

# APARTMENT FIRE



Charred ruins are all that remain of apartments some local residents called home. —Photo by David Sykes

—Continued from PAGE ONE I didn't know they were burned yet."

Silvia's burns turned out to be severe enough to keep him off his feet for a while; he now rolls around in a wheelchair at his temporary home at Northwestern Motel in Heppner. His grandmother was worse off, having to be flown by air ambulance to a burn center later than night. Last he heard, she was conscious and talking. Of her condition, he says, "She alive. Not alive and well, not alive and good, but alive."

Silvia and his grandmother were the only reported injuries in the fire.

Others were away from home when the fire started. Joe and Marti Koerner said they had gone to a friend's house for dinner. They had seen no sign of fire when they left their apartment, Joe Korner said, but no more than 10 minutes had passed when their friend said, "There's smoke coming from the top of the hill. You'd better go save your dogs."

The Koerners, who

have only lived in Heppner eight months, did save their dogs. They also count themselves as among the lucky ones, since their apartment was among the least damaged. By the time the last firefighters cleared the scene around 11 p.m. Saturday night, two apartments had been completely destroyed and two had received heavy damage from smoke and water. Two others received minor damage and two appear to have been undamaged, MCSO reports.

Joe Koerner said he was amazed how quickly the blaze spread.

"If the firefighters hadn't kept water on it, the whole building would have gone," he said. "The firefighters did their best. It's amazing they could save as much as they did."

Tuesday morning, the building inspector declared three of the apartments to be livable, which means those tenants will be able to move back in. However, the remaining five, which suffered the heaviest damage, will take much longer to restore.

That leaves many of the apartment residents displaced for now. Some, like the Koerners, expect to be able to move back in and pick up the pieces with comparatively little trouble now that their apartments have been given the all-clear. Others lost everything in the fire. All suffered temporarily in limbo, relying on the kindness of others to provide daily needs.

Fortunately, that kindness was quick in coming. While some who were displaced by the fire had relatives and friends to turn to, others had nowhere to go. Many of them found a haven at the Northwestern Motel in Heppner, where employee Melba Folckomer says the local refugees have six rooms, many residents having to double up. Folckomer also said someone donated the use of an RV, while the motel donated the RV spot across the street.

"It's good to see people come together like this," says Folckomer.

The American Red Cross stepped forward and paid for the hotel rooms for three nights, but Neighborhood Center Executive Director Lisa Patton says it may be up to the community to pick up the slack once that aid runs out. The Neighborhood Center has already started the process, opening its doors on Sunday so those who lost possessions in the fire could come and get clothing and food. That assistance will continue, she said, as well as help furnishing apartments once they're repaired.

Monetary donations have also been coming in; Patton says the Neighborhood Center board will meet Wednesday to decide how best to use those funds to help people find places to live until they can move back into their apartments.

"Everyone's in agreement about helping," adds Patton, "the only question is how much and where it should go."

Patton said some suggestions for those who would like to help include not only cash donations toward housing but also gift cards from the grocery store. The Neighborhood Center, she says, would be happy to receive donations and distribute them as needed. "The Neighborhood Center will do everything in our capacity to help them," she says.

The residents, some of whom still appear in shock, say they appreciate the kindness of their neighbors.

"It's a wonderful feeling to know people care," says Joe Koerner.

Oregon State Fire Marshal's office, the Heppner Fire Department, and the Morrow County Sheriff's Office are still looking into the cause of the fire. While the cause of the fire hasn't been conclusively determined, Heppner Fire Chief Rusty Estes says investigation so far indicates the fire may have been caused by an improperly discarded cigarette.

As of press time, the investigation is ongoing and anyone with information is encouraged to call the Morrow County Sheriff's Office at 541-676-5317.

# Red Cross seeks local volunteers

The American Red Cross is seeking community members to be trained as disaster services volunteers.

Available volunteer opportunities include disaster action team member, preparedness presenter/outreach worker, fire prevention team smoke alarm installer, fire prevention team educator, Disaster mental health volunteer, government liaison volunteer, sheltering team member, disaster health services volunteer, and more.

Please contact Lisa Stroup, Executive Director, for more information at [lisa.stroup@redcross.org](mailto:lisa.stroup@redcross.org), or go online to register at [www.redcross.org/cascades](http://www.redcross.org/cascades).



The Red Cross is seeking disaster services volunteers to help their communities in times of need. —Contributed photo

# Over the Tee Cup

It was a hot day for the 17 ladies who showed up for the ladies play day at Willow Creek Country Club on June 30. Despite the heat, Virginia Grant took low gross of the field, Tiffani Clements had low net, and Betty Burns had least putts.

Fir Flight A, Eva Kilkenny walked away with low gross, while Karen

Thompson had low net.

On Flight B, Lorraine Montgomery had low gross, Sarah Rucker low net and Shirley Martin least putts.

For Flight C, low gross went to Judy Harris, low net to Jackie Allstott and least putts to Kris Lindner.

Chips-ins were Judy Harris #18, Kris Lindner #16, and Karen Thompson two times on #10.

# Chamber lunch meeting

The next lunch meeting of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce will be an all entities report this Thursday, July 2, at noon in Heppner City Hall conference room. Cost of lunch is \$10.

Chamber lunch attendees are asked to RSVP at 541-676-5536 no later than the Wednesday before to guarantee a lunch.

