

Housing Rehabilitation Program helps Heppner couple

More funds available for county homeowners

By Andrea Di Salvo

Area homeowners who need help making repairs and upgrades to their houses may get a helping hand thanks to a special grant.

Morrow County has been awarded a \$400,000 Community Development Block Grant from Oregon Business Development Department for housing rehabilitation projects throughout the county. The program is providing no-interest, deferred-payment loans to qualified low- and moderate-income households for housing rehabilitation activities.

These activities include work to correct health, safety and structural deficiencies; conserve energy; and install accessibility upgrades such as ramps and railing.

"Morrow County is pleased to be able to provide this opportunity to our residents," says Morrow County Commissioner LeAnn Rea. "We brought this program to the county in 2004 and have seen housing stock improve in our communities."

One Heppner couple, Don and Jo Ann Shannon, knows firsthand the changes that can be made with one of the loans. The Shannons bought their house on the corner of Water and Jones when they moved to Heppner in August of 2006, when Don "retired" from the ministry as a Southern Baptist preacher.

The house was built 1898; 77-year-old Don Shannon says it still contains a washbasin from 1916 and a bath with claw legs from 1928.

"There's still some old stuff hanging 'round besides me," he jokes.

When the Kinzua mill in Heppner was in operation, the building served as a rental, with three apartments in the house and a fourth in a cottage to the side. The building can't be registered as a historical

site because of later additions, Shannon said, but the couple is trying to keep everything as close to the original as possible.

That's something that David VanDerlip, executive director Oregon Rural Housing Services, appreciates. VanDerlip oversees the loan program locally, and says repair specifications for loan recipients in older houses need to be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office, a branch of Parks and Recreation.

"Those houses are works of art and they can't be replicated," VanDerlip says.

While the Shannons' home may be a work of art, age and wear had made it an uncomfortable place to live. At the same time, the Shannons had used their meager savings to pay off the house, which left them with only Social Security for income and little left over to make repairs. Don looked into a reverse mortgage, but found that the interest rate would have left them too far in debt, with little or no equity left in the house.

That's when they got a flyer in the mail, one of two mailings VanDerlip said went out informing local residents about the grant.

"I turned it back in that same day," says Shannon.

The Shannons ended up receiving a loan for \$26,000 worth of improvements and repairs. They don't have to pay interest on the loan, they said, and, though they are not allowed to use the loan on a rental property, they don't have to pay it off until they move or sell the house.

The list of repairs is lengthy. The Shannons first got a new roof. Broken pipes meant no water at the back of the house, and they were able to fix that damaged plumbing. They got a new hot water heater, rain



A new roof takes shape on the Shannons' home on the corner of Jones and Water in Heppner. The Shannons were able to replace their roof, among other things, with the loan money they received from the block grant. —Contributed photo

gutters and leaf guards, and money for paint, though they had to do the painting themselves.

Though that list is impressive, one of the things that made the greatest difference in their lives was the installation of a heat pump. The house previously had no central heating system; they blocked off the back of the house and lived in the front, using shop heaters to warm their living space. Even with limited use, the heaters were expensive.

"It has already cut down on electric," Shannon says.

"First winter we've been comfortable since we lived here," Jo Ann, 74, adds.

The couple says they are grateful for the hand up to make their situation more livable.

"Made it a lot easier if you need repairs done and don't have the money," says Shannon.

David VanDerlip, executive director Oregon Rural Housing Services, says he hasn't gotten as many applications as he hoped, though there have been some takers in the county. At last count, almost a quarter of the grant money, about \$75,000, was yet to be handed out, he said.

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC), a non-profit economic development organization serving seven counties in Eastern Oregon, has been assisting Morrow County with project requirements.

Karen Kendall, project

coordinator for GEODC, says, "We're pleased to work with Morrow County, Oregon Rural Housing Services, Inc. and Oregon Business Development Department to provide the housing rehabilitation program this year in Morrow County."

