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City to crack down on junked and abandoned vehicles

By David Sykes

The city of Heppner will be cracking down on people who leave abandoned or junked vehicles on their property in view of the public, the city council said Monday night.

In an effort to get rid of junked vehicle eyesores around town, the city will begin to enforce a 2002 city ordinance that allows police to remove and dispose of abandoned or discarded vehicles from private property. The police will need the consent of the property owner or a court warrant to enter private property.

"This ordinance has been on the books for many years but not enforced," Mayor Les Paustian said. "It has been abused and it is now time to enforce the law."

"We are after the vehicles that have been parked along the street with expired licenses," council member Cindi Doherty said. City Manager Dave De Mayo said that the city is giving vehicle owners until the end of August to voluntarily comply before enforcement begins.

The ordinance is aimed at expired licensed and unmovable vehicles outside and does not apply to vehicles inside of shops or garages. An owner may apply for a permit to store an abandoned or discarded vehicle on his private property for up to one year. The permit will cost $25 and can be obtained at city hall.

Other parts of the ordinance state that any vehicle parked or left standing upon any private property more than five days without the consent of the owner or person in lawful possession or control of the property may, at the request of either, be removed by the police.

Any "discarded" vehicle left standing upon any private property more than five days and not stored in a building may be removed by the police.

Public property is even stricter under the ordinance. No vehicle which the police have reason to believe is discarded or abandoned shall be parked or left standing on public property within the city for a period in excess of 24 hours.

The 10-page ordinance also covers how the vehicles will be impounded and disposed of once confiscated by the city. A complete copy of the ordinance is available at Heppner city hall.

Abandoned and junked cars will no longer be tolerated on private property in the city of Heppner. The council agreed to begin enforcing a strict 2002 vehicle ordinance beginning Sept. 1.

Police Report

In other business at Monday's council meeting, the police gave the following report for Heppner police activity in the month of June:

-Two transports were conducted from the jail to the Circuit Court and back.

-A deputy made contact with a person in the city park who was drinking alcohol. The subject left town with friends.

-A person reported seeing people on the roof of the senior center and wanted to know what they were doing. The people on the roof were installing satellite T.V.

-Two bicycles were found abandoned in town. Both bicycles were placed into evidence as found property.

-A minor was issued a citation for MIP-alcohol.

-An adult reported he received a pornographic image on his cell phone.

-A resident reported a neighbor putting cat feces on their porch.

-A house had eggs thrown at it. A juvenile admitted to throwing the eggs at the house. The home owner and juvenile worked out a civil compromise.

-A citizen reported a damaged door knob. It appeared as though someone tried to enter the residence.

-a deputy contacted two people regarding a vet bill. The issue was a civil matter.

-A person reported they locked their keys in a vehicle. A deputy responded.

-A person reported to the Sheriff's Office they tried to call a relative and reached a prison instead. The caller was concerned an inmate had her telephone number.

-Deputies assisted the ambulance on three medical calls.

-Deputies investigated two harassment complaints that occurred on school property. Both were resolved by contact.

-A person reported her son was being sexually harassed on-line. The complaint was already being investigated by another agency, where the adult son lives.

-An intoxicated, unwanted male was reported to be at a residence. The intoxicated person was given a ride by a third party.

-Deputies responded to a family dispute. The involved people were in a verbal argument. No crime was committed.

Traffic: There were 20 traffic stops resulting in nine traffic citations. There were 15 traffic warnings issued.

-Four motor vehicle crashes were reported. One was unfounded and three resulted in minor property damage.

Code Enforcement: Six calls regarding lost or found dogs were reported.

-A loose dog was reported. The owner advised the dog will be relocated.

-A barking dog was reported. The owner was contacted, who was going to rectify the problem.

-A person reported a dog in a vehicle with 22 caliber ammunition and was afraid the dog would eat the ammunition.

-There were three parking complaints reported. Loose peacocks were reported.

