

## Burkenbine steps down as fire chief



Forrie Burkenbine serves 28 years as fire chief

'Temporary' is a state of mind.

For Forrester Burkenbine of Heppner, a "temporary" appointment turned into a 28 year stint as the city's volunteer fire chief. According to Mayor Bob Jepsen, Burkenbine was appointed fire chief in January of 1967. Two others considered for the job, Bill Farrah and Clyde Allstott, were out of town, and a third, Howard Bryant, was not at home. His wife, according to Jepsen, who quoted city records, assured the council that Bryant would not be interested. So, Burkenbine agreed to act as fire chief until "something else could be worked out".

As Burkenbine's career with the fire department advanced, so did his professional career. A year before he joined the force, he started working as a meat cutter at what is now Central Market. He worked as a meat cutter until 1961 when he became store manager. In 1976 he bought the store.

Burkenbine says that his staying power on the department is a result of "loving what you do." "I wouldn't have stayed with it all these years if I didn't," he said. "If there was something about the job I found extremely unpleasant, I wouldn't have stayed with it for 39 years. You have to overlook all the bad things and look at the positives. I enjoy the camaraderie with fellow firemen. Everyone that has stayed with the department has done so because they enjoy the job."

Burkenbine says that the job of fireman has changed drastically over the years. Paid men do not practice fear. They practice safety, but not fear.

Burkenbine also credits his department for going above and beyond the call of duty, buying things for the department over the years. Some of the money for the purchases is generated by the firemen

donating \$2 apiece for each fire they attend. Their most recent purchase was a \$7,000 set of three air bags that are capable of lifting up to 35,000 pounds and are used sometimes instead of the Jaws of Life.

Burkenbine says that firemen in a small department are also given a chance to deal with more different kinds of situations. "In a volunteer department, everybody has to do 'Times have changed,'" says Burkenbine. "Back then all you had to do was walk in and attend the meetings. Things are more complex now." Now, he says the job entails much more

than handling fires, as demanding as that may be. (The Heppner department has handled over 1,000 fires over the years.) A fireman now must have around 72 hours of training and the local firemen have around 100 hours a year of ongoing training, he says. Handling automobile accidents is also an important part of the job. Burkenbine says that his department handled around 13 auto accidents last year. In addition to operating the "Jaws of Life" firemen must be trained in First Aid. Almost all the local firemen are now certified by the state. "It's something that the firemen have wanted to do, which helps insurance rates for the residents of our district. Burkenbine says that while the training is only recommended now, in the near future it will be required.

Burkenbine is proud of his department's safety record, both for firemen and for the victims. Over his stint on the department there have been only four fatalities and very few minor injuries. "Fires are extremely serious," he said. "And one thing I have always stressed is safety. If you're injured, you can't put the fire out." Burkenbine says that a paid fire department can have

more accidents than his department has had in 40 years and adds that a healthy fear of fires has contributed to those statistics. "By practicing safety, you practice fear. Some of the everything. There are no specialty jobs."

Burkenbine has put a great deal of thought into transferring the title of fire chief to a new man. "When I took over (from former chief Charles Ruggles) there was no transition time. There needs to be a transition. The last four years I've been training, unbeknownst to them, four people to take over." Burkenbine stresses that the election of a fire chief is not a popularity contest, but instead is based on training, experience, and the ability to manage people.

For the new fire chief, Rusty Estes, training began 20 years ago as Burkenbine supervised a junior fire department of four high school students. Besides Estes, Burkenbine's son Allen, who was a junior member, is still active in the department.

While the department has grown from eight or nine people when Burkenbine was named chief to around 20 now, he says that more volunteers are still needed.

Burkenbine, who cites back problems as part of the reason he is stepping down, says he will remain on the department. "Contrary to the news media reports," he jokes. "I am not retiring because of Ballot Measure 8. (Measure 8 requires public employees to pay their own pension.) The firemen voted Burkenbine in as fire marshal. While he will no longer be actively involved in fighting fires, he will serve in an advisory position, investigating suspicious "smokes and smells". He is also involved in emergency management, the fire board and the District 12 Fire Training Association.

Burkenbine was born and raised in Heppner and graduated from Heppner High School. His wife, Gail, was raised in Pendleton. The couple, who married in 1957, have three children and seven grandchildren: Lisa Heim-bigner, who is an RN at St. Mary's Hospital in Walla Walla, and her two daughters, Amanda and Sarah; Connie LaFarge, who is a paralegal in Salem and her daughter, Allison; and Allen, who works at Central Market, and his four daughters, Monica, Jennifer, and twins Samantha and Stephanie.

