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## Blauer begins work as Morrow County Health District administrator

By Autumn Morgan

Michael Blauer recently began his official duties as Morrow County Health District administrator. Having moved to Heppner from Colorado where he was an administrative assistant, Blauer takes over for Victor Vander Does who retired after 10 years with the district.

Raised in Burley,



Pictured left to right are Amy Blauer and Michael Blauer, who was recently named administrator for the Morrow County Health District. -Photo by April Sykes

Blauer grew up on a farm, Blauer has degrees in Spanish and business management from Idaho State University and a master of health services administration from the University of Michigan. He has traveled extensively, living in the Dominican Republic, Spain, and Mexico.

He has worked as a legal and medical interpreter for the Idaho, Michi-

gan and Colorado court systems and hospitals and an administrative intern for St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia, MI. He was also an administrative resident for the Poudre Valley Health System in Fort Collins, CO when one of its facilities, Medical Center of the Rockies, received the Malcolm Baldrige Award that is given annually to one medical facility in the

Blauer believes that he "can bring experience and work with everyone" because of the good training he has received.

Because he grew up in a small area, Blauer has always wanted to work in a smaller community to help make a difference. "We're super excited to be here," said Blauer. "It feels like home." Blauer's wife, Amy, has a degree in Spanish and is currently taking online classes.

Blauer is looking forward to his work with the health district. "The district is in a good place right now and the staff is great and supportive," he said. "I will make sure the levy money is used wisely to provide the best services we (MCHD) can to the community and use the money in a fiscally responsible way. (I'm) aware of the need to provide quality healthcare and I'm excited to get involved in the community."

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## Walden says government spending out of control

By David Sykes

Republican Congressman Greg Walden told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week that spending in Washington, D.C., is out of control, and he has no idea how the country is going to pay off the debt President Obama and the Democrat-controlled congress is piling on the country.

Walden handed out a graph from the Congressional Budget Office that shows the deficit will balloon from a little over \$400 billion in 2009 to over \$1.8 trillion in 2010.

"How are we going to possible pay this back?" Walden asked. "The prospect of paying back this much debt is bleak." He added that he was afraid the Obama and the Democrats were going to monetize the debt and drive inflation to very high levels. "My biggest fear with all this irresponsible spending is we are causing higher interest rates and higher inflation," he told a crowd of about 45 at the Chamber meeting last Thursday.

In a related matter he said it was China who in part is buying up the Ameri-



Congressman Greg Walden spoke to citizens last Tuesday, June 30, at St. Patrick's Senior Center. -Photo by David Sykes

can debt, and that they are in the process of also buying gold and commodities. He said the United States sells its bonds every other day, and the number of bidders on the debt has dropped from 40 to just 17. He said the country has to sell huge amounts of obligations every other day just to pay off previous bonds that are maturing.

On another issue Walden said the Cap and Trade legislation that is touted as decreasing global warming, is nothing more than a carbon trading scheme. "I opposed the bill for the trading scheme alone," he said. He said there would be derivatives and other trading devices just like we have in other markets, and that is not good. He added that the

bill, which passed the house and is on its way to the Senate will cause higher energy, electric, gas and diesel prices and, if passed, will cause 2-3 million jobs to be moved offshore, out of the United States. He said Spain had the same system and it helped cause a 17.5 percent unemployment rate there.

Walden also said debate on the cap and trade was severely limited in the congress by the Democrat leadership. "The house leadership shut down debate on this," he said. "Eight committees could have had hearings, and did not. This is the biggest tax on the economy in the history of the country; we should be having more, not less, debate."

