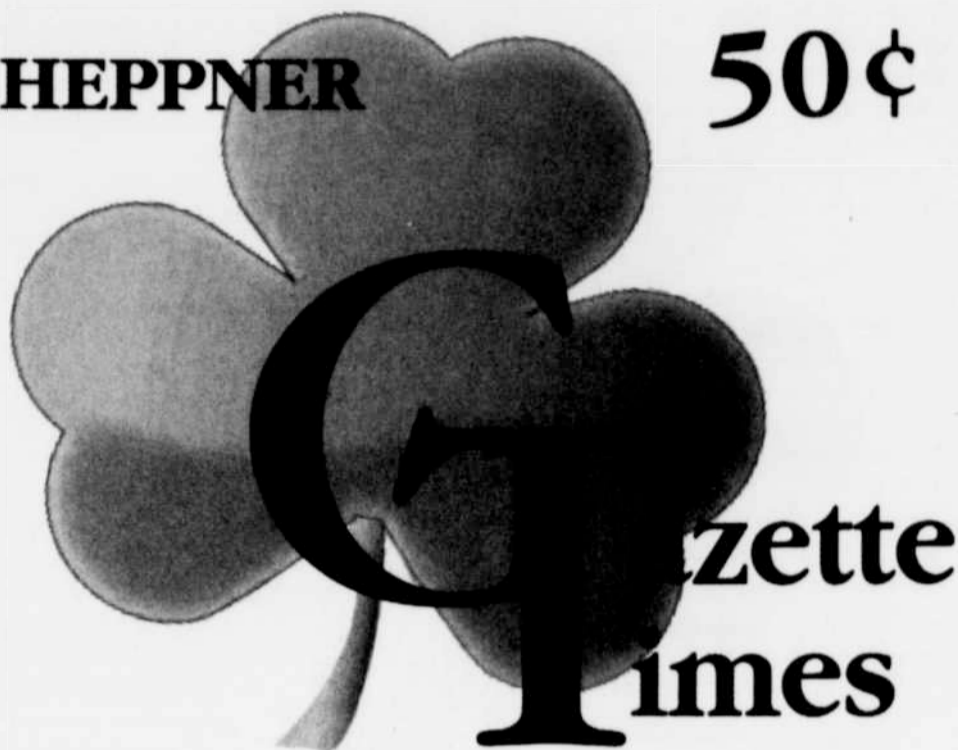


HEPPNER

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VOL. 132 N.O. 16 8 Pages Wednesday, April 17, 2013 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Area farmer, rancher say they will get by Lack of rainfall begins to impact local growers

By Patty Nance

A lack of winter snow and a serious shortage of rainfall could spell disaster for area farmers and ranchers this year.

Bill Jepsen, a wheat farmer who lives 18 miles west of Heppner, says he is already seeing the affects of low moisture on his crops. "Our crops are really starting to suffer," he said. "Where the soil is shallow the leaves are starting to turn brown".

Jepsen, who has tracked the weather every day for many years, said he looks at the crop year which is Sept. 1 through Aug. 31 instead of the calendar year.

If you look from the beginning of the drop year through April 15, Jepsen recorded six inches of rain in

seven and one-half months. "The average is 8.62 inches through the middle of this month," he said. "That makes it 2.62 inches below normal for the crop year."

In a summary of water conditions in the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Willow Basins, the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) data supports Jepsen's findings.

As of April 1, the basin snowpack was 75 percent of normal which is significantly lower than last month when snowpack was 98 percent of normal. According to the report, March precipitation was 62 percent of normal.

Jepsen said the pasture grasses are beginning to struggle. "The native grasses are much shorter," he said. "It is heading out

earlier than usual."

Life-long rancher Joe McElligott, Ione, said the south slopes of his grazing ground are really dry. "They're burned up," he said, "but the north slopes have moisture."

Both men have seen bad years before. "2002 and 1999 were horrible years," Jepsen said.

He explained that in 1999 there was a total of 7.3 inches of rainfall for the crop year and in 2002 just over 9 inches.

Both men have seen the best and the worst of what Oregon weather has to offer. "We should have more moisture," McElligott said. "But we will get by - we always do."

"We are spoiled," Jepsen said. "We haven't cut a bad crop in years."

## Former Ione student awarded the Barry Goldwater Scholarship

A former Ione High School student has received one of the nation's most prestigious honors.

Alex Carlson, a student at Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, was one of 217 scholars awarded the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education scholarship.

Carlson's high school physics, chemistry and advanced math teacher Dale Holland said Carlson was a very good student. "He was a really good student," he said. "We are so proud of him. This is one of the top awards in the nation."

Carlson is a junior undergraduate Biology-Chemistry major and is an undergraduate researcher in the Chemistry department.

"Our current project is developing a small molecule inhibitor of the Anthrax Lethal Factor protein," he said.

In addition to science, Carlson plays in the university's orchestra as principal second violin.



