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Gazette Times

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Bergstrom named administrator of new treatment facility

By Autumn Morgan

Matt Bergstrom has been hired to be the administrator for Lakeview Heights, the secure residential treatment facility being built above the Willow Creek Reservoir. The facility, which is expected to open in February, will provide services to individuals with severe mental illnesses.

When Bergstrom was in college, he didn't picture himself as running a treatment facility. In fact, he holds a bachelor's degree in education and a minor in psychology from Albertson College of Idaho.

Matt Bergstrom

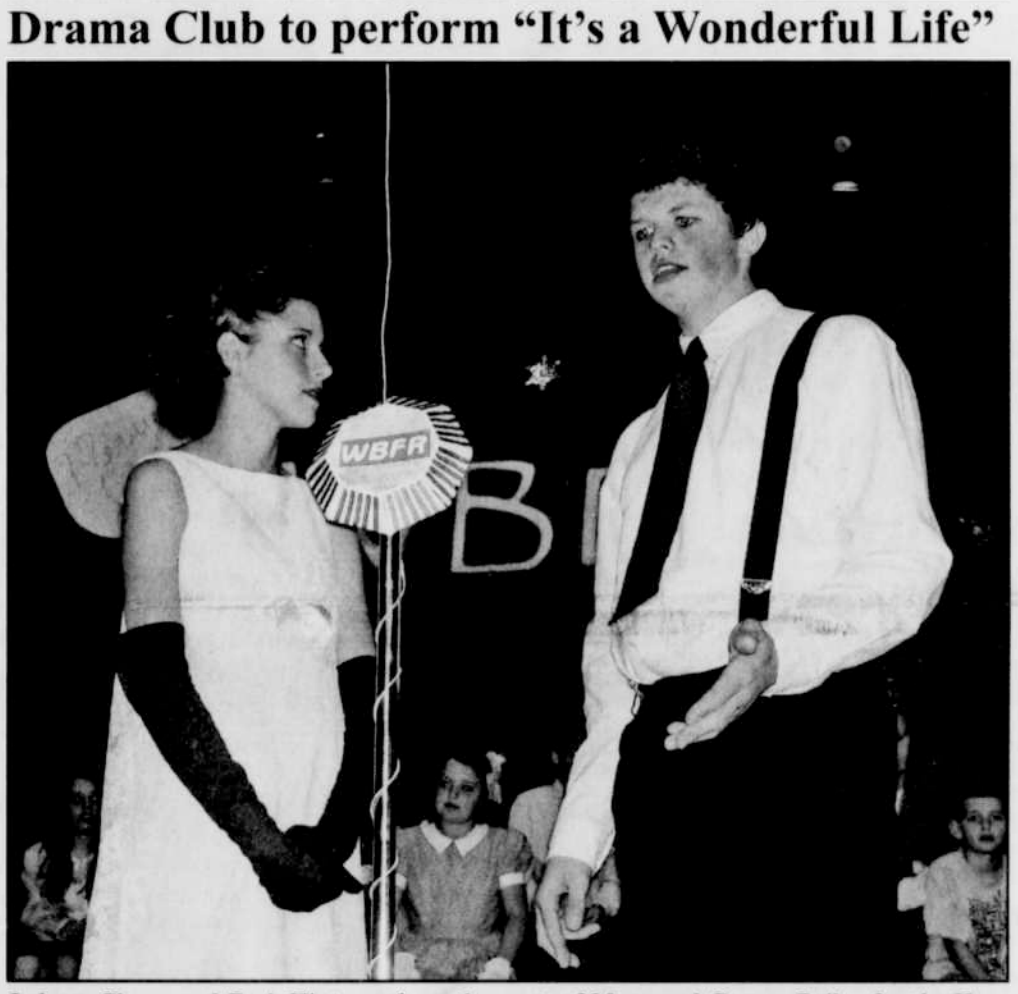
He returned to Hermiston from college in 2006 with plans to be a teacher. But instead, he spotted an ad in the newspaper and "one thing led to another." In July 2006 Bergstrom began working for Community Counseling Solutions, previously known as Morrow County Mental Health. In December of 2007 he began running Columbia River Ranch, a mental health facility in Boardman. In August of 2009, Bergstrom was hired to run Lakeview Heights.

Currently, work is still ongoing in the building process of Lakeview Heights. The facility is on schedule to be completed in January and Bergstrom hopes it will be fully operational by the beginning of February. The facility will employ 14-16 positions including residential associates to help with cleaning and transportation, a registered nurse who will work with residents' medications, mental health specialists, and an assistant administrator. Fifty-five applications have been received to so far. Bergstrom said he plans to begin interviews next week and hopes to have positions filled by Christmas. Two weeks of staff training will be held in January. Bergstrom is currently working with the state on licensing for the facility.

