

HEPPNER

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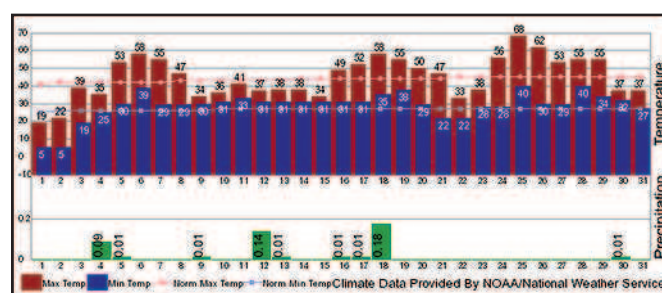
Gazette Times

VOL. 134 NO. 5 10 Pages Wednesday, February 4, 2015 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Winter warm trend to continue into February

The unusually warm winter is expected to continue, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton.

According to preliminary data received by NWS Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged slightly warmer than normal during the month of January. The average temperature was 36.9 degrees, which was 1.7 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 44.9 degrees, which was 1.3 degrees above normal. The highest was 68 degrees on the 25th. Low



temperatures averaged 28.9 degrees, which was 2.1 degrees above normal. The lowest was five degrees, on the 1st.

There were 23 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees. There were two days when the

high temperature stayed below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled 0.47 inches during January, which was one inch below normal. Measurable precipitation of at least .01

-See WARM WINTER CONTINUES/PAGE SEVEN

Remembrance walk/5k run to benefit South Morrow fire, ambulance



Participants at last year's Friend Helping Friends Remembrance Walk in Heppner. -File photo

Coordinators of the annual Remembrance Walk/5K Run have announced that this year's proceeds will be divided between the Heppner Volunteer Fire Department and the South Morrow EMT Association.

In the spirit of keeping donations local and benefiting local healthcare and the elderly, Friends Helping Friends has decided to give event proceeds to the two local emergency organizations to use as they see fit. Rusty Estes, Heppner

Fire Chief and Emergency Medical Services Coordinator for the EMT association, said the two entities have not finalized plans for the funds but do have a few things on their wish lists.

"It's gonna be kind of 'wait and see,' except, for the fire department, we are looking at some hand-held gas meters," said Estes.

Estes said the gas meters detect different kinds of gases when firefighters go into fires. The meters have

-See REMEMBRANCE WALK/PAGE FOUR

Nairns retires from county after 34 years

Not the end of the road, but a crossroad, for retiring Public Works employee

By Andrea Di Salvo

Bob Nairns has spent much of his adult life driving and caring for the roads of Morrow County, but that will end—at least in an official capacity—this Thursday, Feb. 5 will be Nairns's last day as Assistant Public Works Director for Morrow County.

Nairns, 53, has spent 34 years working for Morrow County Public Works. His responsibilities now include three county parks, two garbage transfer stations outside Boardman and Lexington, and the Lexington airport. However, the bulk of his work, and his greatest love, is working with the road crew to maintain the county roads.

That may be because that's where Nairns started his long relationship with Morrow County. Born in Springfield, OR and raised in Bend, OR from the age of two, Nairns was a member of the first graduating class from Mountain View High School in Bend in 1980.

He didn't envision a career in public works. Rather, he took the U.S. Air Force entrance exam right out of high school, but then decided to take the summer and think over the decision. When his father took the

job as Heppner postmaster that year, Nairns followed and took a job as a summer employee with the county, "patching potholes and helping out the road crews."

"Just before my summer employment was up, a heavy equipment operator quit," recalls Nairns. "So, a job opened up and I took the job."

He started as a light equipment operator... though, to road crews, that meant working "light" equipment like dump trucks and backhoes. He spent a couple of years doing that before moving into the maintenance and repair shop, where he eventually became shop foreman. After eight years as shop foreman, he moved to his current job in 2000, where he has spent nearly 15 years.

"It's been a good place to work, Morrow County has. They've treated me well. I've enjoyed working for them," says Nairns.

Aside from his relationship with the county, Nairns began another long-term relationship in 1980, when he met his future wife, George. The couple married in 1984 and have two children and two grandchildren. Son Kiel Nairns lives in The Dalles and works as



Retiring Morrow County Assistant Public Works Director Bob Nairns stands next to his pickup, where he spent much of his time in the last 34 years overseeing the roads and other county properties. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

a crew boss for the Oregon Dept. of Forestry. Daughter Krystal Seitz is currently finishing up an internship in occupational therapy in Cheney, WA.