-Deputies are working on 1 different residences regarding code violations, mostly the concern over tall weeds.

-A vehicle was reported to be leaking diesel fuel on the roadway.

Theft Complaints:

-A wallet was reported stolen from the water park. The wallet was found. A five gallon bucket of 22 caliber brass was reported stolen.

In other action the city council learned of a ballot initiative to strike down legislative action.

$3 million in city projects now a go

Three million dollars in funding from the State of Oregon for seven street and sidewalk projects in the city of Heppner will move forward following the failure of a petition drive to repeal action by the legislature in the last session that provided funding for the projects. Opponents of the State of Oregon Transportation Bill SB 2001 that authorized the Heppner expenditure as part of many other state-wide funding projects, tried to collect enough signatures to put a repeal of the bill on the ballot for voter approval in the November general election.

The opponents were against the tax and fees increases that are part of the bill. The bill will now increase car registration fees by $16 a year, increase title fees by $22, increase the cost of replacement and vanity plates and increase Oregon's gas tax by six cents per gallon, from 24 cents per gallon to 30 cents in January, 2011, or after two straight quarters of economic growth.

The city received the unexpected $3 million for the projects in May, 2009 when state Representative Greg Smith, R-Hepp-

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Volunteers spruce up fair pavilion

Morrow County Fair Secretary Ren'ee Yocom shows off the new paint job in the Morrow County Fair Pavilion. Volunteers who helped, headed up by Jan Stroeber, included Ren'ee Yocom, Joanne Burleson, Peggy Fishburn, Vi Wilgers, Carolyn Cutsforth, Shirlee Sweigart, Christy Correa, Morgan Correa, Makenzie Correa, Kay Fowler, Zach Yocom, Justin Yocom, Bryan Fowler, Thomas Gould and Timothy Gould. Kenny Howard is providing carpentry work and David Allstott and Jim and Cliff Lankford have volunteered their time to repair the doors.

"People have been really good about volunteering," said Stroeber. "It's going to be fantastic."

Kids with guns knock out internet

Kids shooting at birds on a fiber optic line down by the Industrial Park near Heppner was the cause of a three-day high speed internet outage for several local businesses.

Apparently the shots damaged a fiber optic line which had to be replaced at a cost of $45,000. Several businesses, including the Bank of Eastern Oregon and the Morrow County Grain Growers, were without internet service for several days.

Heppner resident competes for $100,000 at Calgary Stampede

Blake Knowles from Heppner is one of the elite rodeo athletes invited to compete at the 2010 edition of the Calgary Stampede.

Knowles is among the first group of steer wrestlers who competed July 9-12. A second group will compete July 13-16. Each day is treated like a separate rodeo with $17,500 up for grabs in each event. Money is added up through the four performances with the top four earners advancing to the final round on Sunday, July 18. The six remaining contestants will compete in a wildcard round on July 17 with the two fastest times on Saturday also advancing to Showdown Sunday's final round.

Knowles, along with other contestants, is vying for a spot in the final round and hoping to get a second opportunity on Showdown Sunday. The four highest scores and fastest times compete in the Showdown Round. If Knowles makes it that far, and has the fastest time in that round, he will come home $100,000 richer, just in a matter of seconds.

This year's Calgary Stampede boasts a payoff of over $2 million making it one of the most lucrative rodeos in North America. Along with steer wrestling, the rodeo has bareback riding, tie-down roping, saddle bronc riding, women's barrel racing and bull riding.

"The tournament style format, top livestock from the Calgary Stampede Ranch and other Canadian stock contractors, and the lucrative prize money, all make rodeo contestants want to compete there. The unprecedented hospitality and prestige of being invited keep them coming back win or lose. The opportunity to win $100,000 for just one ride only happens once a year, and for most rodeo contestants, just once in a lifetime, at the Calgary Stampede," said a Calgary Stampede spokesperson.

For complete results and more information go to www.calgarystampede.com.

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