

The Official Newspaper  
of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

**Heppner  
GAZETTE-TIMES**

U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

Published weekly and entered as periodical matter at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon under the Act of March 3, 1879. Periodical postage paid at Heppner, Oregon. Office at 188 W. Willow Street. Telephone (541) 676-9228. Fax (541) 676-9211. E-mail: editor@rapidservice.net or david@heppner.net. Web site: www.heppner.net. Postmaster send address changes to the Heppner Gazette-Times, P.O. Box 337, Heppner, Oregon 97836. Subscriptions: \$25 in Morrow County; \$19 senior rate (in Morrow County only; 62 years or older); \$31 elsewhere; \$26 student subscriptions. David Sykes ..... Publisher  
Katie Foster ..... Editor

All News and Advertising Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.

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For Public/Legal Notices: public/legal notices deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be required at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).

For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.

For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

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**St. Patrick's Senior Center news**

The Nazarene Church is providing volunteers for the Wednesday, Feb. 8 noon meal at the senior center. The menu, celebrating Valentine's Day is as follows: stir-fry vegetables with chicken and rice, whole wheat and white rolls, juice, cookies and ice cream.

The Hermiston Hearing Center will hold a free to the public seminar for information, consultations and demonstrations of varieties of hearing aides on Feb. 8, at 12:30 p.m., following the noon meal. The seminar will take place in the common room, the consultations will be in the office.

The Sentimentalists and the senior center extend and invitation for people to attend their signing rehearsals on Wednesday afternoons at 4:30 p.m. Residents of the center already have taken advantage of the courtesy offered. This notice is a reminder that others are invited to enjoy these musical moments in a pleasant environment.

The regular board meeting will be held Wednesday, Feb. 15 at 12:30 p.m. at the center office.

**Heppner Elks install new community reader board**



A new electronic community reader board has been attached to the Elks Lodge building in Heppner. The board is property of the Elks but was funded by the Elks Lodge, the Elks Ladies and the Heppner Booster Club. The board, which has been in the works for several years, will be used to let Elks members know about upcoming Elks' events, as well as informing the community about upcoming school and community events. The old BPOE sign will be taken down from its current spot and moved to the rear entrance.



**HEPPNER ELKS 358**  
676-9181 "Where Friends Meet" 142 North Main

**- Thursday, February 2nd -  
LADIES' NIGHT  
DINNER**

**Barbecued Chicken  
with all the trimmings!**  
Dinner starts at 6 p.m.  
Lodge starts at 8 p.m.



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**Editorial: Change could be good,  
but that depends on us**

Published: Jan. 25, 2006  
Reprinted from Sweet Home News

Well, here it is, 2006, and if you've heard the sounds of heavy equipment on the Western Land Reliance Trust property off Clark Mill Road, you've heard the sound of change.

We're talking about 49 lots where developer Dan Desler sent in excavating equipment to begin working last week.

These lots are part of a 432-lot subdivision that was given the go-ahead by the city Planning Commission last year. This month, commission members approved a 236-unit development at the end of 10th Avenue. Between them, that's 668 new houses or apartments, and that does not count another 1,100 proposed lots along the river, about 500 of them Desler's, in earlier stages of development.

To be blunt, Desler's and these other projects have evoked some pessimism and nay-saying in town.

We've all heard folks either bemoaning the arrival of these new homes (and residents) or staunchly maintaining that it would never happen, that Desler and other developers would be unable to get their acts together to actually make something happen.

Well, something is happening. Whether it is good or not depends on how we all respond.

These residences are not going to be hovels, attracting folks looking for the cheapest place to lay their heads. No, the people who are expected to buy many of these homes will be people with money — either money they are earning at current jobs or money they've saved for retirement. They also will be people looking for a better life, which is why most of us have moved to Sweet Home at one point or another.

Sweet Home has a lot of pluses, but its economy is currently not one of them. These homes, while certainly increasing travel on city streets and demands for city services, also will increase cash flow in Sweet Home. There's a good chance that more businesses could get a foothold here with the arrival of these new residents.

Some, if not many, of these folks will come from out of state. Many will like-

ly be fleeing inordinately high housing prices and crummy city lives. They really won't be much different than any of us already here.



Dan Desler stands on the site of the 432-lot subdivision, off Clark Mill Road, where work began last week. Photo by Sean C. Morgan with Sweet Home News.

We all know that we, or our parents, our grandparents, or some relative down the line, arrived here under similar circumstances — usually looking for a better life.

Not to put too fine a point on it, but we've heard muttering about "those Californians" or developers who "are going to turn Sweet Home into California."

We're not too hot on cookie-cutter, cheaply built housing, either. We're not suggesting that our local developers are of the ilk that build this kind of junk and skate away as the houses slide down the hillsides. But we expect that our city officials will ensure that these new homes are built the right way, built to last, and that they will be a positive addition to the city. Sweet Home can't afford to have it any other way.