After so much time working for Morrow County, Nairns says he has mixed feelings about retirement.

"It's both good and bad.

I will miss working on the roads, keeping them in the best shape we can. I'll miss the camaraderie of the daily interaction with the crew... but it will be nice to stay home when it's snowing and blowing sideways and below zero," says Nairns. "The best part will be that I

get to spend more time with my grandkids."

Nairns says he isn't ready to retire, per se, but ready for a change.

"Thirty-four years is long enough," says Nairns. "I'm going into the second phase of my career. Not sure what it is yet, but I'll figure it out."

His immediate plans include work on their house, resuming an old golfing habit, fishing, traveling, and general rest and relaxation.

"For a little while," he adds. "Then I'll probably get bored and look for something to do."

More vehicle thefts in Heppner

Heppner man Seth Moses reported last Thursday that a 24-foot ATV trailer was stolen from his property on NE Center Street in Heppner some time Wednesday night. According to Morrow County Sheriff's Office, the trailer did not contain any ATVs. An MCSO representative says the case is under investigation but was unable to reveal whether police have any suspects in the incident.

The theft comes about a week after the reported theft of a trailer and ATVs belonging to MCSO Deputy John Bowles. That incident is still under investigation by MCSO.

City warns citizens to be vigilant

Increase in area thefts means residents should be on guard

A recent increase in illegal activities in our community prompts a reminder from the City of Heppner to its citizens to guard their valuables.

There are several ways to secure homes and vehicles against theft:

- secure all property,
- lock doors,
- park vehicles in front of trailers,
- lock trailer hitches,
- do not leave keys in vehicles,
- lock vehicles, and
- do not post on Facebook or other social media outlets that you are out of town.

The City of Heppner also encourages residents

to watch out for their neighbors and report any suspicious activities to the Morrow County Sheriff's Office immediately, 541-676-5317.

While this warning comes from the City of Heppner, where several of the thefts have occurred, the concern is not limited to Heppner. An increase in thefts has been noted throughout Morrow and Umatilla counties.

These thefts appear to be targeted and not random. So please: Report any suspicious activities, people or vehicles immediately to the police by called the MCSO at the number above or dialing 911.

Road bowling returns to St. Pat's weekend

Heppner's Irish Road Bowling will draw the St. Patrick's Day weekend celebration to a close on Sunday, March 15. Participants in this event will gather on Sunday afternoon before the 1:37 p.m. activity commences.

This Irish sport that dates back to the 1600s was played in America by the Irish troops in West Virginia during the Civil War. In recent years, a resurgence of interest in the sport has developed in both Ireland and the United States. Heppner's event has gained popularity since it was first offered in 2006, and entries are limited (maximum of 20 teams), so interested persons should pick up entry forms at the Chamber of Commerce office and return them (with payment) soon.

Teams of two to four members compete over a course of approximately one mile by tossing the iron-and-steel "bowls,"



A participant in last year's road bowling launches the "bowl" down Balm Fork Road outside of Heppner. -File photo

which weigh 28 ounces and are slightly smaller than a tennis ball. The team that completes the course with the fewest tosses wins. Each participant must pay \$5 to play. The purse is then divided, with half going into the St. Patrick's Weekend fund and half being divided among the top three teams. Names of the winning team's members will be added to the trophy.

The starting point of the course will be on Balm Fork Road. Spectators are welcome at the event but are cautioned to remain a safe distance from the action because the bowls are heavy and have been known to break bones.

Sign up early to guarantee a spot in the event. Pick up forms at the chamber office or call 541-676-5536 to have one emailed or mailed.

Be on the lookout for flying boots this March in Heppner

The boots are set to fly at the annual "Welly Toss" during the St. Patrick's Day Celebration on Saturday, March 14. Local and visitors are invited to get their teams entered and, if preferred, come by and throw as individuals. Children are invited, as well.

As in years past, the event will be held on Wil-

low Street between Murray's Drug and The Artisan Village.

Team play begins at 10 a.m. and continues until 12 p.m. (noon). Teams are invited to come when they can; the Welly crew

-See FLYING BOOTS/PAGE FOUR



Right: The Golden Boot award. -File photo

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