

## G-T closed Friday

The Heppner Gazette-Times office will be closed this Friday, July 3, in observance of the Independence Day holiday. Normal hours will resume on Monday, July 6.

We wish everyone a safe and happy Fourth of July.

## OTLD begins July with new website, interim director

Kathy Street has been named as interim director of the Oregon Trail Library District, the district announced last week. Street replaces outgoing director Marsha Richmond, who has taken a position as the coordinator for Umatilla County Special Library District, effective July 1.

Street, an Arlington resident, received her Master of Library Science (MLS) degree from Emporia State University. She brings to the position experience in both public and school libraries.

The library district also has announced that the OTLD website will be changing. The website currently is <http://www.oregontrail.plinkit.org/>. As of July 1, the site will move to <http://oregontrail.ploud.net>.

## Tragedy highlights local heroes and a community that pulls together

By Andrea Di Salvo

It was a busy weekend for local law enforcement and emergency heroes; nearly simultaneously on Saturday evening Morrow County Sheriff's Office received calls for a structure fire in Heppner, a grass/wildland fire east of Heppner, two separate life-flight transports from Pioneer Memorial Hospital, and a motor vehicle crash near Boardman. For a time, all fire and law enforcement agencies in Morrow County were tied up with in-progress emergencies.

With all that tragedy, details of personal heroics and community support provide bright spots against the backdrop of catastrophe that struck close to home in an apartment complex in Heppner last Saturday.

It was about 5:30 p.m. on June 27 that Morrow County Sheriff's Office first received report of the structure fire of unknown origin at Mountain Glen Apartments in Heppner. The apartments are located on Pioneer Drive, right behind Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

The fire was apparently first discovered by Mountain Glen resident Cory Silvia. Silvia, 22, says he was cooking dinner for his grandmother, Jeanne Grijalva, in her apartment that evening.

"I ran over to my apart-



Local firefighters work to put out the fire that destroyed part of the Mountain Glen apartments last Saturday. Flames had engulfed one of the apartments by the time firefighters arrived. Despite their efforts, two apartments were destroyed and two heavily damaged in the fire. —Contributed photo

ment to grab something and ran back to my grandma's, and saw no fire. I put the food on the stove. This all took like two minutes," he remembers. "Then I went out onto the porch. I saw smoke and at first I thought a neighbor was barbecuing. I leaned over the railing and said, 'Joe, are you barbecuing down there?' There was no answer, so I ran out the front and that's when I saw the fire."

"Automatically I just went and started alerting people that there was a fire, banging on doors

and getting people out," he adds.

Fire departments from Heppner, Lexington and Ione, as well as Heppner Public Works, responded to the fire. When firefighters arrived, they found one of the apartments already engulfed in flames. Meanwhile, with residents evacuating, Silvia helped fellow resident Linda Tefft and her dog escape the building before running to save his own dog. That was when he realized the flames had started burning under the stairs up to his grandmother's apartment.

"She was standing at

the top, saying, 'I can't, it's too hot,'" Silvia recalls. "And I said, 'Nana, we have to go!'"

He said he helped the elderly woman down the stairs. She had already been burned, and he tried to shield her from the flames, burning his bare feet and part of his back in the process. Friend Wade Matthews arrived and helped Silvia get Grijalva clear of the building. Silvia said he then ran to the nearby hospital for a wheelchair.

"My feet were killing me," he recalled, "but

—See APARTMENT FIRE/ PAGE FOUR

## Irrigon man killed in accident

In the midst of a busy week for emergency responders last week, tragedy struck an Irrigon family when a man was killed in a vehicle related accident.

Last Thursday, June 25, at 9:26 p.m., Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a report of a person who was trapped, and possible dead, under a vehicle.

MCSO responded along with Boardman police, Boardman fire and Morrow County ambulance.

According to Morrow County Undersheriff Steven Myren, they found Lenard "David" Abercrombie, 57, of Irrigon crushed between the partially raised tilt-bed of a truck and the truck's frame.

Further investigation and interviews indicated Abercrombie had gone to work the morning of June 24 and had not returned home that evening.

The next day, concerned family members contacted the police. Law enforcement officers were in the process of investigating his disappearance when the 911 call came in from the person who found Abercrombie's body.

