Bessie Wetzell Newspaper Library
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

HEPPNER
50¢
Gazette Times

VOL. 128 NO. 35 8 Pages Wednesday, September 2, 2009 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Heppner teacher arrested for sex crimes involving students

Wendy Cannin, 30, a teacher at Heppner Jr./Sr. High School was arrested on Monday, August 31, for alleged sex crimes involving students.

On August 21, the Morrow County Sheriff's Office received notification from Heppner Jr./Sr. High School Principal Daye Stone that a female teacher may have been involved in sexual activity with a 17 year old male student.

Wendy Cannin

Detective Karen Dike of MCSO was assigned to the investigation. Dike's investigation determined that illegal sexual activity had occurred between Cannin and two male students ages 17 and 15. The incidents reportedly began before the end of the 2009 school year and ended in the middle of July, occurring both on and off school property.

Cannin was lodged at the Umatilla County Jail on Monday. Charges encompassing both male students were: Count 1-Rape in the third degree; Count 2-Sex Abuse in the third degree; Count 3-Sodomy in the third degree; Count 4-Sex Abuse in the third degree; Count 5-Sex Abuse in the second degree; and Count 6-Sexual Misconduct. These charges are not Measure 11 charges because the youngest student involved was not under the age of 14. Measure 11 crimes carry a mandatory prison sentence. A grand jury convened this week to hear evidence.

A video arraignment was held at 1:15 on Tuesday afternoon at which time Cannin requested a court appointed attorney. District Attorney Elizabeth Ballard opposed release and requested that bail be maintained at $40,000. Judge Daniel Hill granted Ballard's request.

Cannin was placed on administrative leave last week by the Morrow County School District when the allegations of inappropriate contact with minors was brought to the district's attention.

Cannin began teaching at Heppner Jr./Sr. High School in 2007, her first teaching job. She received her degree in elementary education from Eastern Oregon University. She taught junior high mathematics, business, and a yearbook class. She was also the junior high track coach.

2009-2010 school year off to a start

Heppner Elementary School students wait patiently to board the bus after their first day of the new school year. *-Photo by Megan Futter*

Health district approves payment of state health insurance tax

Opts not to pass costs down to employees

By April Sykes

The Morrow County Health District approved an expenditure of $3,200 to pay for a one percent tax on employee health benefits imposed by the state during the last legislative session. The board opted to pay the tax, which was created by the legislature to allow for the inclusion of more uninsured people in the state insurance plan, rather than pass the additional cost on to their employees. The $3,200 MCHD payment will cover the additional state insurance costs from October through May 31.

Andrea Fletcher presented an overview of a plan to apply for a federal grant, working along with the Morrow County Health Department and Columbia River Community Health Services in Boardman. Fletcher said that the grant, which could be up to $85,000 through the Department of Health and Human Services, is extremely competitive with only 20 grants to be awarded nation wide. She said that the three Morrow County entities will "move together collectively with a similar goal and perhaps competitively apply for funds." The deadline for application is September 14.

Also at the meeting CEO Michael Blauer said that he had scheduled an interview this Wednesday with a potential candidate to fill the nurse practitioner's position at the Irrigon Clinic. Blauer said the search for a nurse practitioner has been frustrating and expensive for the district as a search company has been hired.

In other business: the board:

-learned that the trauma survey went well with the surveyors very complimentary.

-learned that the audit was a "pleasant experience" and the auditors gave the district a "clean audit". Blauer said the auditors were complimentary of Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney and her staff.

-discussed the issue of decals on district-owned emergency vehicles at the OHV park. The board earlier expressed concern that decals had been placed on the vehicles which are operated by volunteers at the park and that those decals had not been authorized by the district. The volunteers had also made improve-

-Continued on Page FOUR

Boardman Motorsports Park awaits investor decision

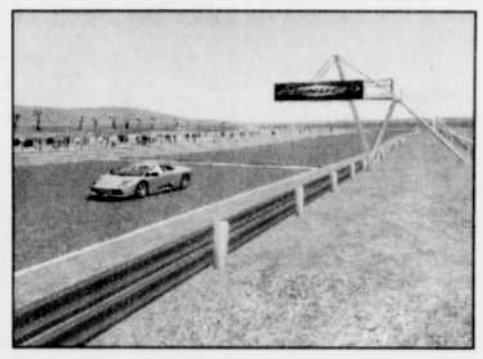
Racetrack needs funding to move construction forward

By David Sykes

Developers of a motorsports park near Boardman are awaiting word if a major investor is going to move forward with funding, a spokesperson told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week. Billie Jean Morris, Director of Marketing for Pacific Northwest Motorsports Park (PNWMP), said one investor went bankrupt when Bear Stearns collapsed several months ago, so developers are now looking for additional investors in the $6.1 billion project. Morris said she expected to find out "soon" if a new investor is in on the project.

