

Businessmen sheep dressing now at rodeo

The Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Committee is always looking for ways to entertain the crowd during the local rodeo in August. The Sunday performance has always been a family affair with stick horse races and calf, sheep and cow riding.

"It is fun and exciting to watch the people you know and see on a daily basis compete in the arena," said Sue Gibbs, Rodeo Committee member. "It always brings about smiles, laughs and conversation as our fair and rodeo season draws to an end."

This year the Rodeo Committee would like to start a new tradition to enhance "the laughs, memories and conversation to take us into this coming fall," said Gibbs. "The OTRP Committee is proud to announce "The Annual Businessman's Sheep Dressing Contest."

In the contest, teams from local businesses will compete in a timed race to put a pair of pantyhose on a ewe of their choice. "Have you ever seen kids running around in a sloppy pen to catch a greased pig?" asked Gibbs. "Well, we just enlarged the pen, erased the slimy pig, added sheep, pantyhose, respectable business people and a

huge crowd to cheer them on." Rules are as follows: Entries are limited to 12 teams. Each team will have three members who work for the business. The team must catch a sheep (no outside devices). Two of the members must put the pantyhose on over the ewe's tail and hold it in that position. The third person runs from the ewe back to a marked white circle in the middle of the arena. John Griffith, event chairman, will be waiting with a flag to signal the times.

The team who completes the even in the fastest time (five minute limit) will be the winner of the Businessman's Sheep Dressing Trophy, "a great honor," says Gibbs. Gibbs says there have been some rumors of a traveling trophy as well, but the exact details have not been "finalized for maximum effect."

No entry fee is required, but the committee must limit entries to 12 teams. The "control top" pantyhose will be supplied for each team. "Good running shoes, old jeans, a team hat and a great sense of humor are recommended for maintaining pride, dignity and a professional winning attitude," says Gibbs.

Call Sherree, 676-5876, to sign up starting June 1.

Business Retention Program to begin

What's the best way to create jobs in a community? Studies have shown that most net changes in employment come from businesses that are already operating in the community, not from new businesses moving in, according to Lisa Breckenridge, GEODC.

A new Willow Creek Valley Task Force is announcing a business retention program to help local businesses grow and thrive.

"It makes sense to focus on existing businesses as the foundation for community job stability and creation," commented Task Force member Bob Jepsen. "This effort is a natural follow-up to the Willow Creek Valley Diversification Study that was completed last year. The study recommended that we pay attention to our existing businesses and help them grow, and we're pleased to be doing just that."

The program's first stage involves business visitation. The goal is to identify what areas businesses need help with. Community volunteers will visit between 30 and 40 businesses representing different economic sectors in Ione, Heppner and Lexington. Volunteers will ask business owners about issues including business trends, workforce, and training needs. The visits will take place from June 12-30. Currently, Task

Force members are identifying volunteers for this effort.

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) is providing staffing to the effort as part of their economic development contract with Morrow County. Breckenridge stressed that the business visits will keep everything on a purely confidential basis. "Volunteers are all trained in confidentiality before the visits, and the results are only reported as a summary."

Once the visits are complete, the Task Force will identify the top areas of business concern and will work with partners to assist business owners directly. "This is a tried and proven method of supporting businesses," commented Breckenridge. "Communities in rural areas all over the country have demonstrated that this program works. This will be the first time this program is available in Eastern Oregon, and we're delighted that we can offer this assistance to the Willow Creek Valley."

Other partners include the Small Business Development Center, Oregon State Economic Development Department, Morrow County and the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

For more information, contact Breckenridge at 276-6745.

Telecom 101 workshop offered

The public is invited to the "Telecom 101" workshop on Thursday, May 25, at 2 p.m. at the Gilliam-Bisbee Conference Room in Heppner.

"We have designed this workshop to be for people who do not have a technical background," says Lisa Breckenridge of GEODC. "The Internet is making fundamental

changes in our economy, and it's important for rural areas to understand how to access it. We need to make sure the 'Information Superhighway' has on-ramps in rural areas and attending this workshop is the first step."

For more information, contact Breckenridge at 276-6745.

