

Fletcher takes over as MCSD business manager

By Andrea Di Salvo
Andy Fletcher, CPA, is taking over the post of business manager for the Morrow County School District (MCSD). The 43-year-old is taking over from long-time business manager Rhonda Lorenz.

While not a Heppner native, Fletcher is no stranger to Eastern Oregon.

Born in Pendleton, he spent his early years in Ukiah before his family moved to Pendleton. He attended school there and graduated from Pendleton High School in 1986.

After high school, Fletcher spent the next eight years attending the University of Oregon in Eugene. The unusual length of time was due, he said, to taking summer classes and working as a wildland firefighter during the winter. He traveled throughout the world, backpacking and fighting wildland fires on several continents.

Even though the winter job extended his college time, Fletcher says the experiences were invaluable. "It's one of the greatest jobs in the world," says Fletcher. "I truly enjoyed it."

Fletcher recalls one adventure in particular. He and a friend flew into Cairo, Egypt, intending to backpack through Israel, Lebanon and the Eastern Bloc before flying home from Germany. It was 1990, though, and the first Gulf War derailed their plans.

"We were stuck in Egypt for five weeks," Fletcher says. "It turned

out to be a great experience. When you spend some time [in Egypt], it's remarkable."

Other adventures from his firefighting days include visiting Bulgaria about three years after Chernobyl and seeing the effects that catastrophe had on the people there. Though Eastern Europe was poor, he said, the people were remarkable.

"The people there were so super friendly. They would find out you were American and say, 'Eat with me; come stay with me.'" The food lines and empty grocery stores were a stark contrast to that hospitality, he says. "It's a very different lifestyle than what Americans are accustomed to."

Despite the lure of his overseas adventures, Fletcher did graduate from the University of Oregon in 1994, with a bachelor's degree in marketing management. He went on to attend Idaho State University in Pocatello from 1996 to 1997. He obtained an MBA with an emphasis in accounting in 1997



Andy Fletcher

and immediately took and passed the exam to become a certified public accountant (CPA). In 1997, he also married long-time love and Heppner native Andrea Ball, whom he'd met while working as a wildland firefighter.

The couple remained in Idaho, where Fletcher taught accounting at Idaho State for the next year, until 1998.

After leaving Idaho State, Fletcher worked for Deloitte Touche in Boise, ID, from 1998 to 2000. He went from there to Building Materials Holding Corp., a large lumber supply and construction company in Boise. He stayed with them until February of 2010. Andrea worked as the director for Rural Health for the State of Idaho.

Fletcher says they moved back to the Heppner area to be closer to their sons' grandparents and to raise the boys, now aged six and eight, in a small community. Their kids attend school in Heppner and enjoy spending time with

-See FLETCHER/PAGE SIX



Gazette-Times welcomes new editor



News editor Andrea Di Salvo settles into her new position at the Gazette-Times. -Photo by April Sykes

Heppner native Andrea Di Salvo is taking over the position of news editor at the Heppner Gazette-Times.

Di Salvo takes over the news editor position upon the departure of long-time editor Autumn Morgan. Morgan, the daughter of missionaries, was born in Texas and raised in Mexico and Florida. She received an associate's degree in business from Chipola College in Florida in 2004. She and her husband, Troy, moved to the Heppner area in the summer of 2006. She is currently working on a bachelor's degree in business at Eastern Oregon University.

Morgan, who has served as Gazette-Times news editor since November of 2006, is leaving the paper to take on Mary Kay Bellamy's previous position as Fiscal Services Specialist for the Morrow County School District.

Di Salvo, 33, says she is excited to take on the role of editor for her hometown newspaper.

"Autumn has done an excellent job as editor. She made it look easy," Di Salvo says. "I have some big shoes to fill and only hope I can do half the job she's done over the past several years."

Bellamy injured in auto accident

Travis Bellamy, former Lexington resident, was seriously injured in an automobile accident on Friday, April 15, near Bend.

According to family reports, he suffered a skull fracture and had surgery to remove a blood clot in his brain and repair the fracture. He was listed in critical condition and is cur-

The daughter of long-time residents Dexter and Corinne Miles, Di Salvo was born in Heppner and raised on the Miles farm just outside of town. She was home-schooled from kindergarten through high school and went on to attend the Lutheran Bible Institute (LBI) of Seattle in Issaquah, WA. She graduated from LBI in 2000 with a B.A. in cross-cultural ministry.

After college, Di Salvo moved to Virginia Beach, VA, to attend Regent University. The move from West to East coast was a shock, she says.

"It was the first time I'd ever had grits, and barbecue means something entirely different in Virginia," she says. "Then there were the traffic, the humidity and the hurricanes. It was a huge adjustment. I'd been to Africa and had less culture shock."

She stuck it out through the culture shock, though, and obtained a master's degree in journalism from Regent in 2002. After her marriage to husband, Carmelo, in 2002, the couple settled down in Virginia Beach.

Di Salvo worked in a variety of writing-related

-See NEWS EDITOR/PAGE SIX

rently in an induced coma at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend.

He is the son of Sam and Mary Kay Bellamy, Lexington.

A bank account has been set up at the Bank of Eastern Oregon to help cover medical costs since he had no insurance.

