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## Sheriff says drug use a factor in much of county's crimes Matlack featured speaker at Tea Party meeting

By David Sykes  
Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack was the featured speaker at the monthly meeting of the Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots Monday night.

Matlack spoke on various issues including illegal immigration, drug use and jail space.

"A large percentage of the crimes committed in the county are in some way related to drug usage," Matlack told the group. He said the production and usage of methamphetamines "figures into much of the crime we have in the county."

Matlack said Umatilla County was number two in Oregon in the production of meth, and that has spilled over into Morrow County. He said a lot of the thefts on ranches and farms in the area are meth addicts searching for copper and copper wire to sell and make money for the drug. He said after Oregon put controls on the sale of Ephedrine, previously an over-the-counter cold medication, and made it a prescription-only medication, the production of meth decreased. Ephedrine is a material that is used in the production of meth, and drug makers would purchase large amounts at retail outlets. "The meth epidemic is still with us, however," he said.

Matlack also said the much of the meth production has shifted to Mexico where the materials to make it are cheaper and more available. He also said that Mexican nationals have been caught growing marijuana in our National forests. "Not so much in Morrow County, but it is going on," he said.

On the subject of illegal immigrants, Matlack says his department does not seek out illegals in the county, and that he, in fact, cannot arrest a person for just being in the country illegally. "In Oregon we have a law that says you cannot make an arrest if it is just for being an illegal," Matlack said. He explained that a person could be charged with being an illegal in conjunction with another crime, but not just being an illegal by itself.

"This (illegal immigration) has become a political issue," Matlack



Sheriff Ken Matlack addresses the monthly meeting of the Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots Monday night. -Photo by David Sykes

said. "Personally I believe the law is the law and if a person is here illegally he is breaking the law, but not everybody sees it that way," he said. "The law is the law and the federal government should enforce the law," he said. "I have been in this business 30 years and I would like to see the law enforced," he said. Matlack said he did not think it was fair to the people who comply with the immigration laws, and wait up to nine years sometimes to become legal citizens, to have other people come here illegally.

He said his department does not track the cost of dealing with illegals separately, and does not know their financial impact on the legal system in Morrow County.

Matlack, who grew up and lived in the Umatilla/Irrigon area most of his life, says he began to see a change in Morrow County back in the 1970s when circle irrigation came and there was a demand for more labor. He said in the beginning the workers pretty much stayed on the farms, worked and did not cause much trouble. Later when more illegal workers arrived and jobs became scarcer, we began to have some troubles. He said he saw a rise in gang activity in Irrigon and that is one of the factors that prompted him to run for sheriff. He had been a state police officer for many years, but wanted to do something to rectify the deteriorating safety felt in North Morrow County.

Matlack sees his number-one accomplishment during his six years as sheriff, as being a change in

the way the county purchases jail space. Previously he said the county had a contract with a set number of beds available at the Umatilla County Jail. He said he reworked the contract so the beds would be averaged out which made more space available when needed. He said this allowed him to put more people in jail when they needed it. "People are more apt to obey the law and do what they are supposed to do when they know there is a possibility they will go to jail if they don't," he said. He said previously people who should have gone to jail were being released with just a ticket.

Matlack says another positive sign for the department is the Secure Residential Treatment Facility in Heppner which has made beds available for people who are having mental problems. Previously he would have had to transport the people to Bend or other far away facilities, taking up valuable deputy time.

Tea Party members asked Matlack what they could do to help law enforcement in Morrow County. The sheriff said, "Be our eyes and ears. Report things that are suspicious." He said ordinary people have every right to make citizen's arrests, but "I don't recommend it." He said a person could be sued or the suspect could be dangerous. He said if a person catches someone on their property stealing something, they do not have the automatic right to shoot that person. "Don't be a

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HEPPNER

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## Walden says FCC exceeding its authority with Net Neutrality rules

By David Sykes

Congressman Greg Walden says the Federal Communications Commission overstepped its authority recently when it enacted Net Neutrality rules without congress' permission. Net Neutrality would allow the federal government more control over the internet which, opponents say, would only lead to increased censorship and invasion of privacy.

"Three hundred members of the house say 'don't do net neutrality,'" Walden told a gathered group of Eastern Oregon telecom business leaders at a lunch in Boardman Friday. And Walden should have some say in the matter as the newly-appointed chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology. He was appointed after Republicans gained control of the House in the last election. Walden is the only Republican congressman from Oregon.