Kendall says that, in Morrow and Umatilla counties, they have provided rehabilitation services to more than 190 homes. In addition to county and city sponsors, other agencies who have participated in the program include Oregon Business Development Department, Community Action Program Eastern Counties of Oregon (CAPECO), USDA Rural Development and Oregon Housing & Community Services.

"These partnerships help leverage grant funds and assist residents with their housing needs," Kendall says. "It's exciting to see this opportunity once again available to residents in Morrow County."

The deadline to complete work on these projects is Dec. 31 of this year; however, it takes some time to get homeowners through the application process and set them up with a contractor, so interested parties should start the process as soon as possible.

Anyone interested in finding out more information on the program or obtaining an application, contact VanDerlip at 541-259-6840. VanDerlip is available to meet with homeowners and work through the application process.

Carlson to croon at Ione

Ione proudly presents Music in the Park, featuring Frank Carlson, on Wednesday, July 3, at 7 p.m., immediately following the talent show, which begins at 6 p.m.

"Frank croons like Sinatra and rocks like Elvis," says one fan. "His rendition of 'Pretty Woman' will have you out of your seats and dancing."

He sings the songs everyone knows the words to, and does requests if he has the music with him. To date, Carlson has released four

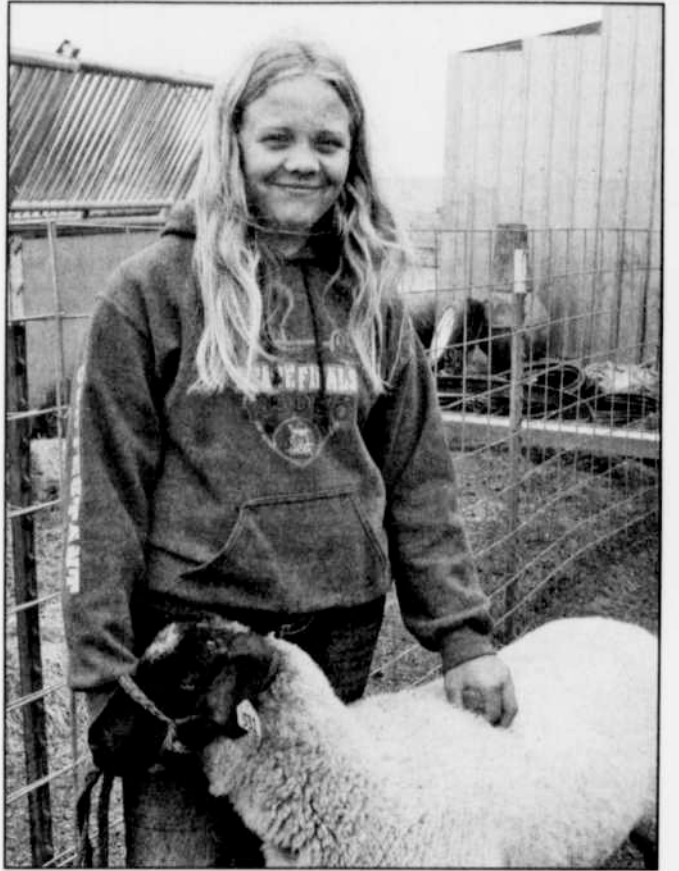
CDs, which those who enjoy his music can purchase for \$15 each.

Notably, Carlson was the first runner-up in the first-ever American Co-op Idol contest held in New Orleans, LA in 2008. His real job is an engineering aid at OTECC in Baker City, OR.

"Don't miss out on this free, super entertainment," says one event coordinator.

"Bring your lawn chairs and dancing shoes and come out for a good time."

Are ewe ready for fair?



Ione Community Livestock 4-H Member Ivy Sandford poses with her market lamb, Michael Jordan. Ivy is the daughter of Rick and Sylvia Sandford of Ione, and will show and sell her lamb at the 100th Morrow County Fair in August. —Photo by Erin Heideman

Farmer's market sees rainy start



Above: Vendors and shoppers alike braved the rain and cold on the first day of the 2013 Willow Creek Valley farmer's market at the city park. Below: Members of the Tyee Triumph Club stopped at the Heppner City Park on Friday, June 21, on their way to Baker City from Seattle. Twelve cars made the stop to peruse the local farmer's market. —Photos by April Sykes



Boardman to hold horseshoe tournament

The Boardman Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a horseshoe tournament during the Boardman Thunder Fourth of July Celebration at the Boardman Marina Park on Thursday, July 4 at 1 p.m.