Alex Carlson

He will graduate from Point Loma next spring and plans to attend graduate school to earn a PhD in Medicinal Chemistry.

The Goldwater Scholars were selected on the basis of academic merit from a field of 1,107 mathematics, science, and engineering students who were nominated by the faculties of colleges and universities nationwide. One hundred seventy-six of the Scholars are men, 95 are women, and virtually all intend to obtain a Ph.D. as their degree objective. Twenty-seven

Scholars are mathematics majors, 159 are science and related majors, 71 are majoring in engineering, and 14 are computer science majors. Many of the Scholars have dual majors in a variety of mathematics, science, engineering, and computer disciplines.

The one and two year scholarships will cover the cost of tuition, fees, books, and room and board up to a maximum of \$7,500 per year.

Recent Goldwater Scholars have been awarded 80 Rhodes Scholarships, 118 Marshall Awards, 110 Churchill Scholarships and numerous other distinguished fellowships.

The Scholarship Program honoring Senator Barry Goldwater was designed to foster and encourage outstanding students to pursue careers in the fields of mathematics, the natural sciences, and engineering. The Goldwater Scholarship is the premier undergraduate award of its type in these fields.



## FFA Lamb Open House held here

Heppner FFA held an open house Monday evening that featured baby lambs. The event was held at the FFA barn at Heppner High School. Above, Ashley Hansen (R), teaches Harley Anderson about lambs. Below, Jimmy Adams gets a good look at a sheep.

Photo by: Megan Futter



## Rules for enterprise zone are developing Boardman, Port and county to vote on how money to be spent

By David Sykes

A set of rules governing how the Columbia River Enterprise Zone board or directors will collect and distribute money collected from businesses in lieu of property taxes locating in Morrow County's enterprise zone, has been formulated and sent to the city council of Boardman, Port of Morrow and the County Court for approval.

If approved the rules will spell out how potentially millions of dollars collected from companies locating here will be distributed within Morrow County in the future. The Enterprise Zone Committee met at the Port of Morrow April 8 to finalize its rules. Boardman, Port of Morrow and the county each appoint two people to the committee, which will make the disbursement decisions. Boardman and the Port along with the county are located within the zone located in the North end of the county. Irrigon, Ione and Heppner are not located in the enterprise zone and therefore do not have representation on the board.

So far the enterprise board has already made an agreement with Rackspace for payments in lieu of property taxes, and will be receiving those funds shortly. The Zone is currently waiting to sign another agreement with Columbia River technologies which will also bring additional funds into its coffers.

Last July Rackspace, a computer hosting company, signed an agreement with the Enterprise Board spelling out how much money the company will

pay in fees instead of property taxes over the next 15 years. Because the company's new data center will be located at the Port of Morrow in an enterprise zone, it is exempt from regular county taxation.

The agreement covers how much the \$6 billion San Antonio, TX-based data hosting company agrees to pay each year "as a contribution to local services or infrastructure benefiting the Facility" instead of property taxes.

In the agreement, Rackspace, which trades on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol RAX, agreed to pay the enterprise zone board \$100,000 per year for the first three years of the agreement; from years four to 15 it will pay \$200,000 per year in what is described as a "local service fee."

Under the new rules of the Enterprise Board the funds will be held and distributed by a designated "fiscal agent" to be named by the board, and answering to the board. Disbursement of those funds will be governed by the six-person board, made up of two representatives from the Port, the county and the city of Boardman. Those representatives will be appointed by their respective bodies.

Under the proposed rules, when giving out the money the board will entertain "recommendations and requests from affected special districts of potential impacts involving the service provided by said districts, including but not limited to fire protection and public safety."

Money collected by the board will be distrib-

uted at least biannually, can change from year to year, and will be carried out by the fiscal agent as instructed by the board. If an agreement cannot be reached as to how funds should be distributed the funds will be divided up and given to each of the sponsor entities (City of Boardman, Port of Morrow and Morrow County) equally.

Current members on the committee are Mayor Sandy Toms and City Manager Karen Pettigrew from the City of Boardman, General Manager Gary Neal and board member Don Russell from the Port of Morrow, and Commissioner Leann Rea and Assessor Greg Sweek of Morrow County. Non-voting Chairman of the Enterprise Zone Committee is Carla McLane of the Morrow County Planning Department.

The board was set up in March of 2009, and governs the approximately 12-square-mile enterprise zone in the north end of Morrow County, which includes mostly the Port of Morrow and the city of Boardman.

As part of last year's Rackspace agreement, 15 percent of the money Rackspace pays in lieu of taxes will go to the recently-formed Morrow Education Foundation. The Foundation is not part of any school district, and was set up to be similar to the Ione Education Foundation, which receives money outside the regular taxing system but helps fund education through a series of grants to the local schools.

Future enterprise zone agreements are expected to carry similar contributions to the education foundation.

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