

Tax aide volunteers sought

PENDLETON, OR—With tax time just around the corner, RSVP of Eastern Oregon and AARP are gearing up to find volunteers to work at various tax preparation locations throughout Umatilla and Morrow counties.

"We are looking for volunteers interested in preparing taxes using a computerized system," says Scot Jacobson, volunteer Program Manager for

Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO). "IRS training is provided and we will assist you along the way."

Volunteers are needed for all areas of the tax preparation service, including clerical reception, tax preparation, computer technician, computer transmitter and review staff. Volunteer tax sites are geared toward low-income individuals and seniors,

although anyone can participate in the services.

Sites are tentatively scheduled for Pendleton, Hermiston, Irrigon, Boardman and Heppner. Each site is open one to two days per week depending on the location.

Anyone interested in volunteering or obtaining additional information, contact the Volunteer Service Office at CAPECO, 541-276-1926 or toll-free at 1-800-752-1139.

STORM DAMAGES POWER LINES

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had been restored to power, but power was still out at various locations in northern Morrow and western Umatilla County as repairs and damage assessments were underway.

Umatilla Electric crews worked through the night to restore power and clear Highway 207 near the Butter Creek power substation.

Damage in the area remained at 12 transmission poles just north of the substation near Echo Junction.

In addition, at least 16 poles south of the substation

along the highway needed replacement.

Regionally, a clear line of damage could be followed from the far southwest reaches of Bombing Range near Findley Bio and Cascade Specialties eastward through to Butter Creek.

The squall line extended further east, which resulted in outages in the Mission, Despain and Missouri Gulch areas.

A crew from Columbia Basin was called to replace eight distribution poles broken near Bombing Range, which took out power to Findley Bio and

Cascade Specialties; they were restored to power around 7 a.m. Monday.

By Monday morning, it was estimated nearly 50 poles were broken and in need of replacement.

By Monday afternoon, about 380 Umatilla Electric customers remained out of power, the company reported, mostly in the Butter Creek area.

In addition to Umatilla Electric line crews, a crew from Columbia Basin and three contract crews from the Portland-Vancouver area worked to restore power to UEC customers.

Prescribed burning in Heppner Unit could impact hunting and camping activities

Pendleton, OR—Fire management staff on the Umatilla National Forest are preparing for fall prescribed burning, which could impact access and camping opportunities in several fall hunting units. Area, road and trail closures will go into effect just prior to, and during, burn operations, which typically take two to seven days.

One of the affected areas is the Gulliford Burn, located in the Heppner Hunting Unit, which encompasses 3,500 acres on the North Fork John Day Ranger District west of State Highway 395 between forest road 5308 and forest road 5314.

Forest officials are advising hunters to plan ahead and avoid camping in designated prescribed burn areas during this 2013 hunting season.

Prescribed burning is highly dependent on precise weather and fuel conditions, and fall weather provides some of the best conditions—dry material and cooler temperatures. Burning could occur anytime from

late September through early November, which coincides with several big-game hunting seasons.

Additional areas across the forest are also scheduled for prescribed burning but will not involve large area closures.

"It's important to note that not all proposed burns planned for this fall may be completed since typical weather conditions provide limited burn windows," said Chris Johnson, Deputy Fire Staff Officer.

Firefighters will ignite the burn perimeter by hand using drip torches. On the larger burns, the interior will be aerial ignited, via helicopter, using a plastic sphere dispenser that drops ping-pong-like balls through the tree canopy that catch fire on the ground. For this reason, it is important that hunters avoid setting up camp within the designated burn perimeter.

"The safety of our firefighters and the public are top priority," said Johnson.

While closures may inconvenience hunters, the long-term reward is worth

the short-term restrictions on forest use.

"Unfortunately, hunting season coincides with prescribed burning season. We understand this will impact hunters, but prescribed burns are necessary to reintroduce fire to the landscape and encourage healthy vegetation that will ultimately improve landscapes and forage for big game," added Johnson.

Partnerships with the Blue Mountain Elk Initiative, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife provide funding and in-kind support for prescribed burning projects. Additional information and maps of the proposed prescribed burns are available on the Umatilla National Forest website, www.fs.usda.gov/umatilla/ or at any forest office.

For more information concerning the Umatilla National Forest Prescribed Burning program, contact Chris Johnson at 541-278-3704 or Dale Boyd, Heppner Ranger District, 541-676-9187.

BABY AT PMH

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Brian (Thompson)."

Her husband works for the Thompsons on their ranch. Brian then told his wife, Susie, to get Amy while he located Brian. Susie, who is a nurse, suggested that Amy go to the hospital in Heppner to be checked out prior to taking off for the Tri-Cities, which is about an hour and a half away.

They checked in at PMH around 2:30 p.m., which was about the time that Brian got there, also.

