

Eastern Oregon pharmacy and Rep. Smith team up for rural Oregon

A measure to help thousands of patients across Eastern and Central Oregon was unanimously adopted by the Oregon House of Representatives. Representative Greg Smith (R-Heppner) said during his floor remarks, "We are taking a great step in maintaining access to rural health care in frontier Oregon. By passing Senate Bill 735 we're going to assist a rural pharmacist in continuing to remain a viable small business."

The Murray Drug Stores approached Smith over a year ago because they were not getting a fair reimbursement rate from the new Oregon Prescription Drug Program. The Oregon Prescription Drug Program started in 2003 as a way to help Oregonians get medications at discounted prices. Today the program serves over 100,000 uninsured Oregonians. SB 735 allows more flexibility in the current OPDP contracts which are now "one-size-fits-all."

"This program as it was written did not allow for negotiation with rural pharmacies. As the rate of reimbursement offered did not cover our costs of dispensing the medication we were not able to fill prescriptions for OPDP clients, leaving a large area of Central and Eastern Oregon without access to local pharmacy services," explained Ann Murray, Co-Owner of Murray Drugs.

Currently in Gilliam, Morrow, Sherman, Wallowa, and Wheeler Counties there may not even be one pharmacy participating in OPDP. According to the Rural Policy Research Institute, there has been a net loss of 500

independently owned rural pharmacies across the country since 2006. Many residents can only use the program through mail-order or they must drive long distances to a participating pharmacy.

"If we lose any more rural pharmacies, and we are losing them at an alarming rate over the past couple of years, those distances increase to 150 or 200 miles to get prescriptions filled," said Representative Jim Thompson (R-Dallas), former head of the Oregon Pharmacy Association. "I think we're doing the right thing, moving in the right direction. It's going to help a lot of people over a lot of square miles."

John Murray added passage of this new law should allow the state to, "address the issues rural pharmacies have and hopefully preserve access to pharmacy services in our rural hometowns. We are celebrating our 50th anniversary in business this year and are extremely grateful for Rep. Smith's dedication to preserving the fragile health care delivery system in rural Eastern Oregon."

OPDP recently added the benefits program used by Oregon's teachers and will now add the one used by state retirees. Smith pointed out, "hundreds of teachers across rural Oregon have had a tough time getting access to prescriptions because there were not enough participating pharmacies."

To learn more about the Oregon Prescription Drug Program go to www.opdp.org or call 1-888-411-OPDP.

Ballroom dancing lessons being offered

Jodi Chapa will be offering ballroom dancing lessons from 7-8 p.m. on Tuesday evenings through August 25.

"I will be teaching six different dances, one each night," said Chapa. "I make sure to start at the beginning level and move at the group's speed so people don't feel left behind. It is a great form of exercise and is a lot of fun too."

Waltz, Cha Cha, Rumba, Salsa, Swing and Tango are the dances that will be taught. Group and private lessons are available as well as single lessons and lesson packages.

For more information call 676-8022 or information sheets can be picked up at Sweet Productions Ice Cream Parlour.

DA's Report

Morrow County District Attorney Elizabeth Ballard has released the following report:

-Brynn Nichol Kulbe, 27, was convicted of possession of marijuana, a Class B felony, and was sentenced to three years supervised probation, 180 sanction units with 90 jail units, 80 hours of community service, other conditions, and pay \$1,173 in fines, fees and assessments.

-Rocky Gerard, 21, was convicted of harassment, a Class B misdemeanor, and was sentenced to 90 days incarceration with 90 days suspended, 18 months bench probation, 20 hours of community service, other conditions, and pay \$913 in fines, fees and assessments.

-Debra Jean Portillo, 49, was convicted of

possession of methamphetamine, a Class C felony, and was sentenced to 18 months supervised probation, 90 sanction units with 30 jail units, six months driver's license suspension, and other conditions. Portillo was also convicted of tampering with physical evidence, a Class A misdemeanor, and was sentenced to 18 months bench probation, complete 40 hours of community service, and other conditions. Total fines, fees and assessments are \$1,276.

-Michael Anthony Mullikin, 25, was convicted of contempt of court, an unclassified misdemeanor, and was sentenced to 180 days incarceration with 160 days suspended, 18 months bench probation, other conditions, and pay \$913 in fines, fees and assessments.

Senior Center Menu

Nazarene/7th Day Adventist Church members will be serving lunch on Wednesday, June 17. The menu will include beef stroganoff, mixed vegetables, apple salad, hot rolls, pineapple upside down cake.

Fire chief announces promotions



Several Heppner firemen recently received promotions, Fire Chief Rusty Estes has announced. Dean Robinson (right) has been promoted to the position of Safety Officer, filling a spot left vacant when longtime fireman Tom Wicklund passed away. Promoted to Captain was Andrew Johnson (center) and to Lieutenant, Brian Harmon (left). -Photo by David Sykes

M.C. Dryland Crop Tour to be held

The Morrow County Dryland Crop Tour will be held Friday, June 19. Participants will meet at the School District building in Lexington for a departure time of 1:15 p.m.

After the tour, a social hour and potluck dinner will be held at the City Park in Ione. Refreshments will be available at 5:30 p.m. with dinner to be served at 6 p.m.

Participants with last names beginning with A-M are asked to bring a dessert and N-Z a salad or side.

For more information contact the OSU Extension Service at 676-9642.

Valby Lutheran Church to host ice cream social

Valby Lutheran Church invites members of the community to join them for an ice cream social on Sunday, June 14, beginning at 2 p.m. In addition to ice cream with all the toppings and games for all ages, there will be a display of Sarah Carlson's calligraphy and live entertainment that will include Alex Carlson and Amanda Tullis playing fiddle tunes.

For more information or for directions to the church, call Pastor Katy Anderson at 989-8174.

Penturf graduates with nursing degree

LaRena Marie Penturf recently graduated from Blue Mountain Community College with a degree in nursing as a registered nurse. She is currently employed with a traveling nursing agency and a job awaits her in the emergency room at Desert Springs Hospital. She plans on furthering her education as she wants to become a life flight nurse.

Penturf is the great-granddaughter of Sally Marlett of Heppner.

Sheriff's Report

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office reports handling the following business:

March 12 cont.:
-Heppner Ambulance received report that a resident at the St. Patrick's Senior Center in Heppner had fallen and his door was locked and the reporter was unable to assist him. Entrance was made. There was no transport.

-Irrigon Ambulance received report of a 54-year-old female with a racing heart and a previous heart attack. She was transported to Good Shepherd Hospital.

March 13: The Morrow County Sheriff's Office received several complaints of cows in the road and in the park in Irrigon.

-MCSO arrested Joseph Lee Swope, 28, on an Oregon State Parole Board felony warrant for Parole Violation/Sexual Assault-attempted rape. He was lodged at Umatilla County Jail with no bail.

-MCSO received report of two four-wheelers riding up and down the road in front of the bowling alley in Heppner without a helmet. The sheriff did not witness the subject riding on the road, but warned subject where to ride vehicle.

-MCSO received report that the Marion County Sheriff's Office arrested Todd Patrick Copenhaver, 26, on a Morrow County Circuit Court warrant for Possession of a Controlled Substance II and DUII. He was lodged

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Come celebrate with us.....

The Port of Morrow is celebrating its 50th Anniversary at our new Transload building.

71401 Rail Loop drive, Boardman, OR

This Friday, June 12th from 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Come as you please.

