Bessie Wetzell Newspaper Library
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

HEPPNER 50¢
Gazette Times

VOL. 128 NO. 37 10 Pages Wednesday, September 16, 2009 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

School district outlines protocol in the event of a swine flu epidemic

By April Sykes

Morrow County School Superintendent Mark Burrows and principals, at the district board meeting Monday night at Heppner High School, discussed the district's protocol in dealing with a possible H1N1 (swine flu) epidemic. Burrows and the administrators stressed prevention and education and outlined contingencies in the event of an outbreak.

"We are concerned about a possible epidemic," said Burrows. Principals said they are tightening the cleaning regimen for the classrooms, emphasizing hand washing, setting up hand washing stations and using Germ-X, especially prior to meals, disinfecting hard surfaces, providing masks for personnel and care givers, providing information to parents and asking parents to provide emergency contact information in the event their child becomes ill, a crucial aspect to the plan.

Burrows said that the school district is partnering closely with the Morrow County Health Department and plans to have health department personnel at each school's open house and vaccination clinics in each building starting in October. He said that the target population ranges from infants six months of age to adults up to 24 years old with the inclusion of pregnant women, caregivers and those with young children. He said that he was told that people over 24 are being advised to get their regular flu shots. He said that initial advice was to have two H1N1 immu-

-See SCHOOL DISTRICT/Page EIGHT

Heppner City Manager receives medal for Iraq tour

Heppner City Manager David DeMayo (pictured right with medal) has received the Defense Meritorious Service Medal for his recent tour with the US Army in Iraq. The citation accompanying the medal read: For exceptionally meritorious achievement as Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Engineer, Gulf Region South District, United States Army Corps of Engineers, from 25 December 2007 to 20 November 2008 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Heppner City Manager David DeMayo

As the PRT Engineer for Dhi Qar and Muthanna Provinces, Major David DeMayo provided engineering oversight for the reconstruction efforts in those southern provinces. He greatly assisted in moving forward the economic stimulus funds reconstruction projects. After two months of exemplary efforts, Major DeMayo was selected to become the PRT Engineer for the Maysan Province. Prior to June 2008, before Coalition Forces had access to Maysan, Major DeMayo's oversight of GRS Iraqi engineers was the key to the success of numerous construction projects including a 12.7 Million dollar surgical hospital, a 1.6 Million dollar roadway, and a 37 Million dollar Location Command. Immediately after the PRT gained access to the province, his technical expertise and ability to manage complex issues led to the rapid approval of 8.1 Million dollars in Iraqi Commander's Emergency Response Program funds for a factory and two schools of vital importance to the government and citizens of Maysan. Major DeMayo led the effort to successfully implement over 70 Million dollars in roads, water compact units, school renovations, veterinary clinics and Iraqi security projects. His outstanding ability to propose, implement, oversee and complete construction projects has been second to none. David demonstrated his dedication as he worked diligently to increase the capability of Maysan's engineers through

-See DEMAYO/Page EIGHT

Sheriff warns of "grandchild" scam

Sheriff Ken Matlack has put out an alert for people to watch out for a scam going around that is bilking people out of money using phone calls from people impersonating grandchildren.

"Basically what they do is call up someone who has grandchildren claiming to be that grandchild and saying they are in some kind of trouble and request money be wired,' Matlack said. They somehow find out the grandchild's name and impersonate them, Matlack said. Then the person wires the money to help the grandchild and the money is stolen. "Often times they will tell them they need money for bail or an attorney and then have the money wired to Wal-Mart or somewhere, he said. He said some people have lost $1,800 to $2,000 as victims of the scam.

Matlack said there was one person in Heppner who fell victim to the scam. "I don't know how they get the names of the person's grandchild, but they do," Matlack said.

"Don't send money until you are sure," the sheriff added. And he urged people to call the sheriff's department if they are suspicious or receive a call like this.

Public health advisory issued for Willow Creek Reservoir

A health advisory prompted by high algae levels found in Willow Creek Reservoir in Heppner was issued by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS).

"Water monitoring has confirmed the presence of blue-green algae that can produce toxins harmful to humans and animals," said Curtis Cude, Hazardous Incident Tracking program coordinator in DHS.

