

Courthouse plans for facelift

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The Morrow County Courthouse in Heppner is in the planning and bidding stages for a "facelift."

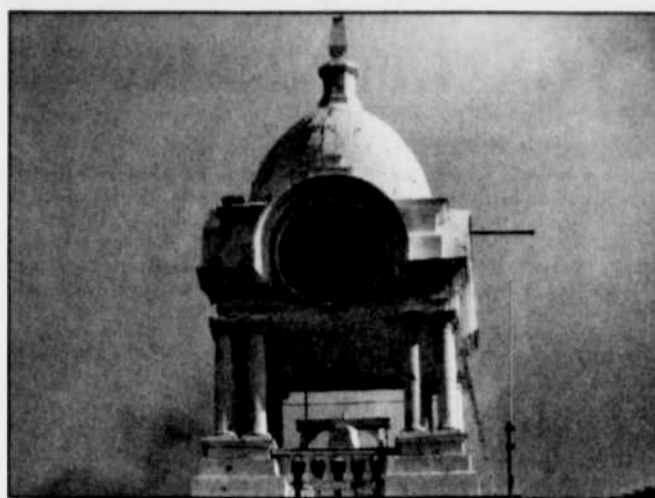
After careful evaluation by engineers, it was determined that the courthouse's bell tower has deteriorated and needs to be repaired in the near future. After a

recent wind storm, one of the neighbors commented that they could see the bell tower visibly sway in the wind.

The original estimate to hire a crane and remove the bell tower, repair it, and then replace the tower was more than \$500,000, and would have required closing the courthouse for extended periods of time.

Alternative processes were considered, and the Morrow County Court agreed to put out bids for an aerial lift. The dome, which is estimated to weigh more than 7,000 pounds, will be lifted by helicopter and placed on a trailer, and then taken off-site for renovations. The courthouse bell, which weighs more than 3,000 pounds, will be removed in a second lift and taken off-site for renovations, as well. This process will not require extensive closures of the courthouse. After renovations are complete, the bell and tower will be returned through a similar lift process.

Bids for the lift will be opened by the Morrow County Court on Feb. 27 at



The dome and bell of the historic Morrow County Courthouse are a familiar sight, visible, and certainly audible, throughout much of Heppner. Their age is showing, though, and the dome and bell are being prepped for major surgery, as bids will be accepted this month for a "lift" to repair and renovate the structure. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

the courthouse in Heppner at 10 a.m. After the bid has been awarded and the contractor has developed a plan of action, more details will be provided. It is anticipated the bids will be approximately \$300,000. The Morrow County Court is considering an operating loan to finance the renovations.

The Morrow County Courthouse was completed in 1903 for a total cost of

\$56,990.10. The current insurance replacement value of the building is more than \$4 million. Upon opening of the courthouse, it was declared as "...all modern and first class and large enough to accommodate all future demands."

The Courthouse is on the National Historic Registry. All renovation is being completed in coordination with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

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Chamber updated on progress of Boardman bio-fuel company

By David Sykes

The ZeaChem ethanol bio-refinery in Boardman is now up and running and producing small quantities of acetic acid and ethyl acetate for production of paints, lacquers and jet fuel. Administration Manager Dean Kegler told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week. The plant is a small test version of a larger production facility scheduled to be built later at the Port of Morrow.

Kegler said the refinery is currently getting its raw material from the poplar tree farms near Boardman, where they harvest the trees after five years. The refinery can also use wheat straw to produce up to 50 million gallons per year once the main production facility

is in operation. Because of the poplar and wheat farms in the area, Kegler said the company will be able to find all the raw material it needs within a 25 to 50 miles radius of the facility. He said each bone-dry ton, or BDT, of material will produce 135 gallons of ethanol.

The test facility uses about 10 BDT and the commercial facility, when operational, will use about 650 BDT per day.

Kegler said the market for ethanol is good, with billions of dollars in market share to be taken away from fossil fuel, a move he said will eventually reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

When asked about the economic viability of the company without the millions in government loans



Dean Kegler briefs last week's Heppner Chamber of Commerce on the progress of the ZeaChem plant at the Port of Morrow in Boardman. -Photo by David Sykes

and subsidies it has received, including a \$250 million loan guarantee from the Department of Agriculture, Kegler said the company can make it in the open market, especially with jet fuel.

"The Department of Defense would like very much to say their jets run on wood," he pointed out. He said jet fuel costs about six

to eight dollars per gallon and that ZeaChem is more efficient than that.

On the job front, Kegler said the company currently has 40 full-time jobs and is actually still looking for a mechanical engineer at the plant, as well as five other people. They will be hiring 65 additional people when the new plant is built and goes into production.