School Calendar

Heppner High School
Thursday, May 24 - Junior/Senior breakfast, 7 a.m.; Baccalaureate, St. Patrick Catholic Church, 7:15 p.m.

Friday, May 26 - Ione High School graduation, 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 27 - Heppner High graduation, 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 28 - Riverside High School graduation, 2 p.m.

Monday, May 29 - Memorial Day Holiday, no school.

Tuesday, May 30 - Junior High awards, 7 p.m.

Thursday, June 1 - Heppner Elementary School awards.

Friday, June 2 - School day, end of fourth quarter and end of second semester, last day of school for students.

Saturday, June 3 - Heppner eighth grade celebration, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 6 - Last day of school for teachers.

Monday, June 12 - School board meeting, Riverside High School, 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, June 14 - Site Council meeting, 7 p.m.

Heppner Elementary School
Thursday, May 25 - Student body assembly, 2 p.m.; Spring concert, HES, 6 p.m.

Monday, May 29 - Memorial Day, no school.

Thursday, June 1 - Awards night, 7 p.m.

Friday, June 2 - School day, last day of school for students; Blue & White Day.

Tuesday, June 6 - Last day of school for teachers.

Ione Schools
Wednesday, May 24 - Ione High School Baccalaureate, Valby Lutheran Church, 7 p.m.

Friday, May 26 - Ione High School graduation, 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 27 - Heppner High School graduation, 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 28 - Riverside High School graduation, 2 p.m.

Monday, May 29 - Memorial Day, no school.

Tuesday, May 30 - Ione eighth grade dinner, 5:30 p.m.; Ione Middle School sports awards, 7 p.m.

Thursday, June 1 - Semester exams.

Friday, June 2 - School day, semester exams, last day of school for students.

Tuesday, June 6 - Last day of school for teachers.

Tuesday, June 13 - Ione Pool opens.

Jack & Jill

tourney planned

The Willow Creek Country Club golfers will have a Jack and Jill mini-tournament on Friday evening June 9, at 6 p.m.

The activity will involve male and female couples playing in a nine-hole modified couples type of play with the format determined by the committee in charge.

Prizes will be awarded for low scores and special events. The charge will be \$3 per couple for members and \$10 per couple for non-members.

Light snacks will be provided by the committee in charge.

Hosts will be Bob and Suzanne Jepsen, Ray and Norma French and Mark and Elaine Miller.

For more information, contact Breckenridge at 276-6745.

Gun Club

meets

The Morrow County Gun Club (MCGC) now has lights for night shooting. The first shoot was held at Tuesday, May 16 at 9 p.m.

The winners of the 16 yard event were Harvey Childers with 22, Mick Sharp with 19 and Deona Hodges with 17. At the 20 yard handicap there was a three-way split for first with Harvey Childers, Barry Munkers and Chrissy Wall all shooting 17.

MCGC also held their yearly meat shoot on Sunday, May 21, with a "great turnout and a fun family day."

A regular weekly night shoot will be held on Tuesdays from now on. The club will also continue to shoot on Sunday afternoons throughout the summer months.

Music in the Parks to begin

A series of 12 free outdoor performances on the banks of the Columbia River begins Monday, June 5, at 7 p.m. The performances will rotate between the Boardman and Irrigon marina parks and offer a variety of musical experiences.

The first performance, June 5, will showcase the Blue Mountain Community College Choir. "This event will feature a variety of vocal performances from talented community college students," said an event spokesperson. "This will be an opportunity for community members to enjoy and applaud prize winning vocalists. It will also showcase potential musical and educational opportunities to young children of the community - the BMCC students of the future."

The June 5 program will be at the Boardman Marina Park.

The June 12 performance, at the Irrigon Marina Park, will feature Oregon State Jr. Fiddle champion Staff Nelson and "Two Guys and a Gal" local "old time" musicians.

Additional dates and locations are: June 19 - Boardman Marina; June 26 - Irrigon Marina; July 3 - Boardman Marina; July 10 - Irrigon Marina; July 17 - Boardman Marina; July 24 - Irrigon Marina; July 31 - Boardman Marina; August 7 - Irrigon Marina; August 14 - Boardman Marina; and August 21 - Irrigon Marina.

