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Gazette Times

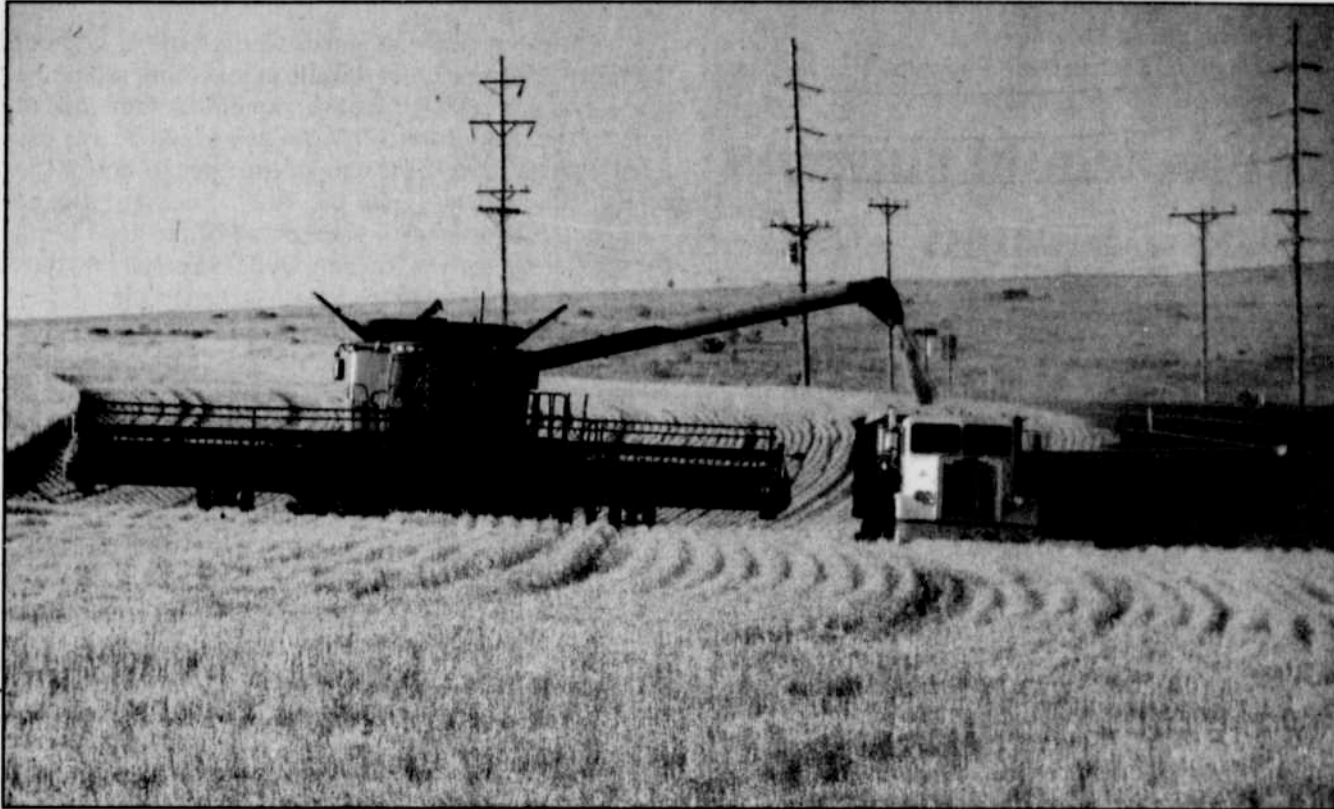
VOL. 133 NO. 24 10 Pages Wednesday, July 9, 2014 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Standing proud for the red, white and blue



A young spectator stands in awe as the lone American Legion color guard leads the way during the Red, White and Blues parade last Friday in Ione. -See more photos PAGE FIVE

Harvest underway in Morrow County



A combine dumps grain into a truck as another truck stands by near the Lexington airport on Monday. With harvest in full swing from Lexington north, average yields range from 25-30 bushels per acre, said Marc Gaffrey of Morrow County Grain Growers. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

Penland Lake break-ins solved through patience, high-tech police work

By Andrea Di Salvo

For many people, thoughts of small-town police departments conjure visions of Mayberry, or maybe sitcom jokes about "yokel" cops. Several Morrow County residents, however, have realized a far different reality as hard work and high-tech investigation by the Morrow County Sheriff's Office solved important thefts within the last year.

The Lindsay and Seitz families will probably never forget the night several individuals chose to break into a Penland Lake cabin the two families co-own. It was Halloween night 2012, as was confirmed both by the time-stamp on video surveillance footage and

by cabin co-owner Wayne Seitz.

"We had security cameras in there and one of the cameras had a picture of one of the suspects; they had the skull and crossbones, and the Halloween decoration was what I remembered," he said.

Seitz said the thieves took several items, some belonging to the Seitzes and some to the Lindsays. Some of the items, he said, were worth a lot of money, including a gun, fishing gear, a fishing motor, a plug-in battery system and more.

"The ones that really got me was they took our grandson's Lightning McQueen sleeping bag,

and some slippers for a little kid," said Seitz. "And alcohol; they seemed to like the white wine."