"The FCC chairman crammed this through and it exceeded its authority," Walden said. He said Net Neutrality is a "solution in search of a problem." "I don't want government running the internet. There are those who think this is the Fairness Doctrine for the internet," Walden said.

Walden also said



Greg Walden R-Oregon (right) visits with Eastern Oregon telecom leaders at a meeting in Boardman last Friday. With Walden is his newest staff member Ray Baum, former chairman of the Oregon Public Utility Commission who will assist Walden on communications and energy oversight and legislation. -Photo by David Sykes

with the Republican controlled house there will be a lot more oversight of how the government is regulating the telecom business. He said federal monies have been misspent on broadband infrastructure and that he would like to see more broadband build out in the rural areas.

Walden also introduced his newest staff member, Ray Baum. Baum was the chairman of the Oregon Public Utility Commission and will assist Walden on communications and energy oversight and legislation.

On other issues Walden said the Republican house is changing rules

to better serve the public. "We are taking away the opening statements of the all the committee members except for the chairmen," Walden said. He said when you have 50 committee members and they all get to talk for three minutes, the testimony drags on for too long. "We want to hear from the citizens we have asked to come in testify," he said

Walden heard of a variety of telecom problems from the industry leaders who attended the luncheon. Fred Ziari of EZ Wireless said his company is having problems finding quality

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## Baker County hires Greg Smith

Editor's Note: The following article was written by Chris Collins and appeared in the January 21 edition of the Baker City Herald.

A state legislator from Heppner who operates a private business consulting firm has been hired as Baker County's new economic development director.

The Baker County Commission signed a contract Wednesday with Greg Smith, 42, who serves constituents of Union, Wallowa, Umatilla and Morrow counties in District 57 of the Oregon House of Representatives.

Smith will earn \$8,000 per month - \$96,000 per year - to recruit business and industry to Baker County and to offer support to existing businesses.

Smith and his wife, Sherri, have operated their business consulting firm,

Gregory Smith & Co., for the past 10 years. He has offices in Heppner and La Grande where he manages the Eastern Oregon University's Small Business Development Center.

As part of his contract with the county, Smith has agreed to establish an office in downtown Baker City as soon as possible with business hours from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday and nights and weekends as needed.

Smith's proposal was one of four submitted to the county.

County Commissioner Chair Fred Warner Jr. said the Economic Development Commission, which he is a member of, recommended Smith for the job even though his bid was the highest.

"It was not an apples to apples kind of assessment," Warner said.

Other EDC members are Mike Kee, Baker City manager; Baker City Mayor Dennis Dorrah; banker Jeremy Gilpin; and rancher Craig Ward.

The four applicants first were screened by a three-person committee of businessmen Dave Lindley and Peter Ellingson, and Rick Minster, Eastern Oregon regional business development officer for Business Oregon.

Warner outlined the three other proposals:

-Gene Stackle, who formerly worked for Baker City as economic development manager, bid \$69,000 for the job, but that did not include the cost of setting up an office.

-Jake Jacobs, who also has provided business consulting services for the city and county, bid

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## BEO to host annual invitational wrestling tournament



Pictured are members of the Heppner Mustang wrestling team, along with their coaches. -Photo by Sandy Matthews

Bank of Eastern Oregon announces the invitees to Bank of Eastern Oregon's 2011 Invitational Wrestling Tournament to be held at Heppner High School on February 5. High schools scheduled to compete are Heppner, Riverside, Irrigon, Adrian, Crane, Elgin, Enterprise/Wallowa, Grant Union, Imbler, Joseph, MacHi (JV), and Union.

The competition begins at 10 a.m. and Bank of Eastern Oregon invites the public to come watch these talented athletes com-

pete. Tickets are available at the door and concessions will be available.

Mark Lemmon, Bank of Eastern Oregon's Chief Financial Officer and Heppner High School wrestling coach, has been instrumental in organizing the bank's sponsorship of the event. "The bank's management has been very involved in establishing this annual tournament and looks forward to the 2011 competition. The first two years of the event were outstanding and we intend the BEO Invitational to be

a "can't miss" tournament on every school's future schedule," said Lemmon. "We appreciate bank staff and local citizens who volunteer to help at the event or sponsor amenities; their help makes the tournament run smoothly!"

Anyone who would like to volunteer to help or has any inquiries concerning the upcoming event, contact Heppner High School's Athletic Director, Greg Grant, at 541-676-9138 or Mark Lemmon at 541-676-0224.

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