A little more than an hour from then, at 3:41 p.m.—not time enough to get to the Tri-Cities, or even to Hermiston, 45 minutes away, or Pendleton, about an hour and 15 minutes away—Walker arrived.

"I had him 'au naturel,'" said Amy. "I asked if I could have an epidural, but they said 'No,'" she said,

laughing. "It was fast."

"I was very scared when they told me I was going to have the baby here."

But, according to all accounts, everything went very well. The baby was delivered by Dr. Russ Nichols, assisted by Director of Nursing Molly Rhea and many of the PMH staff. Sheridan Tarnasky, PA, served as pediatrician.

Everyone just quit doing what they were doing and came to help, said Rhea. "Everyone was so excited."

Amy said she got about 2-1/2 hours of sleep on Thursday night. Amy and Walker were to be discharged from PMH on Friday evening. The new little family said they had relatives coming to help out.

Michael Blauer, former Morrow County Health District CEO, told the

Gazette-Times in 2010 that the last baby was born at the hospital on February 14, 1986. The Gazette-Times confirmed that the baby was Courtney Nelson, daughter of Chuck and Lisa Nelson of Lexington. The G-T also learned that Chuck Nelson was one of the first babies born at the hospital at that location on August 8, 1950, and Justin Nelson, Chuck and Lisa's son and current Morrow County District Attorney, was also born there. According to G-T archives, the next to the last baby born at PMH on February 12, 1986, was Carl Miller, son of Debbie and Ray Miller.

Obstetric services were discontinued in the mid-80s when concerns arose over liability and other issues, such as the ability to provide anesthesiology and perform surgeries.

BMCC to offer retirement planning, investment classes

Blue Mountain Community College will offer retirement planning and investment classes in Heppner beginning Sept. 30.

The classes are designed to help attendees gain the skills to estimate how much money they need to retire, learn how to create retirement goals, review investment basics, and more. The series is being offered beginning

Sept. 30 and will meet at the PettyJohn Building, 430 West Linden Way in Heppner.

The classes are from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and will be held on three consecutive Mondays, with Investment Basics on Sept. 30, Retirement Basics Part I on Oct. 7, and Retirement Basics Part II on Oct. 14.

The instructor is Rita Van Schoiack, a financial advisor and owner of Blue

Mountain Investment Management LLC.

The classes are free and include a downloadable workbook. Advance registration is required. Please call Anne Morter at 541-422-7040 or email her at amorter@bluecc.edu. Students may also register online at www.bluecc.edu. Rita Van Schoiack is a financial advisor with Cetera Advisors LLC, member FINRA/SIPC.

Electric Co-op to begin utility pole testing

Columbia Basin Electric Co-op will begin its annual utility pole checking work for 2013 starting Sept. 16.

CBEC will be checking all poles out of the Ruggs Substation.

National Wood

Treating Company has been contracted to perform this work for CBEC.

The pole checking will be conducted with a pickup and ATV, and all NWT vehicles will be marked with CBEC signage. The annual pole-checking

process is necessary to stay in compliance with Oregon Public Utility Commission and National Electric Safety Code regulations.

Any questions or concerns, contact Brian Kollman or Josh Coiner at 541-676-9146.

CREZ BOARD

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how approximately \$30,000 not returned to the CREZ was accounted for, however no action was taken.

In other action the board voted unanimously to hire Will Carey of Hood River as CREZ attorney.

In a long career Carey has served as municipal judge for Hood River, county counsel for Hood River County, county counsel for Sherman County and city attorney for Arlington and Wasco.

He specializes in corporate law, municipal law, land use real estate, contracts and general business law, and will assist the CREZ in contract negotiations and other business of the board.

In other discussions the board talked about a housing program being formulated by CREZ and several upcoming job fairs planned by businesses that

are expanding at the Port.

"We need to be at these job fairs and put out the information about our housing programs," said CREZ board member and Boardman City Manager Karen Pettigrew.

She said ConAgra, which plans on adding up to 100 jobs with its new plant expansion located in the Enterprise Zone at the Port, has three job fairs planned for Hermiston in October, November and December.

Although the CREZ has plans to implement a home purchasing grant program for people moving to Morrow County, the program will not be ready before the first October job fair.

CREZ board member and Port of Morrow Manager Gary Neal encouraged promotion of the new housing program, which would see CREZ

giving cash grants to people buying homes anywhere in the county, but he stressed that it should be the responsibility of local economic development groups to do it.


"We think it's the economic development that should be pushing this," Neil said.

He did say, however, that it should be CREZ's responsibility to make sure the economic development groups get accurate information about the housing programs.


"A good place to start (getting out the information) should be at these job fairs," Pettigrew said.


"Job fair is the place," Neal said.

"Maybe set up a booth that says 'Live in Morrow County.' But putting a booth together is not CREZ's responsibility," he emphasized.




Bank of Eastern Oregon





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