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Gazette Times

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# Co-gen plant may reopen

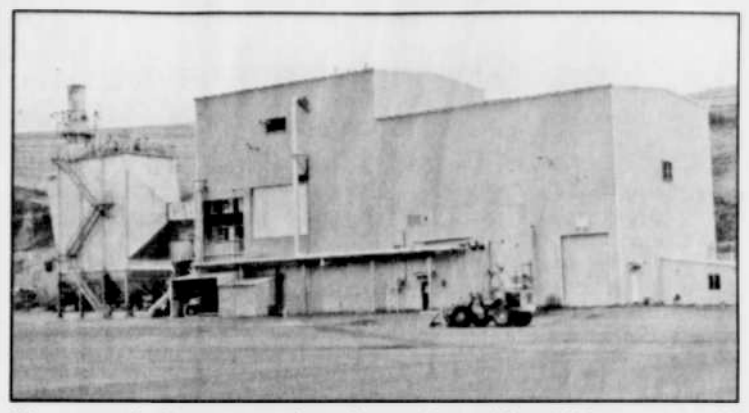
Last Monday, Cascade Renewable Energy entered into a 100-day option to purchase the empty Kinzua power plant site outside of Heppner. Kinzua closed its doors in 1998 and has been empty since.

During these 100 days, Cascade Renewable Energy is looking into fuel availability and prices, financing, and if this is the right market for the property.

If reopened, the power plant would be using wood waste for fuel, which Cascade Renewable Energy is currently in the process of checking into availability.

The company plans to purchase the 25 acres where the power plant is located along with 20 adjacent acres.

According to Gary Neal of the Port of Morrow, if all pieces fall into place and the purchase goes through, the power plant could be open anywhere between 120 days and a year. "(Cascade Renewable Energy) is considering a fairly substantial expansion," state Neal. "I'm not sure if they would expand and then start operations or start operations and then expand at a later date."



**If reopened, the power plant located outside of Heppner could employ 15-20 people.** *-Photo by David Sykes*

If reopened, the plant could provide jobs for 15 to 20 employees.

# No stopping the Wranglers

*Editor's Note: The following story was written by Merlyn Robinson and was published in the July 1995 edition of the Columbia Basin magazine.*

Historians claim that horses were domesticated as riding and draft animals as early as 2150 BC.

Though today we romanticize the Old West, we no longer rely on four-footed horsepower. However, horses have become a major industry and sport. Horses of all sizes and breeds are the common interest of modern equine owners. And varied horse interests are the glue that has held together the continuous activities of the Wranglers Riding Club for nearly 50 years.

Horse owners, including ranchers and Heppner-area business people, met to form this club in 1946. Bylaws were patterned after the rules of the Pendleton Mustanger Riding Club. Cal Sumner, now deceased, was elected as the first president. Charter members recall that Cal was a fearless leader when he participated in a suicide race, charging down the steep, rocky hill overlooking the Hughes ranch on Butter Creek.

"Playdays" were held at local ranches where arenas had been built. Most horses were transported in trucks, as there were few horse trailers in those days, but many riders tested their endurance by riding their mounts from Heppner to those outlying ranches.

Potluck noon feasts preceded some wild and woolly events, including Dougherty's Dilly Duster in Sandhollow, the Balm Fork Brawl at the Ralph Beamer ranch, the Rhea Creek Riot at Floyd Jones' and the Butter Creek Ambush at Martins', now part of the Hughes ranch.

Pole bending and barrel racing were followed by rugged games. The "hide race" required a racer to stay aboard a cowhide, attached to a rope pulled by a partner on the back of a galloping horse. Sometimes a scoop shovel was towed for a wild, bouncing ride over rocky ground.

Speed, hedging and strategic blocking were involved in the "musical rope races," as a winner muscled his way to victory by holding on to the last dangling rope suspended from a line above riders' heads.

"Wannabe" rodeo stars often tested their grit on ranch livestock, or an uncooperative bronc. Dan Brosnan recalls that he met his match as a ranch youngster when he was tossed and trampled by a Greenup bull. Ropers remember trying to wrestle hefty ranch calves to the ground.

