

## MERKLEY TOWN HALL

*-Continued from PAGE ONE*  
and when the government spent the \$800 billion "... it was just a drop in the bucket."

There were also several issues brought up by members of the audience of which Merkley was unaware. On the national level, he was asked his opinion on why the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals was taking a \$1 million vacation in Hawaii using taxpayer money. Although the trip and cost have been widely reported in the media, Merkley said he was not aware of it.

A woman in the crowd, who lives at Blakes Ranch, asked Merkley why a \$7 billion company such as Chicago-based Invenery needs tax breaks from the government to build the large 310-tower Willow Creek wind farm east of Heppner in the Freeze Out Ridge area. Merkley said he was unaware of the project, but did say that all forms of energy are subsidized, and that any energy we produce here in the US will offset imported energy.

On other energy matters, Merkley, whose campaigns are heavily supported by contributions from environmental groups, said he had not yet made up his mind on the Ambre Energy plan to ship large amounts of coal from Wyoming

through the Port of Morrow for export down the river and on to the Far East. The project will provide employment and money to the local school district, as well as county taxes.

"I am trying to get feedback," Merkley said of the proposed coal-shipping plan.

When asked if he knew of the large amount of public support that has been garnered around the area in favor of the coal-shipping project, Merkley said he was unaware of the support, even though almost all regional city councils, county governments and other groups, as well as many individuals, have made their support for the project publicly known.

About the sharp rise in gas prices, Merkley said it was not supply and demand that had caused prices to increase dramatically but, rather, speculators who don't take end-use of the oil, who are the ones to blame. He said jitters about the oil supply in the Middle East cause speculators to bid up the price of oil and that America must break its addiction to foreign oil. He said he favors new laws restricting the activity of speculators.

One member of the crowd had especially strong words for Merkley and his

fellow senators.

"Your approval rating in the senate from the American people is 9.3 percent," said Sam Hornbeck of Heppner. "If you were working for a business, you would be fired."

"You people have lost control of the government," Hornbeck added, pointing out, as an example, the scandals with the Government Services Agency, which spent \$800,000 on a lavish Las Vegas conference. "What is going on with this government?"

Hornbeck said the federal government should give education back to the states and do away with the federal Fish and Wildlife Department, which is dumping wolves onto the population and damaging their animal herds. Merkley did not respond to any of the comments, and only said some of his fellow senators had quit holding town halls because of the strong feedback from constituents. Merkley said, however, that he has not stopped holding town hall meetings.

Merkley received praise from one audience member for voting against the National Defense Authorization Act, which was passed by the Senate 92-7, and signed into law by President Obama.

Jack Melligan of Heppner praised Merkley for voting against the bill, which he and Merkley agreed was a tremendous loss of liberty, allowing the government to arrest and hold Americans without the due process of law.

"If the president or his agents say that you are a terrorist, then the government can strip you of your due process rights. It is an outrageous assault on our rights," Merkley said when explaining the approved legislation. He cited the example of a man in Portland, an American citizen, who was falsely accused of being a terrorist. The FBI took away his due process rights. The man was later exonerated.

The first questioning at the town hall was kicked off by a question from a student. Shadow Kendrick, whose brother had earlier died of an unexpected heart attack, asked Merkley "how can we have more reliable, affordable health care?"

Merkley, who had been a strong supporter of ObamaCare, did not mention the health-care bill in his answer, but did say more preventive measures was the key to better health care. He said community health-care clinics would make health care more affordable.

## Local students receive FCS scholarships

### Northwest FCS awards \$80,500 in scholarships

Three local students were among those selected for Northwest Farm Credit Services 2012 scholarships, the organization announced last week.

Mary Reitmann was a high school scholarship recipient, Brett Harrison was a college scholarship recipient and Natalie Rauch of Lexington was a regional winner.



Mary Reitmann

Forty-five \$1,500 scholarships were given to sons and daughters of Northwest FCS customers in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Alaska; eight high school students and three college students from each state were awarded the \$1,500 scholarships. Regional winners were awarded \$250.

Mary Reitmann is the daughter of Joe and Donna Rietmann of Ione. She was the volleyball and basketball captain, president of the National Honor So-

ciety, lone student body and Spanish Club, and an elementary school teaching assistant. She plans on attending Oregon State University to study human development and early childhood education. She hopes to be an elementary school teacher.

Brett Harrison is from Lexington and is the son of Travis and Kristen Harrison. He attends Oregon State University where he studies agricultural business management and hopes to pursue a career in Ag finance. He grew up on his family's fourth-generation wheat and alfalfa farm. Harrison has been involved in many leadership roles in his FFA and 4-H clubs and high school ASB. Harrison was also chosen for the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Youth of the Year Award.



Brett Harrison

## Flower or noxious weed?

A landscape plant, Euphorbia myrsinites L., commonly known as creeping spurge, donkey tail or myrtle spurge, is a concern in our area, according to the Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Morrow County Weed Advisory Board.

The plant's native territory spreads from the Mediterranean region to Iran. It is a perennial succulent growing up to 15 inches tall with a 12-inch spread; it propagates by seed or division of the plant. The plant has sulfur-yellow flowers in the spring and is used as ground cover.

