

St. William's collects for newborns



Fr. Gerry Condon blesses the bagged gifts as the youth of St. William's look on.

St. William's Parish in Ione celebrated Jesus' birth during the advent season by hosting a baby shower. The annual event had the atmosphere of a real baby shower, with a cake honoring Jesus' birth, punch, and newborn baby items donated by parish members.

The items, which included clothing, sleepers, blankets, undershirts, powders and lotions and diapers, were sorted into individual bags by the youth of the parish.

After a special blessing by Fr. Condon, the bags were taken to Agape House in Hermiston to distribute to needy mothers and their newborn infants.

Parishioner Eileen McElligott organizes the



Jaqueline Juarez and Kylie McElligott sort baby items.

annual event. "Thanks to the generosity of the faithful of St. William's, many newborns will have a little better start in life," she noted.

WC Terrace receives a gift of music



(Girls side Front Row): Teacher Wendy Appleton, Maggie Collins, Kellie Lees, Hanna Lovgren and Alisha Taylor; (Middle Row): Alana Wilson and Courtney George; (Back Row): Ayla Fiamano.

(Boys' side Front Row): Tim Lees, Ryan Bennett, Jacob Moore and Andrew Bara; (Middle Row): John Nelson, Justin Bailey, Troy Fritz, Teacher Cara Osmin.

The recently formed Heppner Elementary School Children's Choir performed for the residents of Willow Creek Terrace on Tuesday, Dec. 16. The children sang

Christmas carols to the residents and handed out carnations. Some of the children also delivered the carnations to residents who

could not come out for the performance.

In a show of their appreciation, the residents had made special goodies for the children to nibble on after their performance.

G-T closed for Christmas Holiday

The Heppner Gazette-Times offices will be closed Thursday, Dec. 25 and Friday, Dec. 26 for the

Christmas holiday. Offices will reopen on Monday, Dec. 29 at 9 a.m.

The Gazette will also be closed Thursday, Jan. 1, 2004, for New Year's Day. We will reopen Friday, Jan. 2 at 9 a.m.

The G-T staff wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

Chemical Depot reports more vapor detections

The Umatilla Chemical Depot reported low readings of GB Sarin chemical agent vapor outside a depot chemical storage structure on both Dec. 17 and Dec. 20. This makes the third occurrence within the month of December; a previous occurrence was recorded on Dec. 8.

On Dec. 20, a chemical operations crew had earlier found a puddle of liquid GB Sarin inside a chemical storage structure used to store 750-pound bombs. The same structure was the scene of the two previous outside detections.

All the incidents were confined to the Depot's nerve agent storage area. The Depot crisis management team was assembled at the depot operations center.

The Depot notified emergency operations centers in Umatilla and Morrow counties in Oregon, Benton County in Washington and the states of Oregon and Washington. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation were also notified.

According to a second press release on Dec. 20, a 750-pound bomb was isolated as the source of the liquid GB Sarin. The bomb has been placed inside a large container within the structure.

Further monitoring of the storage structure continues. As of Dec. 23, no further releases have been detected.

The Umatilla Chemical Depot also states that at no time was there any danger to the community or the environment.

Walden announces increased Oregon CSEPP funding

U.S. Congressman Greg Walden (R-OR) recently joined Oregon Senator Gordon H. Smith (R-OR) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) in announcing a \$4.1 million increase in funding for the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) in Oregon. The funding increase will add to the \$5.6 million that had previously been allocated this year by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the Oregon CSEPP program.

"Like my Senate colleagues, Oregon's Governor, and most of the people of Morrow and Umatilla counties, I favor the swift destruction of chemical weapons at the Umatilla Chemical Weapons Depot as soon as we are able to proceed safely and effectively," said Walden. "However, adequate public safeguards must not be sacrificed for the sake of efficiency in destroying these munitions. We must ensure that Oregonians are properly prepared as we move toward the complete destruction of the Depot's chemical weapons stockpile, and this funding increase will help fund the projects that are essential to public safety. Today's great news is a direct result of the close collaborative relationship that exists between Oregon's congressional delegation, the Governor and the community leaders of Morrow and Umatilla County."

The announcement of increased CSEPP funds follows an effort made by Walden to persuade FEMA officials that the earlier funding level of \$5.6 million was insufficient to meet emergency preparedness needs in the communities surrounding the Umatilla Depot. On Oct. 30, Walden submitted formal testimony in Washington, D.C. at a hearing conducted by the House Armed Services Committee in which he requested increased funding for Morrow and Umatilla counties under the CSEPP program. The hearing, entitled "U.S. Chemical Weapons Stockpile - Program Status and Issues," examined issues surrounding the demilitarization of chemical munitions across the nation, including emergency preparedness plans to protect communities situated near chemical weapons facilities.

Walden's testimony focused on the need to provide Morrow and Umatilla counties with increased federal funds to implement community preparedness projects. The \$5.6 million in federal funding Oregon received for Fiscal

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Morrow County to receive final installment of 2003 county payments

Oregon counties received almost \$158 million Dec. 17 through the final installment of the 2003 county payments funds by The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) and U.S. Senator Larry Craig (R-ID) wrote the law in 2000 to secure a stable source of funding for rural counties; U.S. Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR) co-sponsored the bill and was instrumental in its passage.

Morrow County will receive \$363,432 of the disbursement.

The county payments legislation directs \$1.3 billion over six years from the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to Oregon counties for education, roads and county services. Dec. 17's disbursement represents an

almost 90 percent increase in Forest Service monies from before Wyden's bill was enacted. The BLM portion of the funding, \$110 million, was released to Oregon counties on Oct. 31.

The Wyden-Craig bill establishes a locked-in dollar amount for rural schools and counties by averaging the three highest receipt producing years between Fiscal Years 1986 and 1999. Under this proposal, 80-85 percent of funding will be reserved for traditional county schools and services supported by federal revenues, and 15-20 percent of monies will be set aside for national forest land or forest-related cooperative projects. This final installment was the Forest Service portion of the funds.

The county payments law will provide payments through 2006.

Boardman identified for job creation

To further Oregon's competitive business standing in the global marketplace, the recently formed Industrial Lands Advisory Committee released its report identifying 25 sites of statewide significance for enhancing job creation by increasing available industrial lands in Oregon.

Twenty-five acres in Boardman at the Port of Morrow Industrial Park were included in the 25 sites.

The advisory committee, appointed by Oregon Economic and Community Development Department Director Mary Brantley in November, included representatives of private industry and public officials. The significance of these "opportunity sites" is based on several criteria, among these - size, ownership, accessibility to public facilities and infrastructure, environmental constraints and zoning.

"This highly-qualified committee engaged in a thoughtful, deliberate evaluation of sites throughout the state," said Director Brantley. "The identification of 25 sites of statewide significance represents one important step in Oregon's broad effort to provide a reliable supply of buildable industrial land throughout the state."

In addition to designating sites of statewide significance, the committee also looked at longer-term solutions to make Oregon more competitive for industrial siting.

The full text of the report can be found on the OECD website at www.econ.state.or.us.

**Murray's
Holiday Hours:**

**Wednesday, Dec. 24
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CLOSING AT 5 P.M.**

**Thursday, Dec. 25
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**Friday, Dec. 26
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**Thursday, Jan. 1
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