These algae levels are likely to be associated with dangerous toxin concentrations in the water, according World Health Organization guidelines.

Swallowing or inhaling water droplets should be avoided, as well as skin contact with water by humans or animals. Drinking water from Willow Creek Reservoir is especially dangerous. Cud advised campers and other visitors that toxins cannot be removed by boiling, filtering or treating the water.

DHS advises using another water source not affected by the bloom.

DHS recommends that people who choose to eat fish from waters where algae blooms are present should remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking since toxins are more likely to collect in these tissues.

Exposure to toxins can produce symptoms of numbness, tingling and dizziness that can lead to difficulty breathing or heart problems and require immediate medical attention. Symptoms of skin irritation, weakness, diarrhea, nausea, cramps and fainting should also receive medical attention if they persist or worsen. Children and pets are particularly susceptible.

The public will be advised when the concern no longer exists.

With proper precautions to avoid water contact, people are encouraged to visit Willow Lake Reservoir and enjoy activities such as hiking, biking, picnicking, catch-and-release fishing and bird watching.

For local information contact the Corps' Willow Creek Natural Resource Management Office at 676-9009. For health information, contact DHS Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance program coordinator, 971-673-0438 or www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/hab; also the DHS toll-free information line at 1-877-290-6767.

Helfrecht lands 25 pound salmon

Keenan Helfrecht of Heppner caught this 25 pound, 36 inch, Chinook salmon on Labor Day weekend in the Siuslaw River by Florence. –Contributed Photo

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to have your picture taken, drop off photos, or email them to editor@rapidserve.net.

City council debates feral cat problem

Also hears of $31,000 in late and unpaid water & sewer bills

By David Sykes

The Heppner City Council Monday once again discussed how to deal with the ever-increasing number of feral, or wild, cats living in the city. The subject comes before the council every so often, but a solution has never been found.

The cats not only cause damage to property, but also could be a health hazard and the cats are suffering.

"Cat ordinances do not work," city manager Dave DeMayo told the council. He said the big problem is no one can figure out who the cats belong to, or if they are even domestic or wild. Cats are not licensed like dogs. DeMayo said cat owners should pay to have their animals spayed to cut down on the population, and that the city should not have to pay for this.

DeMayo identified two of the most problem areas of the city, Union and Shobe streets and back by the old car wash on Center Street (see letter to editor in this week's paper).

The sheriff's department has a live trap that can be used to catch problem cats, but, once again, no one knows who the cats belong to. On resident on Union Street said he has trapped at least 12 cats for relocation elsewhere because they were causing such problems on his property. The homeowner said the cats caused $700 in damage to the inside of a trailer he had parked in his driveway. "They basically ruined it," he said. He said also the feral cats had a lit-

-See CITY COUNCIL/Page EIGHT

Cannin waives right to speedy trial

A pre-trial hearing was held on Thursday, September 10, for Wendy Cannin, a former Heppner High School teacher, who has been charged with multiple sex crimes involving underage students.

At the pre-trial hearing, Morrow County District Attorney Elizabeth Ballard objected to Cannin's release. Judge Dan Hill heard arguments from Cannin's court appointed attorney Kittee Custer who requested that bail be lowered. Judge Hill lowered the bail to $20,000.

During the pre-trial hearing, Cannin waived her right to a speedy trial and her attorney asked for continuance. Another pre-trial date has been set for October 8 at 8:15 a.m.

Cannin plead not-guilty to the charges on September 1. A trial date will be set at a later time.

Cannin is currently lodged at the Umatilla County Jail.

Search continues for missing fishermen

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office has learned that five members of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation were fishing on the Columbia River when the boat capsized and two of the fisherman had not made it to shore and had gone underwater. On Monday, September 14, the sheriff's office received a phone call from a Union Pacific Railroad supervisor near the 3 Mile Island boat launch area near Boardman who stated that a large wave had capsized a boat on the Columbia River.

Members of the Morrow County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue were dispatched to the area. Calls for additional assistance were made and

-See MISSING FISHERMAN/ Page EIGHT

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

Precision Agriculture
Precision Solutions For All Seasons
CASE IH AGRICULTURE

AgGPS® EZ-GUIDE® 250 AgGPS® EZ-GUIDE® 500 AgGPS® FM-1000®
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net