Performers include: The

McChoir Sisters, Tony Madrigal, Absolutely Nobody, Homestead Quartet, Tim Cundell, Bram Brata and others.

All performances are free and will be held on Monday evenings, beginning at 7 p.m.

"Music in the Parks" is sponsored by the Arts Council of Morrow County. Funding is provided by Morrow County Unified Recreation District and Portland General Electric.

To find the Boardman Marina Park from I-84, take exit 164 and turn north on Main Street toward the Columbia River. Continue north about 1/2 mile and turn left on Marine Drive.

To find the Irrigon Marina Park from Highway 730, turn north on 10th Street toward the Columbia River.

Performances in both parks will be in the picnic areas.

For more information, contact Carol Michael, Boardman Chamber of Commerce, 481-3014, or LaVelle Partlow, Irrigon Watermelon Festival, 922-3386, festival co-chairs.

Memorial Day dig planned

Memorial Day, a simulated fossil dig program will be offered at John Day fossil Beds National Monument on Monday, May 29.

This two hour program is open to the public and is free of charge. It will begin at 10 a.m. and start at the visitor center, which is located at the Sheep Rock Unit of the monument.

Kids and adults of all ages will learn how to look for fossils, how to carefully uncover them and the kinds of field notes that must be taken to tell the most complete stories of the past. Space is limited to 25 participants and reservations are suggested.

Call (541) 987-2333 to make reservations or for more information.

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Off The Wall
By Merlyn Robinson

A proposed "anti-trapping" initiative petition is being circulated to gather enough registered voter signatures in order to place this initiative on the November 7, 2000, Oregon ballot. One of the initiative sponsors is Elizabeth Furse, a former state representative. This proposal is being supported by the Humane Society of the United States and the "Pro-Paws" organization.

The certified ballot title of this measure, approved by the Attorney General's Office, reads as follows: "Bans body-gripping animal traps, some poisons and restricts fur commerce."

Those in favor of this constitutional amendment say that, if passed, it will protect people and domestic pets along with protecting and conserving wildlife from cruel and indiscriminate steel-jawed leghold traps and poisons. It would also ban all trapping in the state except by special permit.

Opposition to this measure comes from 15 different state organizations, including the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Oregon Farm Bureau and the Oregon State Grange, who have formed a coalition entitled "Oregonians For Responsible Wildlife Management." According to spokespersons from these groups, it's the loosely worded definition of this ballot measure that could have disastrous ramifications for everyone including homeowners and livestock operators.

For instance, the term "body-gripping" might prohibit the use of simple backyard mole or gopher traps and allow predators to encroach freely in both urban and rural areas. It also unnecessarily bans the use of Compound 1080, sodium cyanide, to poison any animals, that is already outlawed nationwide.

If this became a law, Oregonians protecting their property could be cited with misdemeanors and fined up to \$600 per trapped animal. In order to attain a trapping permit it would establish a strict and lengthy permit process requiring staff time and paper work, not currently in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife budget.

According to Bob Krein, the Heppner-based Fish and Wildlife Department district manager, the agency would "be less able to manage wildlife populations and it would take much more manpower and time for whatever system would develop." It would, in most instances, effectively stop all wildlife predator control programs and end all fur-trapping in Oregon. According to the ODF&W Backgrounder publication, "regulated trapping is critical to the health and well-being of fur-bearing populations in Oregon." Oregon regulations already established make it illegal to use some types or sizes of leghold traps.

With environmental concerns on the minds of today's society, this measure would protect animals who destroy forest tree bark or seedlings and damage fruit trees, plants or crops. It would protect non-native animals who feed on or destroy the habitat of endangered species. Also it would restrict control of rodents who damage roadbeds, dikes or diversion ditches that prevent erosion on productive farms and ranches. According to legal counsel, this loosely worded measure could ban the use of headgates, squeeze chutes, lariats or grooming stanchions used for animals at fairs and livestock shows - all falling under the definition of body-holding devices.

"It doesn't make any sense to remove such a valuable tool for managing wildlife," said Pete Test, assistant director of government affairs with the Oregon Farm Bureau. Therefore the Oregonians for Responsible Wildlife Management coalition is preparing to ask for donations to finance a campaign for voter awareness on this issue.

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