Bessie Wetzell Newspaper Library
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

HEPPNER 50¢

Gazette Times

VOL. 131 NO. 4 8 Pages Wednesday, January 25, 2012 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Senator David Nelson will not seek fifth term

PENDLETON – Senator David Nelson (R-Pendleton) announced on Monday that he will not seek another term in the Oregon State Senate. Nelson was first elected from Senate District 29 to the Oregon Senate in 1996. From 2001 through 2003, he served as Senate Majority Leader.

"Serving my constituents has been an honor, a unique privilege," said Nelson. "I am grateful to the good folks in my senate district for their support over the years and for their interest in state government. Their suggestions and concerns have been important to me and my decision making process."

Since his election to the Oregon State Senate, he has championed education and natural resource issues. He has served on numerous policy committees, chaired or co-chaired the Joint Legislative Committee on Information Management Technology, Business Committees, and currently co-chairs the Ways and Means Sub-Committee on Capital Construction. He also serves on Ways and Means sub-committees on Legislative Audits, Information Management and Technology, as well as a Working Group on the State Radio Project and a Task Force on Higher Education, Student and Institutional Success.

Senator David Nelson

Senator Nelson has successfully passed legislation creating a statewide broadband telecommunications network to benefit his district, as well as making Oregon a leader in broadband infrastructure. He sponsored "Oregon Opportunity" legislation to build new Science Laboratory Buildings at Eastern Oregon University and Oregon Health Science University, a forest health bill, and has delivered a water bill to benefit the city of Pendleton and in cooperation with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, as well as water bills leading up to and including the recharge of underground aquifers in critical ground water areas in the Umatilla Watershed Basin. In October, he was appointed by Governor Kitzhaber as co-convener of his second Oregon Solutions Team Projects on Boardman Workforce Housing.

"The active participation of Oregon's people in their government is essential," says Senator Nelson. "It is what makes Oregon a wonderful place to live, work, and savor family life."

Rep. Smith named to agricultural honor roll

Oregonians for Food & Shelter has named Rep. Greg Smith (R-Heppner) to its "Honor Roll of Outstanding Legislators" for his 2011 legislative voting record.

"I am pleased to have been recognized by Oregonians for Food & Shelter and the natural-resource-based producers they represent," said Smith. "I'm also pleased my voting record reflects the constituents I was elected to serve."

Key issues for which Smith advocated during the 2011 Legislative Session include restoration of funding to OSU Extension Services; passage of HB 3058, which delivers tax relief to Oregon wheat cooperatives; and passage of HB 2563, which provides a permanent personal property tax exemption for Oregon's small logging companies.

Rep. Greg Smith

Oregonians for Food & Shelter is a coalition of agricultural-minded individuals and business owners dedicated to protecting the rights of natural-resource-based businesses in Oregon.

McDowell retires from SWCD

Office manager Merilee McDowell retires from her position at the Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) this month. The 57-year-old worked for the SWCD for 15 years, starting as a district clerk in 1996.

Merilee McDowell

McDowell was born and raised near Spokane WA. She graduated from Davenport High School in 1973 and married her husband, Bill, in September of that year. The couple moved to Oregon right after their marriage, when Bill took a job with Columbia Basin Electric in Condon.

The McDowells moved from Condon to Heppner in 1979 so Bill could become a lineman for Columbia Basin. Their daughter, Danielle, was born in 1983, after they moved to Heppner.

Merilee had been working for Murray's Drug in Condon, and transferred to the Murray's store in Heppner, where she continued working until the early '80s. McDowell then worked for First Interstate Bank in Heppner—which later became Wells Fargo—before going to work for the SWCD.

McDowell says she loved her job at the Morrow SWCD, but it was time to retire. Her plans for retirement include visiting friends, reading and using her new Nook, writing inspirational poetry and short stories, and spending more time with the people she loves.

Local cowboy featured in Ronnie Dunn video

By Andrea Di Salvo

Heppner residents might see a familiar face in one of country singer Ronnie Dunn's latest videos.

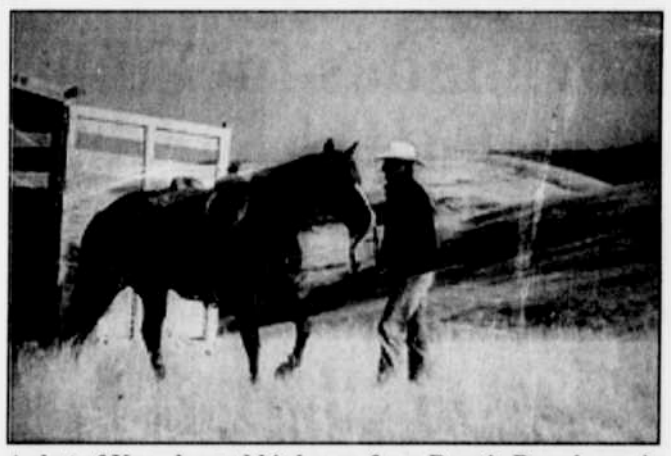
Dunn's video, "Let the Cowboy Rock," features local cowboy Blake Knowles as the lead character, a cowboy who needs to be left alone to have a good time after getting his heart broken.

Dunn, of Brooks and Dunn fame, plays the country singer who is simply there to help the cowboys fight off the lonely. Otherwise, the video is mostly Knowles.

Knowles is a pro steer wrestler currently ranked 10th in the world. He is riding the rodeo circuit in Texas right now, and unavailable for comment, but his wife, Whitney Knowles, said it was exciting watch him.

"I'm so proud of Blake, and excited that he got this opportunity; he did a great job," she said. "He's so humble, though, I know he doesn't talk about it much."

Whitney, who is also featured in the video in a brief bar scene, said she was a little embarrassed, but Knowles reminded her that they were just acting.


A shot of Knowles and his horse, from Ronnie Dunn's music video, "Let the Cowboy Rock."

"It was fun to do," she said, "though not, apart from the cowboy aspect, a true reflection of our characters."

The "cowboy aspect" of the video features Knowles in both riding and steer-wrestling shots. The film crew also caught him in the bar scenes, though, dancing and throwing back shots of whiskey. Whitney said those scenes were out of character for her husband.

"The shots in the glasses were iced tea, not whisky," she said, adding the Blake also isn't a fan of iced tea. "I could tell that by the end of the night he was feeling like, 'Enough iced tea!'"

Most of the video was shot in Pendleton during the Pendleton Round-Up, including the bar scenes from Crabby's Underground Saloon. Additional footage with Knowles was shot at the family ranch on Butter Creek. Other scenes of Dunn were filmed in Salt Flat, UT and Nashville, TN at The Stage on Lower Broadway.

Whitney said having the film crew at the ranch was the best part for her.

"It was great to watch them at work, their process," she said. "We didn't know why they were filming there or doing that, but when we saw it all together, it was amazing to see how their minds worked, how it all came together."

Snow and ice create winter playground

The snow and ice last week may have wreaked havoc with travel, school and work throughout the region, but it provided a winter playground for local kids. Above: Gaige Futter and Noah Wenberg take to the snow to do some sledding in a field near Water Street. *–Photo by Megan Futter* **Below: Wet, heavy snow made the perfect material to build snow sculptures, like these "hello snow kitties" on an area farm.** *-Photo by Andrea Di Salvo*

AT MCGG GREEN FEED & SEED IN HEPPNER:

Wild bird feed 10% off

Wild bird feeders 20% off

Morrow County Grain Growers Green Feed & Seed
242 W. Linden Way, Heppner • 676-9422 • 989-8221 (MCGG main office)

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.