In a written statement, MCSO describes the incident as "tragic" but says that, at this point in time, there is nothing in the investigation to indicate that the incident was anything other than an accident.

## Man arrested on kidnapping, rape charges after 911 call

A man is in custody on multiple charges, including kidnapping and rape, after a 911 call led local authorities to his location Saturday.

Saturday morning shortly after 6 a.m., Morrow County Sheriff's Office took a 911 call from a

female who told police she had been kidnapped and was trapped in a car traveling on I-84. According to Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack, the phone number plotted to a location outside of Boardman.

MCSO, Oregon State

Police and the Gilliam County Sheriff's Office responded and located the vehicle on I-84 traveling westbound near milepost 143 (east of Arlington) around 8:30 that morning.

Law enforcement stopped the vehicle, and

the driver was identified as William T Cooter II, 42, of Greeneville, TN.

A female inside the vehicle was identified as the person who called 911.

OSP stated that roadside investigation revealed Cooter had assaulted and held his female passenger against her will. Cooter and the victim apparently did not know each other prior to the incident.

Further information from the Gilliam County Sheriff's Office stated that Cooter had apparently smashed the window of a vehicle in Arlington in which the victim was sleeping after a long drive. He then allegedly kidnapped her and drove to the junction of I-84 and Hwy. 74, where he sexually assaulted

the victim.

The victim's name was not released.

Cooter was arrested and was lodged at the Northern Oregon Regional Correctional Facility in The Dalles on the charges of First Degree Kidnapping, first Degree Rape, First

Degree Sex Abuse, First Degree Sodomy, Assault IV, Coercion, Menacing, Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle, Unauthorized Entry into a Motor Vehicle, Criminal Mischief in the Second Degree, False Information to a Police Officer, Possession of Methamphetamine, and Interfering with Making a Report. His bail is set at \$137,214.

The case is still under investigation by Oregon State Police.



William T Cooter II

## Ione Red, White and Blues Schedule July 3-4, 2015

### Friday, July 3, 2015

Golf Tournament, Willow Creek Country Club, Heppner, 10 am  
Volleyball Tournament, Corner of Main and Spring Streets, 9 am

### Saturday, July 4, 2015

Fireman's Breakfast, Ione Fire Hall, 7-10 am  
Creative Care PreSchool 5k Walk/Run (\$10 Registration), Ione City Park, 7 am; registration/walk starts at 7:30 am  
Topic Club Book Sale, Ione Fire Hall/Post Office Lawn Area, 9 am  
Ken Turner Memorial Horseshoe Tournament, Horseshoe Pits, 9 am  
3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, Main Street, 10 am  
Craft Fair, Rietmann Building, Main Street, 10 am-2 pm  
Blues Cruise Car Show, Ione City Park, 10:30 am  
Food Vendors/Information Booths/Raffle Tickets, Ione City Park, 11 am  
Fish Pond, Frog Jump, Bike Raffle, Fire Hall/Park, 11 am  
Altar Society Pie Sale, Ione Fire Hall, 11 am  
Parade (Grand Marshal: Betty Rietmann), Main Street, 1 pm  
Park Activities Begin—Dunk Tank, Duck Races, Money Pile, Photo Booth, Much More, 1 pm  
Free Swimming, Ione Swimming Pool, 1:30-3:30 pm  
Legion Auxiliary Baskets, Ione Market, Bidding Ends 3 pm  
Blues Cruise Awards, Ione City Park, 3 pm  
Talent Show, Amphitheatre Stage, registration 3 pm/show at 3:30 pm  
Legion Auxiliary Baskets Winners Announcement, Amphitheatre Stage, 4:30 pm  
Featured Entertainment, Amphitheatre Stage After Talent Show  
The FrogHollow Band (6:30 pm) James Otto (8:30 pm)  
Raffle Drawings, Amphitheatre Stage, 7 pm  
Boat Trip Auction, Amphitheatre Stage, 7:45 pm  
Fireworks Display, Visible throughout Ione, Dusk

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**HAVE A SAFE, HAPPY FOURTH  
WE WILL BE CLOSED SAT.  
HARVEST HOURS HAVE  
STARTED - OPEN 'TILL 6 PM**