# Heppner FFA to attend national convention in Kentucky

A group of young men and women from Heppner High School FFA will be attending the FFA National Convention in Louisville, KY in October. The attendees are Rylee Kollman, Caitlynn Bailey, Alex Lindsay, Katlyn Harper, Tim Gould, Taylor Nelson and Nichole Shaw.

To help pay for trip ex-

penses, this group of young adults will be doing several fundraising events over the next few months.

To kick off these events, Thursday, July 9, FFA will host a dinner at the Heppner Elk's Lodge. Dinner will be at 6 p.m. and they will be serving pork loin, cheesy potatoes, rolls and a desert for \$15 a plate.

# Bent on Blues July 6 at Music in the Parks



Bent on Blues

July 6 at the Irrigon Marina Park, Bent On Blues will honor our veterans during Music in the Parks.

The group says it's dedicated to playing and performing originals and classics tastefully interpreted and presented in ways guaranteed to "Git yer mojo workin" and "yer hips a-shakin, baby."

All performances will be on Monday evenings.

All performances are free, with funding provided by Morrow County Unified Recreation District and Portland General Electric.

Performances in both parks will be in the Picnic areas.

To get to Irrigon Marina Park from Highway 730, turn north toward the river on 10<sup>th</sup> St. For information, contact Renee, 541-922-1560.

# Community lunch menu

Lunch on Wednesday, July 1, at St. Patrick's Senior Center will include cheeseburgers, potato chips, coleslaw, broccoli salad, and a red, white and blue dessert.

Lunch on Wednesday, July 8, at St. Patrick's Senior Center will include fish and chips, a seven-layer salad, bread sticks, and strawberry shortcake.

Milk is served at each meal. Suggested donation is \$3.50 per meal. Menu is subject to change.

# HHS announces semester honor roll

Heppner Jr/Sr. High School has announced students named to the 2015-16 Semester 2 Honor Roll. Students are listed by grade as follows:

12<sup>th</sup> Grade—Paige Grieb 4.0, Maddie Lindsay 4.0, Jenny Marick 4.0, Joseph Schmidt 4.0, Ella McCormick, Makenzi Hughes, Erica Nelson.

11<sup>th</sup> Grade—Jessica Kempken 4.0, Sklyer Palmer 4.0, Kai Arbogast, Patrick Collins, Weston Putman, Rylee Wagoner, Rylee Kollman, Tommy Bredfield, Sydney Maben, William Lutchter, Kaelyn Lindsay.

10<sup>th</sup> Grade—Kolby Currin 4.0, Kellie Eadler 4.0, Bryan Fowler 4.0,

Logan Grieb 4.0, Taylor Hamby 4.0, Kevin Murray 4.0, Demitra Schmidt 4.0, Kane Sweeney, Caden Hedman, Jacob Lindsay, Clyde Britt, Emily Cecil, Riane Dompier.

Ninth Grade—Cara Arbogast 4.0, Sophie Grant 4.0, Reiah Waite 4.0, Morgan Correa, Alex Lindsay.

Eighth Grade—Madi-son Combe 4.0, Jacee Cur- rin 4.0, Jaiden Mahoney 4.0, Hunter Nichols 4.0, Olivia Schmidt 4.0, Leo Waite 4.0, Carson Bros- nan, Keegan Gibbs, Claire Grieb.

Seventh Grade—Kel- len Grant 4.0, Nicole Propheter 4.0, Jason Rea.

# FSA county committee nomination period in Morrow County now open

Heppner—Morrow County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director Kyle Carnine, announced that the nomination period for local FSA county committees began on June 15. Nomination forms must be postmarked or received in the Morrow County FSA Office by close of business on Aug. 3.

"County Committees are unique to FSA and allow producers to have a voice on federal farm program implementation at the local level," said Carnine.

To be eligible to serve on the FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an agency administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) where they are nominated.

This year, nominations and elections will be held in LAA 1, which includes the northern portion of Morrow County and the Butter Creek area.

Producers may nominate themselves or others as candidates. Organizations representing minority and women farmers and

ranchers may also nominate candidates. To become a nominee, eligible individuals must sign form FSA-669A. The form and more information about county committee elections is available online at [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

Elected county committee members serve a three-year term and are responsible for making decisions on FSA disaster, conservation, commodity and price support programs, as well as other important federal farm program issues. County committees consist of three to 11 members.

"It is important that county committees are comprised of members who fairly represent the diverse demographics of production agriculture for their community," said Carnine. "All producers, including women, minority and beginning farmers and ranchers are encouraged to participate in the nomination and election process."

FSA will mail election ballots to eligible voters beginning Nov. 9. Ballots are due back in the Morrow County office by mail or in

person no later than Dec. 7. All newly-elected county committee members and alternates will take office January 1, 2016.

"Nominating potential county committee members, voting for candidates and serving on the committees are truly services to your community and the agriculture industry," said Carnine. "County Com-

mittee members make important decisions on how federal farm programs are administered locally to best serve local needs and interests."

For more information about county committees, contact the Morrow County FSA office at 541-676-9011 or visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/elections](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/elections).

## Murray's Bridal Registry

Trevor Rhea & Mollie Henderson Wedding - July 11

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Laurie Murray & Sean Wood

September 5, 2015

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**WE ALSO HAVE A BABY REGISTRY**

To set up a bridal table or baby registry contact Lori Snyder 541-676-9158

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Murray's Drug, 217 N. Main, Heppner • Phone 676-9158

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