

## Bill Gentry, 2002 M C Fair and OTPR Grand Marshal



**Bill Gentry**

The Webster's dictionary states that the word "involve" means to "engage as a participant, to oblige to take part, to occupy absorbingly and to commit emotionally". The definition also states that this activity, to be involved, has an effect on people. Involvement is a good word to describe this year's 2002 Grand Marshal, Bill Gentry.

Bill and his family have always been an active, helpful and committed part of the community. Small towns often depend on volunteers to help build, improve or enhance the surrounding area. It is said that when help is needed Bill is always there to help in any way he can.

Bill grew up in Ava, Missouri, and moved to Heppner in 1948. He married Pat Healy in 1951 at Santa Maria, California. That same year he was drafted into the military and served both in Germany and France. After his term in the service, Bill returned to Heppner and worked for Columbia Basin Electric for 43 years. He started as a hole digger and worked his way up to lineman,

then to superintendent.

Bill has lived in Heppner for 54 years and raised his family of four children. His children include Janet Greenup, Judy Towner, Jackie Ansotegui and Jerry Gentry. Bill and Pat currently have 12 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. Jackie currently lives in Alaska, Judy lives in Bend and both Janet and Jerry live in Heppner. Jerry is a contractor and a long-time member of the Rodeo Committee. Janet is employed with the water district and is very involved with the Wrangler Riding youth club. Three granddaughters, Amy, Sara and Kelsey Greenup, have been past princesses for the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo. These three young ladies and their sister, Kathleen, were also pennant bearers and involved in 4-H.

Bill Gentry has been active with the youth in the community and felt strongly about developing good programs for them. He helped develop the first Little League baseball in Heppner some 40 years ago and helped coach one of the teams. He can still be seen on his tractor helping prepare the fields before baseball season. He was involved with Junior Rodeo activities and helping to make the grounds safe and made sure equipment worked properly. He has also helped with the football field lighting.

Bill works yearly preparing the lighting, sound and arena ground at the Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo and helps with the preparations, anything from various fair activities, the livestock sale and arena work. "I have always enjoyed the fair and rodeo and helping to get things ready," he says.

Other community services

over the years have included helping to straighten tombstones and develop Willow Creek RV Park. Bill has always freely given a helping hand when needed.

Bill enjoys people. "I have had the opportunity to work with many fine people over the years," he says. Changes have occurred over time due to committed and dedicated people. The quality of the stock has improved and this can be seen through the faster times in timed events. "The time for winning the saddle has gone down from over a minute to eight seconds or less!" The rodeo has brought many fine memories for Bill but the most memorable was watching his son Jerry competing and winning the Morrow County Calf Roping Saddle.

Staying involved is important. Bill Gentry has shown that to all of us. The Fair and Rodeo appreciate his being a part of the activities, commitment to helping others, and his participation in our community. These things truly have a positive effect on other people. Bill feels strongly about this involvement: "I hope the community will stay involved and keep the fair and rodeo alive for many years to come. It is good for the young and old to stay involved and active in community affairs," he says.

### Lots of food at the Fair

There are a variety of foods at the fair this year. Zamora's will be back with their delicious Mexican Food and C&R Ice will have Hawaiian Ice again. New this year will be buffalo meat. If you've never tried it, well, come to the fair. The Hearn's from Weston will have buffalo burgers and sausage dogs. They also have beef burgers and hot dogs for the faint of heart—and a lot of curly fries. And don't forget, as always, the delicious food at the 4-H Snack Shack!

For the fifth year, the ladies of the Nazarene Church will be busy baking pies for fair. The Willow Creek Service Club will also be here again, with their taco salad and baked potatoes. Come to the Pavilion kitchen and enjoy a great meal. And, of course, the senior citizens will be selling their ice cream and root beer floats for all to enjoy.

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**Wrangler COWBOY Breakfast**  
at the Morrow County Fairgrounds  
Sunday, August 18<sup>th</sup> 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.  
\$15.00 family • \$5.00 adults  
\$3.00 for 12 and under  
Pancakes, Ham, Eggs, Hashbrowns, Coffee, Milk

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