HEPPNER



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## June Crowell retires from Bank of EO



June Crowell

After nearly 28 years with the Bank of Eastern Oregon, June Crowell, lone branch manager, will retire effective Dec. 31. George Koffler, Bank of Eastern Oregon president, has announced.

An open house will be held in honor of Crowell at the lone branch on Wednesday, Dec. 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Crowell, 62, started in the banking business in 1950 right out of high school with First National Bank, now First Interstate. She worked on and off with First National for 15 years while she had her family and

then stayed home for two years with the children before joining the staff at the Bank of Eastern Oregon in 1967. She first worked at the Bank of Eastern Oregon as a teller, then as a bookkeeper and then was named branch manager in May of 1974.

Crowell commented that the biggest change in the banking business has been computers. "I think they've been a marvelous help," said Crowell, who noted that when she started, posting was done by hand.

Crowell says that she has no special plans after retirement other than enjoying her family, spending more time with her grandchildren and perhaps doing more camping. Crowell and her husband, Howard, who is a retired lone Schools custodian, have three children and nine grandchildren: son Gene and his wife Kristy, lone, and their two children, Jory and Erin; daughter Sharon and her husband Brian Rietmann, lone, and their four children, Andrew, Alyssa, Alan and Alex; and daughter Karen and her husband Rick Kandle, Ver-

nal, Utah, and their three children, Heather, Michelle and Jeremie.

Crowell says that she will miss her job and the people at the bank.

Mardean Patton, who has been with the bank for five years, has been promoted to lone Branch bank supervisor, effective January 1. She will be responsible for the operations of that branch. Patton started out as a teller at the Heppner branch in the fall of 1989 and then transferred to the lone branch around March of 1990. At the lone bank, in addition to working as a teller she handled new accounts, was proof operator and also worked as a back up teller for the Arlington branch. "It's a great place to work," said Patton.

Anita Orem, who had been working at the bank part time, will now take on a full time teller position and Natalie Hodges has been hired for the part time position. Richard Wood, who is an agricultural loan officer for the Bank of Eastern Oregon will be responsible for the lending activities of the lone branch.

## Lone businesses plan second annual open house

By Anne Morter

The businesses of lone will hold their second annual holiday open house on Wednesday, December 21. Local business people will serve refreshments and many will give away door prizes throughout the day.

Businesses planning to participate include Wheatland Insurance, Bank of Eastern Oregon, lone Key Lock, lone Repair, Bristow's Market, Morrow County Grain Growers,

Beecher's Restaurant, B & C Repair, the Post Office and the lone Community College Coordinator for Morrow County will be on hand to answer questions.

As an added bonus, the ICABO (lone Community-Agri Business Organization) will hold a lunch meeting at noon at Beecher's Restaurant. Everyone is invited to attend the meeting.

According to spokesperson Nancy Snider, last year's event was well attended and enjoyable for the business people

and the community alike. "It's a good chance to visit the local businesses and enjoy their hospitality while we express our appreciation," Snider says. Woolery House, Creative Care Preschool will have a display and Anne Morter, Blue Moun-

## Heating assistance available for low income

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) has money available for eligible low income families. The program helps offset the costs of home energy that are excessive for some households.

Money will be allocated on a first-come basis. A video will be previewed and helpful hints for reducing energy consumption will be discussed.

Guidelines for determining household eligibility for one person is not to exceed \$767 per month, \$1,025 for two persons and increases of \$258 per person for additional members.

Applicants must bring proof of all household income (in-

cluding scholarships and grants) for all members; social security numbers for all household members; a current electric bill and a current heating bill if other than

electric.

Applications will be taken December 21 at the Neighborhood Center at 10:30 a.m.

For more information, Call 676-5024.

## Teen dance set Dec. 27

Dan Burns of Three D Productions out of Pendleton will provide music at the winter dance for high school and college age youth (under 21 years of age) on Thursday, December 29, at the Heppner High School cafeteria from 9 p.m. to

midnight.

This alcohol and drug free dance is sponsored by the Oregon Together group of Heppner and Lexington. Admission to the dance is \$1 per person, or \$2 per couple.

## Concert at Heppner Elementary

The Heppner Elementary School kindergarten through fourth grade winter concert is slated for this Thursday, Dec.

15, at 2:30 p.m. in the multipurpose room.

Everyone is invited to attend. There is no admission charge.

We'll keep you warm this winter

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Morrow County Grain Growers  
Lexington 989-8221 1-800-824-7185