Sure, local folks opposed to change could resist these newcomers, but that would be a mistake. Many of them will likely bring talent and positive influences to our community. They may be able to help Sweet Home change for the better.

Some of these new residents will bring vision and, we hope, energy to make that vision a reality. There is vision here now, but it's been dulled somewhat by tough economic realities that have hurt Sweet Home and turned it into what it is today — a bedroom community that needs to become something more than that.

The fact is, change is inescapable. The sound of that heavy equipment off Clark Mill Road is the sound of change. We want that change to be progress in a positive direction for Sweet Home and it will take attention and effort from all of us — city officials, residents and newcomers to make that happen.

**Pop Can Drive to be held**

The Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Court is having an on-going pop can drive. They will pick them up or you can drop them off.

For more information contact Renee Yocom in the Fair office at 676-9474 or talk to Queen Heather Yocom or Princess Josie Miller.

**G-T News Deadline  
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**~ Letters to the Editor ~**

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

**Reckless driving will cause accidents**

To the Editor:

When there's no traffic, the intersection of Church and Gale Streets in Heppner is a portrait of pastoral serenity. The historic Methodist church sits on one corner, the Episcopal church occupies another, and St. Patrick's church is just a few steps to the north. Ironically appropriate, since somebody's going to be killed here, within spitting distance of their own funeral service.

I live on this corner, supposedly controlled by two stop signs on Church Street. Just about any time of the day or evening, I can count on looking out my front window to catch the reckless drivers on parade. The most common offense is a right turn from Church onto Gale Street, running the stop sign at the corner. I specifically say "running" because when they take that corner at between 15 and 20 mph, that's no "rolling stop"; that's running a stop sign, pure and simple.

By the way, how do you make a fast 90-degree left turn without losing control of your vehicle? Simple. You "soften" the angle by veering into the lane of opposing traffic as you execute the turn. At least, that's frequently how it's done at my corner. It works great as long as you don't smash head-on into a car approaching you in the lane you have no business being in.

Another common occurrence is cars going up or down Gale Street at speeds of 40 mph and up. Fifty is not unheard of, and during the Christmas holidays, I swear I observed some clown tearing up Gale at 60 mph. As most of us with driver licenses can recall, the state-mandated limit for travel on residential streets like Gale is 25 mph unless posted otherwise.

Add these inexcusable driving habits to the unavoidable fact that people, especially kids, are occasionally careless, and death or serious injury is the inevitable result. Based on casual observation over the last year or so, along with enough knowledge of basic statistics to be dangerous, my guess is that the victim will probably be a local child aged 15 or younger, and the killer will likely be a male driver between 16 and 25.

While young men typically display the worst driving judgment most frequently, I've also noticed a more disturbing trend. Heppner's reckless driving contingent encompasses a lot more than just testosterone-ravaged teenage males. It also includes over-scheduled soccer moms, female high school students, local business owners and employees of both genders, government workers, church-goers, and an occasional retiree for good measure. In other words, the phenomenon is fairly widespread and virtually every segment of the local driving population is represented.

Am I just being a reactionary old crank? No doubt about it, but it turns out I'm not the only one. After asking around, I discovered similar complaints

from residents on Gilmore, Riverside, Water, Hager, and other streets around town. All of which seems to point to a very interesting anomaly: Heppner is the epitome of small town rural American life in just about all aspects except one — an uncomfortably large number of us become self-indulgent maniacs when placed behind the wheel of a motor vehicle.

So why isn't local law enforcement doing more (i.e., issuing citations by the hundreds) to get the problem under control? Beats me.

Some time ago, I posed that question to the local sheriff's office, which is paid (by you) to handle law enforcement for the City of Heppner under a service contract. The answer I got was that they preferred to "educate" the public rather than issue citations on a wholesale basis. Very progressive-sounding, except that approach falls flat on its face when directed at those mule-headed souls among us who resist educational overtures with every fiber of their being unless the lesson is backed up by force and/or penalties.

So, what next? First, if you agree we've got a problem, call or write your local elected officials and demand more aggressive traffic enforcement. You can make your feelings known to me or any other member of the Heppner city council, the mayor, the city manager, or the sheriff. If enough of you speak up, the wheels of government will lurch forward. You can also remain silent. In either case, the old political adage holds true: people generally get the quality of government they deserve.

Second, if you're one of the lousy drivers, adopt a belated new year's resolution to clean up your act behind the wheel. Start by coming to a full halt at stop signs. After you've mastered that, work on the concept of obeying speed limits.

And third, join me in the following pledge: RESOLVED- If I happen to witness the senseless slaughter or maiming of anybody on our public streets by a reckless driver, I will fall all over myself in my zeal to get to the courthouse for the purpose of testifying against the perpetrator, regardless of his or her family name, position, or status in the community.

Don't get me wrong. Heppner is still the best place I've ever found in which to live. I just don't want it to be the best place for some kid to die a violent and premature death, especially as a result of something as incredibly stupid as a traffic accident. We can do better than that.

(s) Glenn Baker  
Heppner

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