## County visitors "reviving Oregon's amazing roots"



Dave DeMayo (left) and John Sutton (right) listen as Aaron Auer (center) reads the Declaration of Oregon's Ministers and Statesmen on the Morrow County Courthouse steps on Monday, July 6. Auer is representing Jason Lee, Oregon's first missionary, whose statue can be found at National Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C. Sutton is representing Jedediah Smith, the Methodist trapper/mountain man who was also known as the "shouting Methodist." The two are part of R.O.A.R., Reviving Oregon's Amazing Roots. Auer and Sutton are visiting Oregon's 36 counties in an effort to revive Oregon's "amazing roots by celebrating and preserving the treasure of Oregon's Christian and patriotic heritage" as the state celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of statehood. Auer and Sutton presented DeMayo with a copy of the 1924 Circuit Rider dedication for Morrow County. -Photo by Autumn Morgan

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:  
MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

## From hospital administrator to full-time RVer

By Autumn Morgan

Victor Vander Does' retirement became official on Monday, July 6, as he finished up his last day as Morrow County Health District administrator. In fact, his retirement is so official that he and his wife Nancy have sold their car and are planning to take up the RV life full-time.

Vander Does, who grew up on a farm in Michigan, was a "clinical person" a long time before he was an administrator. He moved to Heppner in September of 1999 to fill the position of MCHD administrator. Before that, he had worked at a small hospital in western Washington beginning in 1974 and spent a short time in Spokane.

The biggest obstacle Vander Does says that he had to deal with was the state of the MCHD's financial and billing systems when he first took over the position. "Everything now seems to be on track," said Vander Does. "A levy has passed to make it more stable for the next five years, depending on federal legislation."

But along with obstacles, Vander Does has had many memorable moments. On his last day, in



Pictured are former Morrow County Health District administrator and his wife, Nancy. Vander Does retired after 10 years with the health district. -Photo by April Sykes

fact, employees spent part of the morning trying to corral a feral hamster that was in the hospital's front lawn.

Though they are leaving the Heppner area, Vander Does suspects that they will be back to visit a lot to visit their goddaughter, Jaiden Mahoney. The Vander Does' have taken Blane, on road trips. "As godparents it is our duty to educate and broaden their horizons."

Vander Does says he will miss the community, friends, and family, but "will miss the kids the most."

The managers, employees, and nurses have been great to work with," said Vander Does. "They are enthusiastic and dedicated to the hospital and community. I couldn't ask for a better staff."

Vander Does and his wife Nancy began their new RV life on Tuesday, heading off towards Olympia to visit their two daughters. But as they left they took with them fond memories of their time here. "Heppner is, without a doubt, the best community we have ever lived in. It is just a friendly community."

## New watermaster hired for Lower John Day Basin and Willow Creek Drainage

Scott White has been hired as the new watermaster for the District 21 office of the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) in the Lower John Day Basin and Willow Creek Drainage. White replaces Joel Clark who has moved to Post Falls, Idaho to further his career as a forest hydrologist for the State of Idaho, Department of Lands.

White, his wife Mary, five year old son Hunter, and 1 year old daughter Gracie, are moving from Pendleton where he has been the north central region well inspector for OWRD. Prior to that, Scott worked for the City

of Albany as an environmental services technician and Mary worked as a full time mom and a part-time pre-school teacher at Albany Christian School. He is nearing completion of his master's degree in business administration and earned his bachelor of science degree in environmental studies from Oregon State University. While working to achieve his bachelor's degree, Scott interned for the Benton Soil and Water Conservation District and the City of Corvallis promoting the conservation and wise use of water.

The White family enjoys traveling and spending time in the outdoors.

They are looking forward to embracing the dry land wheat fields, the deep canyons, amazing geology and the radiant charm of Condon as their new home. While breaking from the exhausting work of being a mom, Mary enjoys writing, landscape photography and painting. Scott's interests are baseball, hunting and fishing.

Scott filled the Watermaster position on June 01, 2009. If you have any questions or concerns about water management activities, please contact Scott at the Watermaster's office in Condon at (541) 384-4207.

## Articles wanted for annual fair edition

The annual Morrow County Fair is fast approaching. Once again this year the Heppner Gazette-Times will be putting together a special fair edition. Anyone interested in writing any fair related articles are asked to turn in those articles by Friday, July 15. Articles can be dropped off at the Heppner Gazette-Times or emailed to editor@rapidserv.net.

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