Smith says K-12 funding to get \$50 million less over last biennium

By David Sykes
The legislature has passed a \$5.7 billion K-12 education budget, which is down from \$5.75 billion in the current budget, state representative Greg Smith told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week.

Smith was on a conference call from Salem with the chamber and said he was not pleased that education funding was down, but was happy to get the budget figures out to the school districts so they could begin planning their local budgets. "This is a significant reduction over what schools need with inflation and increased costs," Smith said of the \$50 million cut.

In other state issues Smith said a plan to combine Hermiston and Heppner court systems with Pendleton's has been averted. In a cost saving measure the legislature had earlier floated a plan to close the Heppner court system, and Smith says that closure has been averted.

In other issues Smith said a bill to compensate ranchers for grey wolf damage has been in-

troduced, but he did not know if it would pass or not. "The problem with that is I do not want my tax money going to pay for wolf damage," said Heppner resident and Chamber member Cliff Green.

"I don't disagree, but I have a large urban population (here in Salem) and they do not understand the problems of the rural areas," Smith responded.

Smith said that, under the current proposed budget, OSU extension was set to lose \$20 million. "This will cut everything from research to 4-H for kids," Smith said. He added that he is fighting to keep 4-H spending whole.

Smith said other than the budget issues he did not see a lot of "big" legislation coming out of this session of the Oregon Legislature.

"There is a 30-30 split in the house between Republicans and Democrats and there just isn't going to be a lot of ground-breaking legislation," Smith said. "Any kind of education reform is just going to stall."

Eastern Oregon educators learn about the benefits of Google apps

More than 40 educators from Arlington to North Powder and everywhere in between recently gathered at the Umatilla-Morrow Education Service District to learn how Google applications, or "apps," for education can benefit them in the classroom.

Through an agreement with the state of Oregon, Google provides schools with free applications in mail, online documents, sites and calendars to provide teachers with the tools they need to keep up with the ever-changing world of teaching with the Internet. The UMESD hosted the all-day event, which is part of a Google Apps road show by the High Desert ESD's (out of Bend) Oregon Virtual School District Training Team of Rachel Wente and Steve Praull. Both Wente and Praull taught courses in utilizing Google Apps, as well as the UMESD's Instruc-

tional Technology Specialist Joe Buglione and Sunridge Middle School (Pendleton School District) teachers Paul Nolan and Heidi Paullus.

"I've been thrilled with the response, and getting it out to teachers in the classrooms," said Wente of her trainings around northeast Oregon, "because there are some really great apps."

Wente and Praull will return to the area either this summer or early fall for another round of training with educators from the region.

Corps to apply herbicide on Willow Creek Dam

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will apply herbicide to the face of Willow Creek Dam this spring to kill undesirable vegetation.

G&L Exteriors of Estacada, OR is currently installing a permanent fall protection system, including horizontal life lines, on the face of the dam. The system will protect workers who will later apply herbicide over the course of about a week.

The total contract cost is about \$127,000. Installation of the permanent fall protection system will reduce the cost of future applications.

The types of herbicide to be used have been closely coordinated with the state Department of Agriculture and do not pose a significant health risk to people or animals in the area. The actual application area is on the face of dam where no public access is allowed.

Although the her-

Columbia River Community Health Services receives ConAgra grant

Columbia River Community Health Services and the "Investing in Boardman's Healthy Future" Capital Campaign have received a grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the ConAgra Foundation.

The ConAgra Foundation grant will be used to support the construction of a new health clinic for the Boardman community, which serves as many as 12,000 visits per year. Columbia River Community Health Services, a nonprofit organization, is the only medical facility in Boardman and provides up to 30 percent charity care each year. "In order to continue to offer quality health care to the Boardman and North Morrow communities, a new facility must be built," said Mindy Binder,

bicides are approved for use in or near domestic, irrigation or recreational water supplies, the Corps plans to lower the level of the small holding basin below the dam during and immediately after the application to minimize contact.

"Vegetation control on the dam is something the Corps has always tried to accomplish, but the right equipment was not in place to do a thorough job," said Willow Creek Dam Park Ranger Dan Dunnett. "Contractors have sprayed the face of the dam twice a year but could never reach a significant part [of] the growth with the equipment they had."

Although unsightly, the shallow-rooted vegetation—mostly flowering plants and grasses—on the dam's face does not pose a hazard to the dam's structural integrity.

For more information, call the Ranger Office at 541-676-9009.

Executive Director of the clinic. "This gift from the ConAgra Foundation is wonderful news and brings the new clinic that much closer to reality."

Currently, Columbia River Community Health Services is housed in a 5,000 square foot building that can no longer expand with the existing footprint. The new facility will be 15,000 square feet when it is completed in early summer of 2012. The capital campaign's goal is to raise \$4,723,800 in cash pledges and in-kind contributions; to date the campaign has secured \$3,500,687.

Director Binder reminds everyone that commemorative bricks are still available for purchase. Contact Mindy at 541-481-7212 to make a donation.



Valvoline Air Shield 2.5 gal Diesel Exhaust Fluid \$11.99

- Cummins Approved
- Compatible with all diesel SCR Systems
- API Certified and meets ISO 22241 specifications
- Non-toxic, non-hazardous, and non-flammable
- Ready-to-Use

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