

Heppner Garden Club to meet



Danny Picard, a member of the Heppner Garden Club, helps by watering at Memorial Park and Heritage Plaza.

The Heppner Garden Club will meet on Monday, Aug. 7 at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick's Senior Center. The program will be on making final plans for the fair. The Garden Club prepares a booth and has been winning prizes almost every year. Club members also set up and categorize flowers and plants.

Hosting the meeting this month will be Danny Picard and JoAnne Burselson. The Garden Club always welcomes guests and does much to beautify the city.

The person honored this month is Danny Picard. He packs a hose twice a day to Memorial Park and Heritage Plaza to water those areas every day. Here's another Garden Club member at work, keeping our city pretty.

Workforce grants available

Training grants are available to businesses within Umatilla and Morrow counties. Funding is provided by the Employer Workforce Training Fund, established by the Governor of Oregon to support the retention and growth of living wage jobs, a skilled workforce and competitive businesses. Grant amounts are based on the demonstrated need of the company with a one-to-one funding match required.

Grant applications will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis between Aug. 20 and Sept. 20, 2006. All grants will be awarded beginning Oct. 15, 2006 and projects must be completed no later than March 31, 2008. Granted funds may not be used to pay employee wages or for capital purchases.

Contact Tina Bishop at tbishop@capeco-works.org or (541) 278-5675 for application materials and assistance in completing necessary forms.

Used book wanted

The annual Friends of the Library book and bake sale will be during the Fair this year. Books will be sold Friday and Saturday, Aug. 18 and 19 inside City Hall. People with books to donate may take them to the library, the Methodist Church or to Kuhn and Spicer by Monday, Aug. 14.

The Friends will have story time for children Wednesday and Thursday afternoons again this year at the Fair. They will be located on the lawn behind the 4-H Snack Shack.

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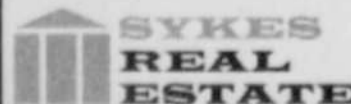
By DAVID SYKES
REALTOR

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Firefighters save homes from advancing flames



Steve Rhea with Heppner Volunteer Fire and Rescue keeps a careful watch on the Oxbow fire moving toward him and the highway at the Oxbow Village Tuesday. Baker City Herald/S. John Collins

Reprinted from the Baker City Herald. Article originally published: July 27, 2006.
By Jayson Jacoby
jjacoby@bakercityherald.com

Dixie Taylor lost her electricity to the McLain Creek fire, and the blaze busted her water pipe, too, but so far the flames have spared her home.

Taylor lives along the Homestead Road about two miles north of Oxbow.

She's one of approximately 90 homeowners whose properties at the eastern edge of Baker County are threatened by either the McLain Creek fire or the Foster Gulch fire, both of which were sparked by lightning on Sunday evening.

As of this morning, though, neither of the blazes, which are about nine miles apart, had burned any homes or other structures.

For that Taylor credits the hundreds of firefighters who are trying to corral the flames, which have spread across an estimated 26,240 acres of grass-and-sage country cured to tinder during the heat wave that has blistered Baker County since last week.

Occasionally gusty winds and single-digit humidity, combined with steep terrain, have complicated the fire crews' task.

"I can't say enough good things about the firefighters," Taylor said this morning. "They park these big trucks right next to your house and keep the fire away."

Taylor said the McLain Creek fire is the biggest blaze that has burned on the Oregon side of Hells Canyon near Oxbow since she moved there in 1960.

Since Tuesday, when

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski invoked the Conflagration Act at the request of the Baker County Board of Commissioners, 100 fire engines have arrived to protect homes, most of them in the Oxbow area or along Highway 86 between North Pine Creek and Oxbow.

About 750 people are working on the two blazes, which are being managed together as the Foster Gulch Complex.

The fire camp is at the fairgrounds in Halfway.

Taylor said the lights went out at her home Tuesday night. Flames scorched several wooden power poles that support an Idaho Power Company line that runs north from Oxbow.

Taylor said this morning that Idaho Power crews were replacing burned poles.

She has been staying since Tuesday with her daughter, Julie Stromer, who owns the Hells Canyon Bed & Breakfast at Oxbow.

Taylor said that without electricity, she can't run her pump which siphons water from Hells Canyon Reservoir, water she uses to irrigate her property.

Taylor said she doesn't have drinking water, either, because flames burned the pipe that leads from a spring above her home.

Another of Taylor's daughters, Jeanne Dennis, lives along the Homestead Road about two miles north of Taylor's home.

Taylor said that when she drove to Dennis' home Wednesday night, the fire was emitting "a big glow" on the slopes above the site of Homestead, a town founded about 1900 near the Irondyke Mine.

