

Greg Walden named grand marshal for St. Patrick's parade

The Grand Marshal for this year's Great Green Parade St. Patrick's Day Celebration is U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (R-Ore.).

"Greg Walden was selected as a grand marshal

for this year's festivities because he has been coming to Heppner and participating in our Irish traditions," said a St. Patrick's Committee spokesperson. "We chose him because he has become an 'adopted Irishman,' and we appreciate the dedication he gives every year to break away from his busy schedule and be a part of the St. Patrick's weekend... and because he looks good in green!"

Walden represents the sprawling Second Congressional District of Oregon, an area of nearly 70,000 square miles that spans from his hometown of Hood River, south to Bend, Medford, and Grants Pass, and clear out to the Idaho border.

Despite representing one of the largest districts in the entire country, which involves extensive travel and time on the road (and visits to each of the 20 counties at least twice every year), Walden says he makes it a point to put the Heppner St. Patrick's Day Celebration on his calendar every year.

Only the occasional



Though not from Morrow County, Rep. Greg Walden (far left) has long been a fixture at Heppner's St. Patrick's Celebration, attending whenever his duties—and the weather—allow. —Contributed photo

curveball thrown by Mother Nature can deter Walden from participating in the festivities; last year a snow storm got in the way.

"Sure enough, Murphy's Law is alive and well!" Rep. Walden wrote last year in his regular e-newsletter

after the travel disruption. "Every year, I make a regular visit to Heppner to join the community for their fun St. Patrick's Day celebration. The plan was no different this year. After a full day of public events in Medford...I intended to catch the 5 a.m. flight out of Medford for Portland and make the 3.5 hour drive to Heppner in time for the

Heppner festivities."

"Not to be," he wrote. "The plane didn't get in from Los Angeles the night before so the flight out of Medford that morning was canceled. That meant no early flight and no way to get to Heppner in time for the KUMA Coffee Hour program, the community lunch, the parade, or anything else for that matter in Morrow County. Big bummer. I hope the folks in Heppner understand; hopefully I'll have better travel luck next year."

As a descendant of Oregon Trail pioneers, Walden was raised on a cherry orchard in The Dalles and spent most of his

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Plans underway for Ione School fitness center

By April Sykes

The Ione Facilities Task Force Committee met Feb. 28 following the regular school board meeting to formulate a plan for establishing a weight room/fitness facility for use by the school and perhaps eventually by the community.

Following reports on various options from committee members, the group agreed, by a tally of

votes, that using an existing classroom would be the best short-term solution, deciding that using the Grange Hall in the interim was not an option. Their first choice for a long-term solution was determined to be a stick-built facility on-site and the second choice was a modular facility.

The school is currently renting the old "Ri-

emann Building" from current owner George Murdock for a weight room and fitness center; however, the building has been determined to be uninsurable and therefore unfit for use unless upgrades are made.

Committee members are now exploring funding, including possible grants, building issues and a long-term time line.

Candidates set for county elections

The filing period for county positions closed yesterday, sealing the list of candidates for open Morrow County positions. The 2012 primary elections in Morrow County will be held May 15. General elections will be held November 6.

As a reminder, county positions open for the 2012 election and current position holders are: Morrow County Assessor, Greg Sweek; Morrow County Clerk, Bobbi Childers; Morrow County Commissioner 1, Leann Rea; Morrow County Sheriff, Kenneth Matlack; Morrow County Surveyor, Judson Coppock and Morrow County Treasurer, Gayle Gutierrez. All positions

carry four-year terms. The county commissioner position is partisan; all other open positions are nonpartisan.

County clerk, treasurer and sheriff are elected at a general election. Assessor, surveyor and Justice of the Peace can be elected at the May election depending on the number of candidates filed.

