty.

Sign commemorates 1903 Heppner flood



Photo by Joyce Hughes

Wendy Cloyd (left) and museum director Marsha Sweek, unveil the new historical flood marker to fourth graders and other onlookers. The marker is located in the new mini park.

A new sign commemorating the 1903 Heppner flood was unveiled by Morrow County Museum Director Marsha Sweek in a ceremony Thursday, Oct. 21 at the new city mini park.

The sign sponsored by the museum, with additional financial support from the Morrow County Historical Society, is the first of its kind in the state, with imbedded photographs and a new

type of support structure.

Speakers included Wendy Cloyd of the Travel Information Council of the state of Oregon, Delpha Jones, from the Historical Society, Heppner Mayor Bob Jepsen, who spoke on the flood, and city administrator Gary Marks, who spoke about the mini-park. The park is significant because it is at the juncture of

Hinton and Willow creeks.

Also on hand for the ceremony were Jean Nelson of the Morrow County Historical Society; Kay Robinson, Heppner City Council; John Edmundson, Tourism Committee and teachers Cara Osmin and Karen Dubuque and their fourth grade students.

Vandalism at dam could endanger town

Vandalism is senseless, unsightly and expensive. But sometimes it is downright dangerous.

Vandals who destroyed the high water alarms at the Willow Creek Dam the night of Oct. 20, could have endangered the whole Heppner community, according to James G. Williams, power project supervisor with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"If we had not had a backup," said Williams, "this town would not have had a flash flood warning."

Williams discovered the vandalism when he called the system to get the water readings and got a busy signal. When a telephone company repairman went out to the site, he discovered that the terminal box on the side of the dam had been hit with a big rock and wires torn off which created the busy signal. The system was out for four days dur-

ing repairs.

Williams said that the telephone system is backed up by radio telemetry. "But," he added, "if the radio system were to fail, we'd have no backup."

Officials remind the public that the property is federally owned. If a juvenile was caught committing vandalism on the property, he would be referred to juvenile court. In addition to restitution, the juvenile may be required to do some community service. The sentence would also depend on the severity of the crime, and the juvenile's previous record. "It could get real expensive for some parent," cautions Verlin Denton, undersheriff for the Morrow County Sheriff's department.

"There's no need of anyone climbing the fence," continued Williams. "If anyone wants in to see what's there, I'll conduct a tour at the drop of a hat. I'll con-

duct a tour for one person. All I'm asking is your help."

Williams said that if a flash flood came down Willow Creek or Balm Fork the dam would hold it. But, the Corps would like to have advance warning so they could release additional water from the dam in preparation for a flood.

Williams said that the last two months there have been four or five occurrences of vandalism at the dam and, while the Corps has been very tolerant of minor offenses such as torn fences and life rings torn off and thrown in the water, this most recent vandalism alarmed him.

"When they do things like that, they put the whole town in danger," added Denton.

Denton and Doug Rathbun Heppner Police Chief say they will attempt to increase patrols near the dam and ask that anyone seeing anything suspicious near the dam to call 911.

MCGG annual meeting Nov. 1



Fritz Hill

The 63rd annual meeting of Morrow County Grain Growers will be held Monday, November 1, at the fairgrounds pavilion in Heppner, beginning with dinner

at 6:30 p.m.

The speaker for the evening will be Fritz Hill from Pendleton who promises a humorous talk on agriculture, "Are We Proud Enough?"

The business meeting will include a review of the financial report by the company auditors, plus reports from company officers. There will be an election of four directors for three year terms. Nominees for the four positions are: Doug Drake, Keven Haguewood, Steve Hill, Dave Matheny, Barry Munkers and Paul Proudfoot. Nominees for the four associate director positions are: Tony Ashbeck, John Luciani, Joe Rietmann and Tim Rust.

Babysitting will be provided for those with small children.

Sheriff's office has phone problems

The Morrow County Sheriff's office has been having trouble with their phone system since their move from the courthouse to their new offices on Willowview Drive.

Anyone wishing to contact the sheriff's office is asked to phone 676-5317 instead of the former 676-9061. Calls cannot be transferred to the new location from the 676-9061 number.

"We understand that means a long distance call from the north end," said a sheriff's office spokesperson, "and we apologize. Please be patient during our move and hopefully the problems can be resolved."

Red Cross offers disaster training courses

The Benton-Franklin chapter of the American Red Cross encourages participation in the disaster training courses to be held November 5, 6 and 7 at the St. Patrick's Senior Center in Heppner.

The following courses will be available:

3066-Introduction to Disaster, Nov. 5, 6-10 p.m. This will be a prerequisite for all other authorized Red Cross disaster courses. Basic information about disasters, their effects on people and the community, the roles of Red Cross, government and other

agencies in responding to those effects. The class includes the Red Cross structure, policies, procedures and how the organization provides disaster relief services.

3068-I Mass Care Mod I, Nov. 6, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Prerequisite Intro to Disaster. This class teaches the basic Red Cross chapter responsibilities of establishing shelters and feeding operations. Included are key functions, workers roles, resources needed, inventory control, administrative regulations and reporting requirements.

Shelter Operations Workshop, Nov. 7, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. The purpose of this workshop is to prepare Red Cross and other agencies' staff to effectively and sensitively administer shelter operations as a team, to meet the needs of people placed as a result of a disaster. Excellent for members of local agencies or facilities that may be recruited to assist in Red Cross Shelter operations.

Anyone interested in attending any of these courses contact the chapter or Jane Rawlins as soon as possible.