Eastern Oregon med student right at home at PMC

By Andrea Di Salvo

For many Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) medical students who pass through Heppner for their dose of training in rural medicine, this small-town setting can seem like a different planet. For Teresa Worstell, Pioneer Memorial Clinic's current student, it's more like a piece of home.

Worstell was born in Enterprise, OR but raised in Hermiston. That makes this corner of the state familiar stomping grounds for the 29-year-old med student.

After graduating from Hermiston High School in 2000, she went on to obtain a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Oregon in 2004. After graduation, she moved to Portland, where she went to work for OHSU as a research assistant, doing lab and clinical research from 2004 to 2010.

Worstell says she always knew she wanted to end up in medicine.

"I always really liked science," she says. "I really like people, interacting with people. I thought it would be a good combination of my two interests."

She started medical

school at the university in the fall of 2010 and is now in her third year.

Every third-year student is required by OHSU to do a five-week rural health rotation, observing first-hand the differences and challenges faced by rural health practitioners versus those in larger cities. Despite the fact that Worstell's parents moved away from Hermiston just last fall, the pull of friends and childhood memories made Heppner an appealing option when it came to choosing a location.

"I put Heppner first on my list because I wanted to come back here," she says.

While here, Worstell focused on women's health screening guidelines and recommendations. Aside from shadowing the doctors at the clinic, she spent time creating a handout with patient information, including care timelines and information on tests such as pap smears and mammograms. She has also been working on a handout for health care providers, making sense of the variety of guidelines and recommendations made by various national organizations involved in women's healthcare.



OHSU med student Teresa Worstell explains the details of one of the handouts she created while on her rural-health rotation at Pioneer Memorial Clinic. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

"Which bodies nationally make which recommendations and where they match, and where they might be different," she explains.

Worstell also says she had a good time getting out of the clinic and into the community. She mentions one such outing with Dr. Betsy Anderson, in which she and Anderson visited the elementary school to speak with fifth-graders on the subject of smoking.

"It's fun to see community involvement in different ways like that," she says.

Now in her fifth and

'American Sniper' killed in shooting

"I'm happy that everybody's OK. I like a happy ending," said Heppner native Scott McEwen of "American Sniper" Chris Kyle in a recent interview.

Those words have become tragically ironic as news of Navy SEAL Chris Kyle's murder has spread across the nation.

Kyle, 38, and his friend Chad Littlefield, 35, were shot multiple times at a gun range at Rough Creek Lodge west of Glen Rose, about 50 miles southwest of Fort Worth, TX, Erath County Sheriff Tommy Bryant said Sunday afternoon. Both men left behind young families.

Police arrested Eddie Ray Routh, a 25-year-old Marine who had served tours in Iraq and Haiti, for the shooting. Friends said Kyle sometimes mentored other veterans, taking them to the gun range as a kind of therapy. Officials said Routh's motive was unknown, but Routh is believed to suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which may have been why Kyle and Little-

field had taken him to the range.

At a news conference Sunday, authorities said the three men entered Rough Creek Lodge, a remote gun range about 77 miles southwest of Fort Worth between Glen Rose and Hico, at 3:15 p.m. Saturday. No one heard any disturbance but, at 5 p.m., a hunting guide discovered two men near the range who appeared to have been shot. The guide called 911.

Police later captured and arrested Routh, who was charged with one count of capital murder and two charges of murder. A semi-automatic handgun found at Routh's home in Lancaster, TX might have been the weapon used Saturday to kill the two men, Bryant said, though ballistic tests were not complete at last notice.

The U.S. military confirmed Sunday that Routh was a corporal in the Marines, serving on active duty from 2006 to 2010. His current duty status is listed as reserve.

Construction begins on Tillamook plant expansion in Boardman

After several months of planning, the Tillamook County Creamery Association (TCCA), producers of Tillamook Cheese, have broken ground and begun construction on a more than 63,000-square-foot expansion project at its production facility in Boardman, the company announced last week.

The facility expansion will add whey processing capabilities to Tillamook's existing cheese-making plant in Boardman. The demand for such capability has grown significantly in the last several years, as the lactose and high-quality protein components derived

from whey (which is separated from milk in order to make cheese) are increasingly being recognized for their high nutritional value and used in products like infant formula, performance nutrition products and products that help manage some of the impacts of aging.

"Our farm-family owners have committed a significant investment to enhancing our infrastructure in Boardman so that we can maximize the value we derive from every pound of milk we produce," said Patrick Criteser, president and CEO of TCCA. "We look

-See TILLAMOOK PLANT EXPANSION/PAGE FIVE

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