One concern with the plant is that it is slightly toxic. The sap can be very irritating, producing blisters on the skin. A local resident

had a potentially serious allergic reaction over Memorial Day weekend when pulling the plant from the landscape. That's why the SWCD recommends wearing gloves when working around the plant. Heppner has several locations in which the plant is growing unchecked.

Another concern is that, in some areas of the country, it has escaped from cultivation and is considered a noxious weed. It is becoming a problem in Grant County and, reportedly, its sale is forbidden in Colorado.

The Weed Advisory Board encourages gardeners to research plants before purchasing and adding them to their landscapes.

## Local groups receive Wildhorse grants

The Ione Topic Club and Morrow County Health Department were among 42 recipients of Wildhorse Foundation grants given out on May 9 for the first quarter of 2012.

The Ione Topic Club received \$5,000 to purchase three computers along with supporting accessories—printer, bar code scanner and dual-performance router and necessary furniture to display and use new equipment—for the Ione Public Library.

The Morrow County Health Department received \$10,000 toward the remodel of its Boardman office.

A total of \$221,335 was awarded to the 42 organizations for the first quarter, bringing the total since the

foundation began in 2001 to well over \$5.9 million.

The Wildhorse Foundation, a community benefit fund established by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) as a result of its gaming operation, hosted their annual recipients! Wednesday, May 9, in Cayuse Hall at Wildhorse Resort and Casino.

Quarterly deadlines for requests are April 1, July 1, October 1 and January 1. For more information on Wildhorse Foundation guidelines or to receive an application, call foundation administrator Tiah DeGroffit at 541-966-1628 or visit [www.wildhorseresort.com](http://www.wildhorseresort.com).

## Bunco for Relay for Life

A Bunco fundraiser to benefit Relay for Life will be held Thursday, June 14, at 6 p.m. at the Ione Legion Hall. Entry fee is \$10 per person; participants are also asked to bring a \$5 gift for raffle that night.

For more information, contact Becky Sparks at 541-676-5131, Sharon Rietmann at 541-422-7437 or Taranna Patton at 541-422-7317.

**If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, help is available and that help is FREE of charge.**

If YOU have a family member who suffers from gambling addiction, YOU can also receive FREE treatment even if the gambler is not receiving treatment.

If you are a resident of Morrow County and you wish to take advantage of the services above or desire more information, Please call any of the following numbers to set up a LOCAL appointment or just to talk:

Bobby Harris @ 541-676-9925 or 541-258-0175  
Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) @ 541-676-9161  
OR 1-877-695-4648 (1-888-MYLIMIT)

## Crum prison assailant indicted

The inmate who assaulted local man Steven Crum in prison has been accused of attempted murder in connection with the incident.

The alleged assault occurred while the two men were lodged at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility. Oregon State Police detectives investigated James

Robert Wiley, 50, after the Dec. 28, 2011 assault, according to Lt. Gregg Hastings of the OSP.

The investigation led to Wiley's indictment by a grand jury on charges of attempted murder, first-degree assault and unlawful use of a weapon, according to the Washington County DA's office.

## Community lunch menu

Christian Life Center members will serve lunch on Wed., June 13, at St. Patrick's Senior Center.

The meal will include tuna salad sandwiches, gar-

den tomato soup, broccoli salad and strawberry pudding. Menu is subject to change.

## Rankin graduates from Harvard

Jennifer Rankin of Heppner participated in commencement exercises at Harvard University on May 17, 2012. Rankin is the daughter of Tim and Kathy Rankin of Heppner. She graduated from Harvard with a master's degree in political science.

## Get ready to celebrate Heppner

Celebrate Heppner is this Friday, June 8. This year's event will include the annual local merchant sidewalk sales, as well as special sales and events going on inside some businesses.

Some special features include children's games; small dog races; free cup of Starbuck's Coffee at Heppner Family Foods; shaved ice at Murray Drugs; "Red and Blue River Beverage" sponsored by The Stable of Youth (in front of Hair I Am); basketball competitions on Willow Street between Murray's and Artisan Village, sponsored by the Willow Creek Baptist Church youth group; mini carnival and face painting for kids and a prize wheel

for adults at Community Bank. Quality Concessions also will be open on Friday morning after 9 a.m.

Event-goers will also have a new opportunity this year to check out all of the vendors who will be set up throughout the downtown during this year's community flea market/crafts fair and fundraisers. Flea market/craft fair participants will be setting up in front of available businesses on Main Street.

The Bank of Eastern Oregon will once again be sponsoring a community hamburger/hot dog barbecue meal from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the AmeriTitle parking lot.

See the full schedule on PAGE ONE.

## Heppner pool opens Saturday

Willow Creek Water Park in Heppner will open for the season this Saturday, June 9, from 1 p.m. until midnight. After that, hours of operation will be Sunday, 1-5 p.m. and Monday through Saturday, 1-8 p.m. Call 541-676-5752 for more information, including costs and swimming lesson schedules.

The opening date and hours of operation for the Ione pool have not been finalized; check future editions for more information.

Are you hungry? Morrow / Grant OHV park would like to welcome Harsh and Patty to The Landing. They will cook a variety of meals. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Closed on Tuesday. Please take a little time in the Blue Mountains in The Landing and welcome the Harshes. 35 miles south of Heppner on Highway 207. Coming from Spray, North on 207.



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