

HEPPNER

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Work starting on Barratt Blvd project

By David Sykes

A Washington construction company has started work on the \$1.4 million Barratt Blvd project in Heppner, the city council was told last week.

To avoid the extra crowds and traffic, Tapani Inc. of Battleground, waited until after St. Patrick's Day to start the work, but is now preparing to start tearing out old road and replacing with new street, sidewalk, curbs, and in one place a stairway from Barratt past the Nazarene Church on Gilmore, up to the hospital.

The project is expected to be completed by July 4, a spokesman for the company told the *Gazette*. There will be 12 people working on the project and equipment will include dozers, excavators and wheel loaders, he added.



In other construction news Heppner City Manager Kim Cutsforth told the council the Sperry Street relocation project has been pushed back from May to August when it will be put out to bid. "The project will be starting this fall as opposed to this summer," Cutsforth told the council at its monthly meeting last week.

The Sperry Street project will see the street relocated after the bridge over Willow Creek was closed and it was determined to be more feasible to reroute

the street than put in a new bridge.

Cutsforth also told the council that the sidewalks on Riverside were almost complete and the curbs were scheduled to be done last week, and that the city received the go-ahead from ODOT (Oregon Dept. of Transportation) to proceed with the easement and put in the Lover's Lane Bridge.

She also announced that John Anderson and Patti Allstott had agreed to serve on the city planning commission. "They will both be a great addition," she said. The council voted unanimously to appoint the two. In addition Cutsforth pointed out successful property cleanups around town and thanked the Morrow County Sheriff's Department for its cooperation in working with landowners to clean up their properties.

In other council business Judy Buschke of the Heppner Housing Authority, which runs the St. Patrick's Senior Center and apartments, said they currently have two vacancies.

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Over 13,000 CRP acres in Morrow County set to retire in September

Oregon Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director Lynn Voigt announced recently that the Oregon FSA will conduct a four-week Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general sign-up beginning May 20 and ending on June 14.

"It continues to be our goal to ensure that we use CRP to address our most

critical resource issues," said Voigt. "In 2012, many states experienced the worst drought in 60 years. CRP protected environmentally-sensitive lands from washing or blowing away. It gave ranchers extra grazing land when they needed it. I expect there will be strong competition to enroll or re-enroll acres into CRP, so I urge Oregon's producers

to maximize their environmental benefits and make sure their offers are cost-effective."

In addition to erosion control, CRP provides significant water-quality benefits including reduced nutrients and sediment loadings and adverse consequences associated with floods as well as expanded and enhanced wildlife habitat.

Currently, about 543,542 acres are enrolled in CRP in Oregon. In Morrow County, there are 114,672 acres enrolled in CRP and 13,211 are set to expire in September. Statewide, contracts on 56,219 acres are set to expire.

CRP is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them safeguard environmentally-sensitive land. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and enhance wildlife habitat.



Dick Paris, Heppner, caught this 24 1/2 inch long steelhead on the Wallowa River last week. He was fishing with his grandson, Terry Reynolds, who resides in Milton-Freewater. -Contributed photo

Great Green Parade winner



Brianna Peterson, Heppner, passes out treats during the Great Green Parade on Saturday. Peterson, an employee of the Bank of Eastern Oregon, said this is the first year she worked on the bank's float. The bank took first place in the float division. - Photo by April Sykes

Fantastic sheep, local support key to bringing dog trial enthusiasts to Heppner each year

By Patty Nance

Cold, biting winds and ornery sheep coupled with intense, determined dogs and strident commands like "walk up" and "away to the right" were the norm last weekend when championship dogs took on the sheep from Cecil.

All part of the action at the United States Border Collie Handlers Assn. (USBCA) Sheep Dog Trials held just north of Heppner last weekend.

Handlers and owners from throughout the Northwest and beyond brought their border collies in hopes of adding to point totals that could earn them a berth at the national championships in Virginia later this year.

Why Heppner? For owner, handler, trainer Diane Deal of Greenleaf, ID., the answer is simple: It's all about the sheep.

"It's the Krebs' sheep," she said. "These are yearling range ewes and they have never been run in a group of less than 1,000. They take these sheep and break them into groups of five. They are just wonderful sheep." Deal said she has been coming to the Heppner trials for 10 or 12 years.

She said they have the

opportunity to compete at Sonoma, CA. but choose to come to Heppner.

Although there were dogs of all ages at the trials, Deal said it takes dogs five or six years to become a top herder. They reach their prime, she explained, between ages five and nine.

Along with the competitions, Deal also trains border collies and a few kelpies. "Border collies can go the distance. They move stock with their eyes. They are such control freaks - kind of like us," she said.

Karen Mohney, event organizer, said the event registration is filled quickly for the Heppner event. "We had 82 signed up for each day," she said. "But we were only able to run 50 dogs." Mohney said a lottery is held by registration date.

A new field was used for this year's competition. The course was 320 yards

from the top of the hill to the gates. "It was fantastic," she said.

Mohney credits Brian Thompson for making the event so special. "He donates the land, the hay and the setup for the sheep and the All-Around High Point Award," she said. "That and the Krebs sheep were just fantastic."

Local 4-H group, the Barnyarders, helped at the pen, separating the ewes into lots of five. Mohney said the group helps each year to help raise funds for their club. "You just have the greatest support there in Heppner," she said.

This year's overall winner was Scott Glen and his dog "Don" from New Dayton, Alberta, Canada. Glen also won top points on Sunday.

Saturday's top point earner was Lora Withmell and her dog "Bella" from Salem.



Border collies herding sheep on Sunday. -Photo by Patty Nance

Churches will provide food baskets

Seven area churches have joined efforts to provide a gift of food to local families who could use a little help during the long month of March, especially those with children to feed over Spring Break.

Anyone in need is welcome, no questions asked. Food boxes will again be distributed outside All Saints Episcopal Church (corner of Church & Gale in Heppner) this Sunday,

March 24, from 2-4 pm (or as long as supplies last). Delivery is available for those unable to pick up a box. For delivery, call the Shared Ministry office at 541-676-9970 and leave a detailed message.

No charges filed in alleged diaper incident

No charges will be filed following an alleged incident, concerning the use of diapers in a classroom at Sam Boardman Elementary School in Boardman.

According to a press release from the Morrow County School Dist., there have recently been some

allegations against a district employee regarding conduct towards students in the classroom. The employee in question was placed on leave when the allegations surfaced, and an investigation was completed by law enforcement and district officials. In late February,

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson determined that criminal charges would not be pursued. According to the press release, the district addressed the issue with the employee and the teacher returned to work on March 18.

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