Not only did the thieves steal, they also destroyed.

"They pretty much just trashed the place, just trashed it. They threw stuff everywhere, and then they went ahead and spent the night," Seitz recalled. "You wanna just give up and walk away and hope it never happens again, but then you clean the glass up and pick stuff up, and you just feel violated. But luckily we have too many good memories, too many years of good times at the lake, to let bad memories ruin it."

Seitz called the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, and MCSO Deputy Ryan Jundt

was the first to the scene. He was followed later by MCSO deputies Scott Carter and Todd Siex, who helped process the scene and canvass witnesses, but it was Jundt who found the forensic evidence that would later blow the case open.

The Seitz family had begun to clean up and take an inventory of missing items by the time he arrived, Jundt stated, but some things remained untouched.

"I noticed a cigarette butt in the shed and Mr. Seitz advised no one at the cabin smoked," Jundt said in his report.

Not only were there no smokers among the cabin's usual occupants, but the shed housed a generator and some gas, flammables around which Jundt knew no property owner would allow a cigarette. He bagged the cigarette butt to be sent to Pendleton for analysis.

Seitz also pointed Jundt to what they thought must be the point of entry, a broken window in a sheltered corner of the cabin. Both the broken glass and the wall immediately inside the house had reddish-brown stains Jundt believed to be blood; he took a swab of the stain, which would also be sent to a lab to be analyzed.

Other evidence was gathered, including a pillowcase with a red-brown stain and a bottle of Boone's Farm that the

-See PENLAND LAKE CASE/PAGE FOUR

Teen airlifted after Fourth of July crash

Two teens were involved in a motor vehicle accident on Willow Creek Road out of Heppner over the Fourth of July weekend, Morrow County Sheriff's Office reports.

Treston Maben and John "Johnny" Wilson, both 18, were in the vehicle when it crashed on Willow Creek Road about nine miles east of Heppner just before 10 p.m. last Friday, July 4. MCSO, Heppner fire and Heppner ambulance all responded to the scene.

Maben, who was reportedly the driver, suffered minor injuries and was not transported, MCSO said. However,

Wilson was transported to Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner and later airlifted due to severe back injuries. MCSO had no further information on his condition, but other sources say he was resting comfortably at OHSU (Oregon Health & Science University) in Portland with his pain under control as of last Saturday. He reportedly suffered a fractured L-3 vertebrae and tears to his intestines.

There is no indication yet as to the cause of the accident. The crash remains under investigation by the sheriff's office.

Community Counseling Solutions has grown over the years

By David Sykes

Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) has grown from a local organization called Morrow County Mental Health to today's organization, which operates multiple services in four different counties. Executive Director Kimberly Lindsay recently came to the Heppner Chamber of Commerce to give an update on its activities.

Lindsay said Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) has grown to where it now operates in Morrow, Wheeler, Gilliam and Grant counties with a budget of \$9.2 million and 130 employees.

It started its growth spurt in 1996 as Morrow County Metal Health with 15 employees providing outpatient and addiction counseling to adults and children.

Now CCS offers a wide variety of behavioral health services including individual, family and group therapy, alcohol and drug treatment, 24/7 crisis intervention services, psychiatric consultation, and medication management.

It also operates the Lakeview Heights Secure Residential Treatment Facility in Heppner, The David Romprey Oregon Warmline for telephone help for people in distress, and also problem gambling and counseling.

Lindsay gave an

update to the Chamber of Commerce on the Lakeview Heights secure facility in Heppner, saying it has served 152 individuals since opening in February of 2010.

With a payroll of over \$70,000 per month and 19 of the 21 employees living in South Morrow County, the facility has become an asset to the community, she says. She said the facility also buys much of its groceries locally and uses the local hospital and clinic, also.

Grant County has seen significant expansion of Community Counseling Solutions services where, in partnership with Blue Mountain Hospital and Eastern Oregon Health Services Consortium, it operates Juniper Ridge Acute

Card Center, a secure acute care psychiatric facility. This 10-bed facility provides acute care services for up to four individuals, short term secure residential care for up to five individuals, and one crisis/respite bed for individuals primarily from the Grant County area.

Lindsay says her job and the growth at CCS has been quite a learning experience.

"Without an MBA (Master of Business Administration) I have had a significant learning curve," she told the Chamber.



CCS Executive Director Kimberly Lindsay

Local woman makes 'substantial' donation toward new fire hall



Ida Farra of Heppner has made a "substantial" donation toward construction of the new fire hall, Fire Chief Rusty Estes has announced. Estes, along with a large group of firefighters, presented Farra with a plaque of appreciation Monday evening, in honor of this and other donations she has made to the local fire department.

The fire department is in the early stages of constructing a new fire hall next to its present hall on Willow Street in Heppner. So far an architect has been hired and grants are being applied for to pay for the hall, which is estimated to cost around \$900,000 Estes said. While declining to name the exact amount Farra donated, Estes said it would get them off to a good start. He said anyone else who would like to donate should please contact him.

"Ida Farra, thank you for many years of support. Heppner Volunteer Fire and Rescue," the plaque read. She has purchased seeded equipment and other items for the dept. over the years Estes said. -Photo by David Sykes

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