On one occasion, wild goats at the Jones ranch were captured for an arena event that required roping those goats and wrestling them into large wool sacks. It was a dubious victory for the team that roped the herd's old billy goat, a rather smelly individual!

Even skilled riders sometimes "bite the dust," but Wranglers Club participation has given many young cowhands their first education about rodeo their first education about rodeo events. A number of young members have gone on to become high school, college and professional rodeo contestants. Among them are names such as Currin, Healy Steagall and Mahoney –and the tradition continues.

Other, less strenuous horse interests have also continued through the years. In the early 1950s the Wranglers began supervising an annual horse show, held during the fair. Show-horse quality of that era didn't always measure up to today's stringent standards. But horse show superintendent Fred Mankin, now deceased, showed his well-bred Tennessee Walking horses with pride, while Merle Becket, a former club president, rode a well-trained American Saddlebred mare. Classes for all ages and breeds became popular as Western riders competed for the "champion performance horse" title. Floyd Jones retired that first revolving trophy after winning it for three years with the same horse.

Monthly club meetings were once held in a former Civilian Conservation Corps building on the fairgrounds, where the dormitory now stands. Lively music, costume parties and entertainment, aided by an old upright piano, rocked that old wooden building. When members first moved that piano in, the floor gave way, requiring a repair job.

In 1949, as a fundraiser, the club began staging cowboy breakfasts, which were held Sunday mornings during the annual Heppner Rodeo. This Cowboy Breakfast has become a traditional event. An avid horse fan, Dimple Munkers, also deceased, was the chairperson of the breakfast for many years.

It was these fundraisers that held the club to purchase a small parcel of land below Heppner from Harvey Harshman about 1956. The hilly property required a great deal of excavation to create a level arena and a permanent club facility. The donation of equipment and labor by Don Evans made this possible. Members built fences with poles cut and hauled from the mountains.

The clubhouse, a former bandstand building next to the fairgrounds racetrack, was moved and remodeled under the leadership of John Newman, an electrician.

Charter members Howard Bryant and Cornet Green say that the bucking chutes also came from the fairgrounds. These two handymen did repairs and maintenance on club property for many years.

For a time, interclub playdays with other horse clubs were held. Horse racing led to competition in relay and baton races, both at Heppner and at the Pendleton Roundup. This crowd-pleasing event provided many thrills and spills, as recalled by former jockey Joe Yocom and other racing enthusiasts, including

*-Continued on Page THREE*

# Boardman recognizes outstanding citizens

The Boardman City Council recently congratulated the Riverside High School wrestling team for their accomplishments during the 2008-09 season.

Brigham Hansen and Carlos Garcia were presented with certificates of accomplishment. Hansen was the OSAA 2009 3A tournament champion in the 171 lb weight class. Carlos Garcia received 3rd place in the OSAA 2009 3A tournament at the 140 lb weight class.

Mayor Phillips introduced Evelyn Garcia, a junior at RHS, as an Oregon Ambassador of Music that will be touring Europe this summer.