Bergstrom, 26, is enjoying working in Heppner. Although he was raised in Hermiston and currently lives there, he has family roots that tie him to Heppner. His parents, Mike and Michele Bergstrom, both graduated from Heppner High School. Also, his grandparents, Marlene and Randall Peterson, Bob Bergstrom, and Don and Margaret Evans, all live in Heppner. He is engaged to be married in July to Chelsea Gill of Hermiston, who is employed as a teacher.

Bergstrom is looking forward to the opening of the facility. "I think it's awesome," said Bergstrom. "I'm excited and everybody has been so supportive." An open house is being planned after completion of the facility.

Drama Club to perform "It's a Wonderful Life"



Jodessa Chapa and Zech Hintz perform the parts of Mary and George Bailey for the Heppner High School Drama Club's upcoming production of "It's a Wonderful Life." Three performances will be held in the HHS cafeteria on Monday, November 30, and Tuesday and Wednesday, December 1 and 2, at 7 p.m. Tickets are $5.50 each and can be purchased at Sweet Productions or by calling 676-8022. *–Contributed Photo*

Gazette-Times to close for Thanksgiving

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed on November 26 and 27 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. The office will re-open on Monday, November 30, at 9 a.m.

Biorefinery facility planned in Boardman

By David Sykes

A Colorado based company plans to build a production facility in Boardman that will convert poplar trees into chemicals and fuels, a representative of the company told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week.

Carrie Atiyeh, public affairs director of the ZeaChem Inc.of Lakewood, CO, told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last Thursday that the company is currently constructing the facility at the Port of Morrow in Boardman. She said, when completed, the plant will produce 250,000 gallons of ethanol per year using fast growing poplar trees harvested from the 35,000 acres of tree farms owned by GreenWood Resources in the Pacific Northwest.

Atiyeh said the plant is not a full production facility, but is called a semi-works scale facility, used to test production for a large scale production plant to be built later. She did not say where the full scale facility will be built. "Financing is tough right now," Atiyeh said. "But this plant is the first step to prove the technology to go out and put in our first commercial size facility."

She said ZeaChem, which was incorporated in 2002 and also operates a research and development laboratory facility in Menlo Park, CA, is putting $30 million into this facility, but she declined to name the full price.

Top Photo: Carrie Atiyeh told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week about a new bio facility going in at the Port of Morrow in Boardman. Bottom Photo: The new facility plans to use poplars from the tree farm near Boardman as raw material. It may also use other raw material such as wheat straw and forest waste, a representative said. *-Photos by David Sykes*

Atiyeh did, however, say Oregon's favorable renewable resource tax exemption law, which may be repealed by the state legislature in special session in February, was a major reason the company decided to locate here. She also said the company is looking for venture capital and federal stimulus money to move development and construction of full scale production forward.

Some of the end products coming out of the plant will be chemicals for plastic products, car paint material and an additive that makes coffee decaffeinated. Atiyeh said the plant could, in the future, also use wheat straw or waste from the national forest in its production. "Corn was the first generation of ethanol production," Atiyeh said. "But now we are expanding into other areas. It's not just ethanol anymore," she said of the ZeaChem process.

The test facility at Boardman will take biomass (wood or other material), and ferment the material with a natural bacteria called acetogen. Acetogen is highly robust, but unlike yeast, produces no carbon dioxide (CO_2) during the fermentation process. According to a company news release ZeaChem's approach "leapfrogs the yield and carbon dioxide (CO_2) problems associated with traditional and cellulosic based biorefinery processes."

The company went on to say that it has a significant capital cost advantage compared to other cellulosic technologies. By efficiently extracting the most energy possible from biomass feedstocks, ZeaChem significantly increases output while reducing both production costs and environmental impacts.

The plant in Boardman will employ 25 people when completed, and will employee 75 during construetion, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2010. Hazen Research of Golden Colorado will construct the plant, which will actually be a series of individual modular processing units constructed elsewhere and then connected together when they arrive on site in Boardman.

Wolff, Hintz fill elk tags

Left Photo: Ashley Wolff, 17, of Heppner took her first elk recently, a mature cow. The hunt was donated to the Booster Club Auction by Brian and Susan Thompson, and guided by Sid Kennedy. Right Photo: Micha Hintz of Heppner killed this spike elk at the OHV Youth Hunt on November 7. *–Contributed Photos*

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.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

We will be closed for Thanksgiving at all locations
November 26, 27, and 28
Have a happy holiday!

Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net