

Saint Patrick's Parish ham dinner tradition going strong

Nearly 30 years ago, on Saint Patrick's Day, Jimmy Farley, Jim Healy, and Harry O'Donnell began offering up a ham dinner to the members of St Patrick's Church. The parishioners enjoyed these meals for several years. During this time it was decided to invite the rest community to join the parishioners. The meal became a stew feed and was organized by Eleanor Gonty. The stew feed grew until it became apparent that there was a need for a larger meal for more people. Thus, a ham dinner created by three local men became the annual St. Patrick's Ham Dinner.

This year's ham dinner will be held at St. Patrick's Catholic Parish

hall on Saturday, March 19, from 4-7 p.m. The cost is \$9 for adults, \$5 for children ages 5-12, and free for children four and under.

Since the early 1980s it over four hundred people to line up annually and enjoy the meal at the church's parish hall. Trish Sweeney was the first chairperson to organize this event. She was followed after several years by Gwen Healy and Garnett Hudleston, Marge Kenny and Evelyn Sweek, MaryAnn Elguezabal, and Roberta Lutcher. These women have directed the many members of the Altar Society during their preparations for their largest fund-raising event. This year's event comes full circle when it will be

headed by Trish Sweeney again. She will be overseeing the many committees that will be cleaning, shopping, cooking, setting up, serving and eventually cleaning up. By the time that last person puts down his fork and pushes back from the table it is likely that every Catholic lady in Heppner will have had a hand in some aspect of his meal.

The ham dinner is well known for the quality of food that is served. It is also famous for the large assortment of homemade pies available to the diners. During the meal you will find young parishioners pushing cart after carts full of every kind of fresh baked pie imaginable. The suc-

cess of this event depends on a large commitment from nearly every member of the parish. There have been years when it has been difficult to rally everyone together and start them all on the long preparation for this meal.

Luckily there is always someone there to remind them that many, many families and visitors are counting on them for sustenance on this long day of celebrating. Where else can over four hundred people sit down with their friends and families and enjoy Heppner's hospitality. This meal is not only a fundraiser, but it is an important part of Heppner's Saint Patrick Day Celebration.

Free Skywarn Weather Spotter training in Heppner

Volunteers are being sought to participate in the latest weather spotter training on April 7 in Heppner. Weather spotters trained by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service (NWS) are key volunteers who assist the meteorologists by providing up-to-date information about storm activity.

The Skywarn Weather Spotter training is free and will be held in the Morrow County Emergency Operations Center, located at 320 South Willow View in Heppner beginning at 7 p.m. and co-sponsored by Morrow County Emer-

gency Management.

Even though the Doppler weather radar is scanning the skies and the NOAA Weather Radio is broadcasting forecasts, watches, and warnings, forecasters depend upon getting good information from trained Skywarn weather spotters.

"Skywarn volunteers are not storm chasers, although many Skywarn members, both local and nationwide, may chase storms on their own time," said Dennis Hull, NWS Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the forecast office in Pendleton. "The National Weather does not encourage storm chasing because it is very dangerous."

Hull added, "The safety of all Skywarn spotters is a high priority. Skywarn members are volunteers trained in weather spotting and reporting those findings in a timely manner using the phone, amateur radio, or internet."

Skywarn spotters attend a two-hour training session where they learn how to observe cloud formations and other weather in this area. The Weather Service teaches how to determine which storms are potentially severe. Spotters use a special toll free number, amateur radio frequency, or the internet address to let the forecasters at the National Weather Service office in Pendleton know what is happening in their area. Meteorologists use this data as they issue severe weather warnings or statements to the residents of Morrow County.

In the winter, spotters report heavy snow, icing, high winds, and blizzards. Skywarn also works to ensure National Weather Service forecasts, watches, and warnings are broadcast and received in a timely manner.

Interested residents who would like to learn more about the local weather or those who may have an interest helping your neighbors obtain good weather warnings, are invited to attend the Skywarn Weather Spotter training. Volunteers are asked to bring information about their latitude, longitude, and elevation so their locations can be easily mapped. Those attending will be eligible for door prizes.

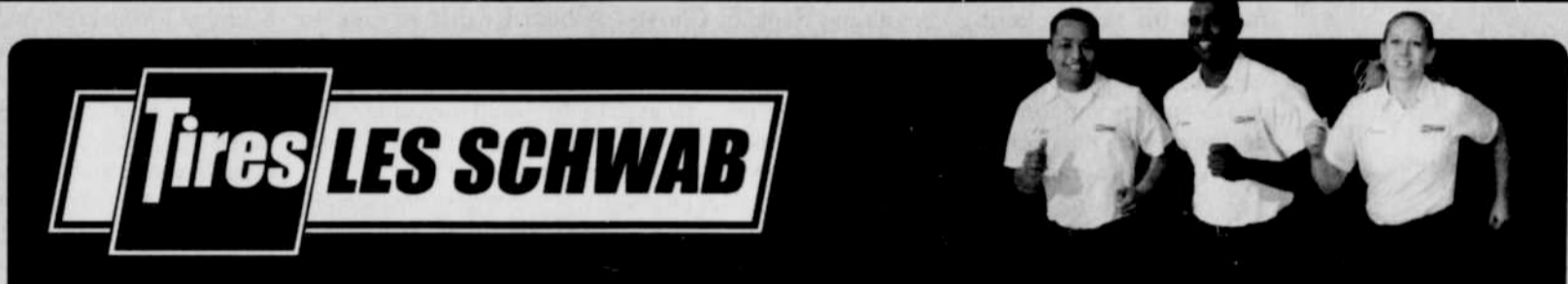
More information about the training is available by contacting Morrow County Emergency Management at 541-676-5161 or the National Weather Service at 541-969-7136. You can also email Hull at dennis.hull@noaa.gov. Additional information is also available at the National Weather Service website at <http://www.weather.gov/pendleton>.

NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts to Morrow County from transmitters at Sillusi Butte and Wilkenson Hill on a frequency of 162.425 MHz and near Boardman on AM 1610 KHz.

Additional information about Skywarn can be found at <http://www.skywarn.org>.

Teen club night planned for Saturday

A teen club night will be held at Sweet Productions on Saturday, March 19, from 8-11:30 p.m. Admission is \$2. There will be dancing, music, and specialty drinks.



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