

HEPPNER

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VOL. 133 NO. 22 8 Pages Wednesday, June 25, 2014 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Fire infringes on Heppner city limits

Burns nearly 1,000 acres of grass but with little property damage



Top: A volunteer firefighter holds the line against the brush fire that threatened Heppner last week. Above left: A community member is barely visible through the heavy smoke as she drags along a garden hose to help fight the fire. Above right: A volunteer evacuates some ducks when their pen is threatened by the fire. -Photos by Kurt Johnson

By Andrea Di Salvo

A fire that burned hundreds of acres of grassland last Thursday was kept from doing major property damage due to the diligence of local fire departments and an outpouring of community volunteers.

The fire began off the end of Canyon Drive in Heppner, and appears to have started from a bird on an electric transformer. Heppner Fire Chief Rusty Estes said the Heppner Fire Department was paged out shortly after 2 p.m. on June 19.

"I started calling for help after I got there and saw how big it was getting," said Estes.

Aside from Heppner's engines and team of volunteer firefighters, Estes said Ione contributed two engines, Station 7 on Butter Creek sent two, and

Boardman sent one engine and an administrative person to help coordinate. The U.S. Forest Service was in town and contributed three engines, while Columbia Basin Electric put several crew members on the ground fighting the fire by hand. Estes said he had difficulty guessing the total number of crew members but estimated it at close to 30 volunteer firefighters.

"It was magnificent," he said. "It (the turnout) ended up being really nice."

In addition to the volunteer firefighters, Estes said Heppner townspeople turned out in force to protect their town.

"I told someone later, that's why I live here," he said. "I came up a back street and there were six ladies running up the street with garden hoses over -See FIRE THREATENS HEPPNER/PAGE FIVE

One down, two to go



A house located next to the Morrow County Courthouse is now just a pile of rubble. As of Tuesday morning, workmen had finished tearing down one of the three houses that will be demolished in the coming days to make way for construction of the new county administration building. The new 10,000-square-foot facility will be built to house the Morrow County Health Department and some other county agencies. The new building is being built right next to the existing courthouse, which will still have many county services located there. -Photo by David Sykes

Ione band named Fourth of July grand marshal

Band to lead parade in honor of Bob Baker



The Ione Community Pep Band is this year's collective grand marshal for Ione's Red, White and Blues Fourth of July parade. -Contributed photo -See full story PAGE FOUR

Port in line for \$6 million for warehouse, rail project

Grant provides nearly half of funding for rail spur, facility

Reprinted from Northeast Oregon Now.

The Port of Morrow is in line to receive \$6 million in funding for a cold storage and rail transload facility from the Oregon Department of Transportation Connect Oregon V funding.

The funding's final approval depends on the Oregon Transportation Commission's decision.

The port will provide \$6.1 million in matching funds to construct a 2,500-foot rail spur, including switches and a 100,000-square foot warehouse. The cold storage area will include 75,000 square feet of frozen storage space and the remaining 25,000 square feet will be refrigerated space.

Anna Aylett, communications specialist for the Port of Morrow, said the port's food processing tenants, including Tillamook, Boardman

Foods, Calbee North America, ConAgra Watts Brothers and others, will benefit from the facility that will create or retain 385 jobs with an anticipated outcome of 150-200 million pounds of product in and out in the first year.

The project will include paved truck access, lighting and fencing in the port's East Beach Industrial Park. Aylett said the East Beach park has experienced significant growth since 2006 with \$50 million invested in infrastructure improvements and hundreds of millions in private investment. Since that time, the port's annual economic output has grown by 88 percent to \$1.6 billion annually.

Aylett said the rail and warehousing project has been in the Morrow County Transportation System Plan since 2005 and is also identified as a priority in the port's strategic business plan.

New area of wolf activity identified in Umatilla County

OR26 is setting down roots



A 100-lb. adult male wolf was GPS radio-collared in the Mt. Emily unit on May 25, 2014. -Photo courtesy of ODFW

A new area of known wolf activity had been identified by Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) in the southern portion of the Mt. Emily Unit in Umatilla County, the agency announced this

month. OR26 is a male wolf that was recently captured by ODFW biologists and fitted with a GPS collar. Initial data from this wolf -See OR26 PUTS DOWN ROOTS/PAGE TWO

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