The entry fee is \$5 per person, with the first- and second-place winners receiving ribbons and a 50 percent pay-back. The more

entries, the more money there will be to be won.

This event has been going on for many years, and chamber representatives say they are looking forward to a great turn-out again this year.

Registration will begin just prior to the tournament. For more information, call the Boardman chamber at 541-481-3014.

A View from the Hill

By Doris Bronnan

Yes, the view of Willow Creek Terrace has become more colorful because May showers did bring a variety of blossoms to the flowerbeds, with the promise of more to come. And the garden shows promise, too, to anyone who ventures out for a look between June showers. Truly an unusual spring and beginning of summer in Heppner, Oregon.

However, residents of the Terrace do not lack for activities while waiting for warmer, dryer weather. Thanks to their loyal volunteers, every day of the week offers an opportunity that brightens the day for participants: Bingo; piano music; a trip for socializing and dining at the senior meal site; reading and discussing the Gazette-Times; seasonal crafts; games; Saturday matinees; and library book exchange.

The daily exercise and discussion is both physically and mentally stimulating, too. When the group learned that June 3 is designated as "Cancer Survivor Day," they discovered through sharing that several residents are cancer survivors, some from more than one fight against the disease. The discussion on the anniversary of the first space

walk brought back memories of that history-making day, as well as a growing list of changes witnessed since then. That June 3 discussion also focused on the 80th anniversary of the drive-in movie, which brought more than a few giggles and red faces. (Readers may want to explain the drive-in movie to grandchildren.)

On Flag Day, a discussion of respect for the American Flag was followed with a discussion of family histories because June 14 is also designated "Family History Day." Liz Bueller found this topic of special interest, as she was involved with genealogy and a history publication for many years.

The 65th anniversary of The Ed Sullivan Show on June 20 reminded the group that they watched that long-running show on their first TV sets, leading, of course, to discussion of that changing industry.

The official "First Day of Summer" brought some laughs and complaints, since it was a rainy, cool day, but June 21 was also the "Ugliest Dog Day," so many residents remembered especially ugly dogs they had had and loved.

This week is on the calendar as "Celebration of the Senses" week, so resi-

dents will be considering their five (or six?) senses during discussions, and the adventurous ones will be blindfolded and asked to identify some items by using all but their sense of sight. And on "Handshake Day," June 27, the group will contemplate the meaning and importance of a handshake.

Through the month of June and coming in July, the mantra visitors might have heard and will continue to hear is the familiar "You scream, I scream, we all scream for ice cream!"

July will continue the pattern begun this month with "Chocolate Ice Cream Day," "Banana Split Festival," and "Ice Cream Soda Day."

These special days are opportunities to build your own concoctions and make ice cream using Gordon

Craber's wonderful recipe. Concern about calories is not an option.

Ice cream on the warm, dry days of summer will be refreshing, and so will be the Music-in-the-Parks concerts that residents will be traveling to in July and August. This year, Heppner is added to the list of sites for these free concerts. Since all apartments are now rented at the Terrace, the group who travels may be a full busload.

Sometime soon, the residents who enjoy occasionally cooking or baking in the kitchen will be able to do so on new countertops and find ingredients in new cupboards. The new floor will be a nice update, too, for staff and residents. The Community on the Hill views their home as important, and all improvements welcome.

IT'S ALMOST FAIR TIME!



Heppner Gazette-Times will be publishing the special fair edition August 7. To submit articles or to place an ad call or email megan at The Heppner Gazette-Times 541-676-9228 or megan@rapidsolve.net

Deadline to be included in the Special Fair Edition- July 31

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:

MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.