Billie Jean Morris

"Securing project funding remains PNWMP management's primary focus," the park's summer newsletter said. "To this, we have already entered into detailed discussion with new investors and a cadre of worldwide financial institutions who are impressed with the project and are working through the processes that will enable them to invest/lend their funds." Morris did not say what would happen if the new investor did not come through, but said last week they were expecting a letter late last week or early this week. Tuesday she told the Gazette the letter had not been received, but that they still expected it "soon".



Pictured is a screenshot of the Racer simulator program.

Morris did say that if the project moves forward she expects to see 1,000 construction jobs in Boardman by the end of the year. "In 2006 we said we would be operational by 2009," she told the chamber. "Obviously that did not happen, but we think by late spring early summer of 2011 we will be running." She added that at this point the only construction on the site has been an 8.5 mile service road built.

Part of the motorsports park layout will consist of a 6-mile course on which members will be able to drive private race cars. The cost of a membership in the club for a single person will be an initial $30,000 with a monthly fee of $350. A lifetime membership for a family will cost $100,000.

If you don't have that kind of change you can now still enjoy the track as a computer simulator is now available for download from the PNWMP web site. The simulation uses a program called Racer which was programmed by retired IBM optical engineer Bob Hojaboom of Umatilla. The simulator is based on the actual track that will be built at Boardman.

According to the newsletter the simulation program will run on most computers using just a mouse and keyboard for controls. It took Hojaboom two years to develop the simulator.

"PNWMP is the first racing venue in the world to use a simulation as part of a design project." The newsletter says. "Most venues have a simulation created after the circuit is physically built. We are using the simulation as a design tool to test and improve the circuit and facility concepts prior to final design."

The simulator is free to the public and can be downloaded at http://pnwmotorsportspark.com and click on download track simulator.

Advantage Dental Services brings new dentists to Heppner

In early August, Advantage Dental Services of Redmond purchased Hayden Family Dentistry Group. That purchase brought in new dentists to the Heppner office.

Dr. G. Adam Fulton

Dr. Julian Petersen

Dr. G. Adam Fulton and Dr. Julian Petersen both worked for Hayden Dental before Advantage took over. The doctors, who both live in Hermiston, now travel between the Hermiston, Heppner and Boardman offices during the week.

Fulton, 34, is originally from southwest Missouri. He attended the University of Missouri in Kansas City, graduating in the spring of 2008 from its School of Dentistry.

He has been married for almost 10 years to his wife, Melanie. They have three boys, ages 7, 5, and two, and a daughter set to be born any day.

"This has been a seamless transition for me," said Fulton. His first day in Heppner was his first day in the Heppner office. "I am excited to be here, I like the town."

Peterson, 28, is originally from Memphis, TN. He graduated in May from the University of Tennessee.

He and his wife, Sheri, have a 20 month old son.

Fulton's schedule will bring him to Heppner once a week, on Thursdays, while Peterson will also be in Heppner once a week on Wednesdays. When the doctors are not in the Heppner office, a hygienist will be in-office.

There has been no changes to the insurance plans that will be accepted through Advantage Dental Services.

Heppner Gazette-Times closed for Labor Day

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed on Monday, September 7, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

The deadline for news and advertisements for the September 9 edition of the newspaper is Friday, September 4, at 5 p.m.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

FRIDAY AT 5:00 P.M.

GREEN FEED & SEED IN HEPPNER:
END OF SEASON NURSERY SALE
40% OFF All trees, shrubs, and perennials in stock
Morrow County Grain Growers Green Feed & Seed
242 W. Linden Way, Heppner • 676-9422 • 989-8221 (MCGG main office)