Although the

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Homestead post office closed in 1965, the historic Homestead School, which was built about 1903, still stands.

Taylor said she didn't drive beyond Dennis' home, so she doesn't know how close the flames came to the school.

Keeping track of the fire is difficult, Taylor said, because smoke continues to cast a pall over Hells Canyon.

"It's so smoky you can't see anything," she said.

So smoky that Taylor moved her mother, Ruth McGinness, to La Grande until the air clears. McGinness lives next door to Taylor.

"She's 88, and she doesn't need to be in this smoke," Taylor said.

Fire officials have recommended residents in and around Oxbow leave the area, but evacuations are not mandatory.

Fire officials continue to limit public access to the Oxbow area.

Highway 86 is closed between the Wallowa Mountain Loop Road intersection, which is about seven miles east of Halfway, and Oxbow.

The paved road between Oxbow and Brownlee Dam is closed as well.

Idaho Power is allowing people who have whitewater rafting permits for the Snake River to drive the road that runs along the Idaho side of Hells Canyon Reservoir to Hells Canyon Dam, said Brian Bombie, who works at the company's Oxbow compound.

But that road is closed to people who just want to get a look at the fire.

"We're trying to keep sightseers out, to avoid conflicts with all the fire traffic," Bombie said.

Idaho Power has evacuated its campgrounds at Copperfield, which is at Oxbow, and at Hells Canyon Park, which is on the Idaho side about seven miles north of Oxbow.

The company's two other nearby parks — Woodhead and McCormick — remain open, Bombie said. Both parks are on the Idaho side of Brownlee Reservoir.

The Foster Gulch fire, which started near the summit of Halfway Hill on Highway 86 between Richland and Halfway, has burned south and east since Sunday. Flames have crossed the Sag Road south of Halfway and moved to the shore of Brownlee Reservoir.

The blaze is not yet threatening Brownlee Village, where eight Idaho Power employees and their families — about 25 people in all — live, Bombie said.

The company has not recommended those residents evacuate, he said.

"But everybody's well aware of what's going on," Bombie said.

Neither fire has affected Idaho Power's operations at Oxbow or Brownlee dams, Bombie said.

He said Idaho Power workers are striving to protect wooden power poles that support an electricity transmission line that runs west from Brownlee Dam.

Crews used bulldozers to carve 15-foot-wide fire lines around the poles, and so far none of the poles has burned, Bombie said.

Molly's Revenge to perform at Old Richmond Church

Molly's Revenge is coming to raise the rafters at the Old Richmond Church in the little town of Richmond, Oregon, on Thursday, Aug. 10 at 8 p.m.

Born out of the timeless tradition of Celtic music sessions, Molly's Revenge is a band with a genuine affection for the music they play; their enthusiasm for the music carries over in all their live and recorded performances.

The classic combination of solo instruments such as the Highland bagpipes, uilleann pipes, whistles, fiddle and mandolin against a backdrop of guitar and bouzouki accompaniment, with an occasional rousing chorus song mixed in, guarantees an enjoyable and memorable listening experience. Add the visual excitement of award-winning Irish step dancing to the mix and you've got yourself a party.

Equally at home in front of audiences several thousand strong or in small intimate venues, such as the Old Richmond Church, Molly's Revenge has performed at many of the top folk festivals and performing arts events in the USA and countless private concerts. Internationally, they have performed at prestigious events in Australia and China.

The band's skilled musicianship and boundless enthusiasm for its music guarantees enjoyable entertainment for people of all ages. Their arrangements of traditional Celtic jigs and reels brings these dance tunes up to date with a driving, hard-edged accent in a way that will leave your feet tapping, your hands clapping, and your voices shouting for more.

Last summer, the Old Richmond Church hosted Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Peter Rowan and Tom May. Once again, local flat picker Gwamba will charm the audience with his own unique style of guitar to open the show. Refreshments will be available and the show starts at 8 p.m., on Thursday, Aug. 10. Tickets are \$15 and can be reserved by calling (541) 934-2140.

The Richmond Church is easy to find. Take Hwy 207 south from Service Creek, or north from Mitchell to Richmond Road, at milepost six. The church is one mile east of Hwy 207 on Richmond Road in the old ghost town of Richmond. See you there.

Willow Creek Baptist to host VBS

Willow Creek Baptist is hosting Vacation Bible School on Aug. 7-11 from 6-8:30 p.m. at City Park. VBS is open for children in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Activities will include crafts, water balloons, games and refreshments. Registration forms are available at Murray's and the Gazette office. Fill out the forms and bring them with you to VBS.

For more information, contact Deana Price at 676-5552.

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