Candidates filed for the open positions are: Bobbi A. Childers, county clerk

Greg Sweek, county assessor

Gayle L. Gutierrez, county treasurer

Kenneth W. Matlack, county sheriff

Leann Rea, county

commissioner, position 1 (Democrat)

Kandy Boyd, county commissioner, position 1 (Democrat)

Judson L. Coppock, county surveyor

Stephen K. Hadcock, county surveyor

Voters are also reminded that they will receive partisan (Democrat or Republican) primary ballots only for their registered party. Unaffiliated and other party voters will receive only nonpartisan primary ballots unless otherwise designated by the party in question. All general election candidates will appear on November's general election ballots.

Area farmers attend growers marketing workshop

Ione farmers Loren and Della Heideman and Hermiston farmer Luke Hansell were the only 'east sider' present at the recent Growers Marketing Workshop held at the Wheat Marketing Center (WMC) in Portland, OR.

The WMC is dedicated to improving the competitive edge of U.S. wheat through education and research. The February 2012 workshop was sponsored by the WMC in collaboration with the Oregon Wheat Commission and held in the Albers Mill Building in downtown Portland.

In addition to learning more about marketing wheat internationally, the workshop offered a tour of their in-house wheat research laboratory, wheat testing demonstrations on



Loren and Della Heideman check out a new batch of Asian noodles being tested at the Wheat Marketing Center in Portland. —Contributed photos

such things as wheat quality, gluten strength and falling numbers testing, and hands-on activities with lab staff and visiting scientists and scholars.

The participants snacked and tasted their

way through a variety of activities researching recipes for products that use soft white wheat (SWW) including flat breads, crackers, snack wraps, noodles

—See MARKETING WORKSHOP/PAGE THREE

Citizens make Salem trip to become more involved in state government

Group makes 2-day bus excursion emphasizing rural issues

By David Sykes

A recent bus trip by local citizens to Salem during the legislative session was set up to discuss important rural issues with politicians, and also become more involved in state-wide issues. The trip was sponsored by the Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots.

About eight people left Heppner at 7 a.m. on Feb. 21. The bus stopped in Madison Farms and picked up Kent Madison and also stopped at the Space Age near Hermiston and picked up several others from Pendleton, Irrigon and Hermiston. Later, Andrew O'Connell of 2Morrow Energy boarded the bus in Hood River and rode with the group to Portland, which gave them time to discuss wind economics and other issues. O'Connell's com-



Citizens from Heppner and several other counties took a bus trip to Salem, and one part of the trip was a tour of the Capitol building. Here a tour guide shows them the State Seal. —Contributed photo

pany is developing wind farms in the South Morrow County area.

Increasing the amount of water that Oregon farmers receive from the Columbia River was one of the objectives of the group, which was told by local farmer Kent Madison that currently Oregon only receives one third of one

percent of the Columbia River water, while Idaho receives seven percent and Washington four percent. To illustrate the point, Madison gave the group a sandwich bag containing 300 Cheerios.

"This bag of Cheerios represents the average —See CAPITOL TRIP/PAGE FIVE

School district supt. proposes moving office; plans staff cuts

By April Sykes

Morrow County School Superintendent Dirk Dirksen, at a special meeting at the district office in Lexington Monday night, broached the idea of moving the district office in as a cost-saving measure in preparation for state cuts in school funding.

Dirksen said he estimated the district could save in the neighborhood of \$10,000 year if the district office was moved to Heppner Elementary School.

"The district office is always a target," said board member Bill Kuhn. "We don't have anyone we don't need (at the district office)."

Barney Lindsay commented that MCSD has always tried to maintain a presence in each community in the county, which would not be so if the offices were relocated.

"If the roof collapses, it would be a good time

to move, but I don't recommend it," said Lindsay.

Dirksen also expressed concern that the district's computer network servers, which are located in the district office, are at risk, especially since a water pipe runs directly over the servers. He said it would be very expensive to replace the servers if a water pipe burst and they were destroyed.

—See SCHOOL DISTRICT/PAGE FOUR



Daylight Savings begins Sunday

Daylight Savings Time will begin Sunday, March 11. Remember to spring forward and turn your clocks forward one hour.

Hurry! FINAL DAYS

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