

Ione Booster Club recognizes businesses

SIMPLY THE BEST.



Business people honored at recent Ione ball game

By Debbie Radie

The Ione Cardinal Booster Club recognizes businesses at each of its home games for their support for the academic and athletic programs funded through the club.

On January 3 the following businesses were recognized: Dobyn's Pest Control, represented by Arlynda Gates, Wheatland Insurance Agency, represented by Jim Swanson, and The Bank of Eastern Oregon, represented by Linda

LaRue. Lyndee Ramos, the Cardinal Booster Club President, accompanied by Eva Chitty and Alyssa Rietmann, the Ione cheerleaders, presented each business with a certification of appreciation during half time of the boys' varsity game.

TripCheck.com and ODOT travel info line break usage records

In a record-breaking, nine-day holiday period, the Oregon Department of Transportation's travel information Web site and new phone line -TripCheck.com and 511 - surpassed all previous usage numbers accumulated over any monthly period.

From Christmas Eve through New Year's Day, TripCheck.com logged more than 1.2 million visits. A partial tally for December 2003 indicates more than 2.3 million site visits. The prior TripCheck record was 1.5 million visits for the month of December 2001. The biggest day ever for TripCheck occurred Dec. 29, 2003, with 278,000 visits.

The ODOT travel information phone system - 511 and (800) 977-ODOT -

also set a record for the number of calls over the same nine-day period. Between Dec. 24 and Jan. 1, the system received 308,000 calls. Last year, 187,000 calls came in for the entire month of December. The previous monthly record was 250,000 calls in December 2001.

With the addition of 511, the number of available phone lines doubled, from 108 to 216 lines. Still, the lines continue to be busy at times during extreme weather events.

"We urge citizens to use the TripCheck.com Web site whenever possible, so that travelers who do not have access to the Internet can still get through on the phone. This way, we can get critical travel information out to as many

people as possible during severe weather conditions," said Galen McGill, ODOT Intelligent Transportation Systems manager.

511 and TripCheck.com provide highway advisory information for state and federal highways in Oregon. The same crews who perform maintenance and respond to incidents in the field are the ones who provide this information. As the most adverse weather conditions hit, these field personnel often are directed to locations where the weather is most severe or where emergency situations exist.

"When our crews on the highway are helping motorists or clearing snow, there can be an impact on their ability to update information," McGill said. ODOT advises reviewing the TripCheck.com incident maps to get an overall picture of travel conditions. By clicking on a variety of icons, displayed as snowflakes, cameras, weather stations and general information, potential travelers can get a good idea of what to expect.

"Even with the increased usage of late, TripCheck.com is carrying the load very well," McGill said.

Scavenger hunt winner announced

Kim Scalf was the winner of the Merchants' Reindeer Scavenger Hunt. She used her gift certificate at Central Red Apple.

The hunt was sponsored by participating merchants.

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From the Morrow County Road Department
Road department responds



County snow plow works the roads

Over the past several days the Morrow County Road Department has had either full or partial crews working seven days a week, including New Year's Day, to try and keep the roads open for the citizens of Morrow County. Our ability to keep roads open in the face of the kind of storms we have been experiencing is limited. We realize that the need to do this is very necessary to the well being of the citizens of Morrow County who depend on our County road system.

Morrow County has over 1200 miles of road, 400 miles of which are paved. Of that, we have 900 miles of road which we plow and sand. We have eight trucks with plows and seven of those with sanders. We also have four road graders which are routinely used for snow removal. All of this equipment has to serve double duty because when we are not having a snow event we are working on some part of our road system.

Our total road crew is 18 people. Of this, two are mechanics and one is the county weed manager. We do have people take vacation and call in sick. This can be as few

as one or as many as four or five on any given day. When you consider this, the real number of the road crew is closer to 14. We work four 10 hours days in the winter, with half of the crew working Monday through Thursday and half of the crew working Tuesday through Friday. This gives us the ability, under normal conditions, to take care of winter road needs. We have a total overtime budget of \$30,000, of which we had used a third when this recent storm began.

We have a winter plow route which we maintain seven days a week during the winter, as needed. This route includes Patterson Ferry, Tower Road, Bombing Range Road, Base Line from 207 to 74, Rhea Creek from Morter Lane to 74, Willow Creek to the top of Coal Mine Hill and Fuller Canyon (Spruce Lane). This is over 90 miles of road that for several different reasons are priority winter routes. Tower Road has over 2,500 cars per day, a dairy and the Coal Fire plant which depend on it. Bombing Range Road has the Finley Butte Landfill as well as all of the North-South traffic. Patterson Ferry has truck traffic from I-84 and Hwy 730 on a daily basis. Baseline has over 400 cars per day from the Ione area. Rhea Creek has a dairy which needs feed and milk trucks to be able to get in and out on a daily basis. This year there are two logging operations hauling off of Coal Mine Hill and down Willow Creek as well as the

Class of 2004 service auction set

A Heppner High School Class of 2004 service auction has been planned for this Saturday, January 10, during halftime of the girls' and boys' basketball games.

The boys will be sold during halftime of the girls' game, approximately 4:30 p.m. The girls will be sold during halftime of the boys' game, approximately 6 p.m.

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Snowmobile folks on Weekends. Spruce Lane accesses the high school as well as the Morrow County Sheriff.

On a routine basis we have school bus Routes and mail routes as well as those folks with emergency medical needs to consider. We also have those farmers and ranchers with livestock that they need to be able to reach in order to feed and water them.

During our recent storm event all of these factors were involved in decisions we had to make involving plowing.

To add to that, we had two trucks broke down and one stuck for a day, as well as Monday with only six people working. Since then we have had crews working every day, including New Year's Day, with the exception of Saturday when we only ran two trucks. Sunday we started again with our graders and most of our trucks.

We have all of our trucks currently back on line and enlisted the aid of some local contractors to help break open drifts so we can plow them out with our graders.

We do appreciate everyone's patience and help during this past week. Please feel free to call our office at 989-9500 with any questions or concerns.

Weather Report
from the city of Heppner
For the month of December

	High	Low	Precip.
12/1	54	33	.28
12/2	40	33	.01
12/3	53	34	.08
12/4	45	25	.00
12/5	36	27	.07
12/6	57	35	.13
12/7	47	31	.03
12/8	46	34	.06
12/9	46	25	.00
12/10	33	28	.10
12/11	33	28	.08
12/12	47	29	.28
12/13	51	38	.14
12/14	53	33	.62
12/15	42	32	T
12/16	45	32	.00
12/17	49	32	.00
12/18	50	26	.00
12/19	36	28	.00
12/20	36	29	.07
12/21	48	32	T
12/22	45	28	T
12/23	34	27	.00
12/24	51	28	.03
12/25	51	31	.01
12/26	51	29	.05
12/27	39	29	.02
12/28	42	31	.09
12/29	35	22	.32
12/30	26	07	.05
12/31	36	15	.02

Snow on Dec. 10 (.5"); Dec. 11 (.25"); Dec. 29 (.5"); Dec. 30 (1.5"); Dec. 31 (.25")

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