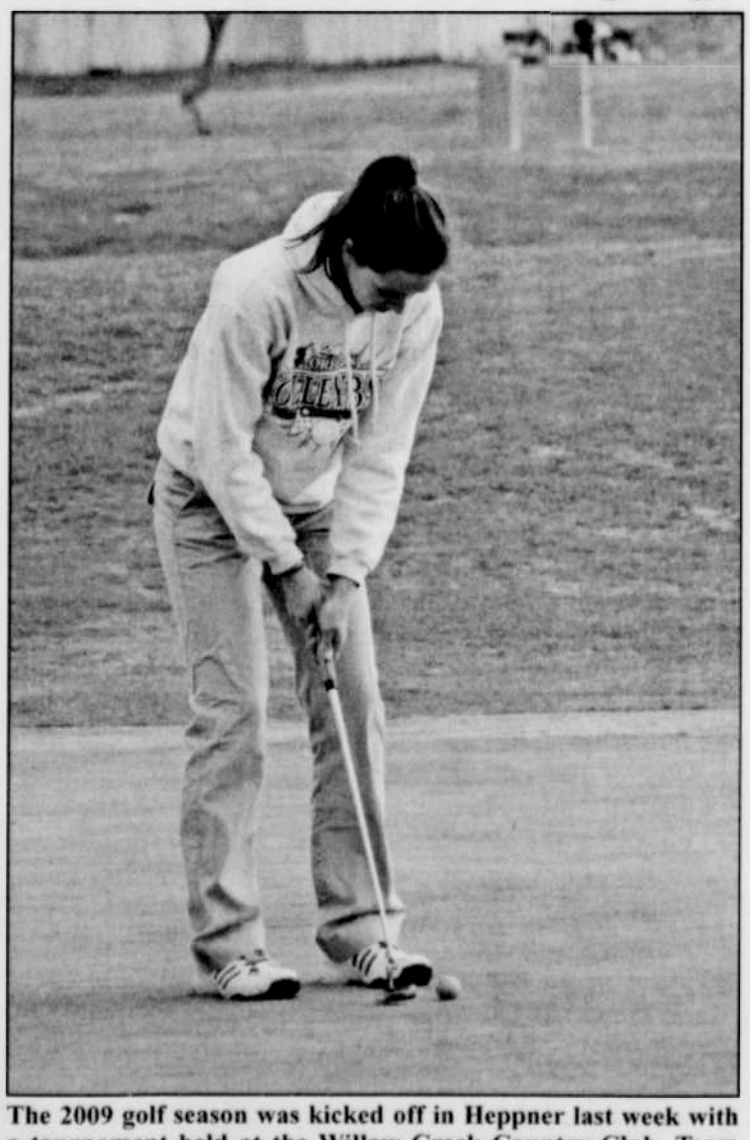
Boardman City Council is proud of the accomplishments of these students. Also recognized were officers from the Boardman Police Department: Nat Hughes, Shane Brandon, Chris Tiboni, and Chief Zeiler for their outstanding performance of duty.

A resolution was approved to be joint sponsors with the Port of Morrow and Morrow County in applying for the renewal of Columbia River Enterprise Zone. Intergovernmental Agreements for the new formation and operation of the Columbia River Enterprise Zone were approved.

Mayor Phillips announced the "If I were the Mayor for a Day" contest for elementary through high school students in Boardman. The contest runs from March 23-May 29, 2009. This contest is sponsored by the Oregon Mayor's Association. For more information call Boardman City Hall.

In other news, Mayor Phillips proclaimed the month of April as National Sexual Assault Awareness Month in conjunction with the Domestic Violence Services of Morrow and Umatilla County.

## Golf team starts swinging



**The 2009 golf season was kicked off in Heppner last week with a tournament held at the Willow Creek Country Club. Team member Lindsay Cutsforth makes the putt with ease.** *–Photo by Sandy Matthews*

## Public meeting set for discussions of fuels reduction strategies

The Heppner Ranger District of the Umatilla National Forest will host a public meeting on March 31 at 6 p.m. at the Heppner Ranger District Office, to discuss an upcoming assessment for identifying fuels reduction and forest stand density projects in the Potamus Watershed Area southeast of Heppner.

"We feel it's important to discuss and coordinate wildfire risk reduction strategies across land ownerships," said Tom Mafera, Heppner District Ranger. "So, prior to developing any project proposals, we want to visit with those interested about specific interests and project ideas."

In 2001, the Morrow County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) identified the Penland Lake Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) area as a priority for fuels reduction projects to lessen the impact of wildfire on lives, property, and the landscape.

Presentations will include: Role of fire in the ecosystem; Fire regime and tree species adaptation; history of fire and insect disturbance in the Potamus Watershed area; Current fuel conditions and expected fire behavior; Wildfire risks; Private land fire protection; and Morrow County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

For more information about the public meeting or Fuels Reduction assessment, contact Brian Spradlin (Fuels Specialist) at the Heppner Ranger District (541) 676-2127.

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