

Fireworks and flags



Ione held its annual Fourth of July celebration last Saturday. See more photos PAGE FOUR. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

VOL. 134 NO. 24 8 Pages Wednesday, July 8, 2015 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

June warmest on record locally July expected to continue the hot, dry trend

June was a hot month, even by Morrow County standards, and no relief is in sight for July, according to the National Weather Service out of Pendleton.

The average temperature was 70.5 degrees, which was 7.8 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 86.2 degrees, which was 9.6 degrees above normal. The highest was 104 degrees on the 28th. Low temperatures averaged 54.9 degrees, which was six degrees above normal. The lowest was 44 degrees, on the 4th.

On seven days, the temperature exceeded 90 degrees. It was at least 100 degrees on three days.

Precipitation totaled 0.01 inches during June, which was 1.37 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation of at least .01 inch was received on one day.

Precipitation this year has reached 4.38 inches, which is 4.28 inches below normal. Since October, the water year precipitation at Heppner has been 8.42 inches, which is 4.30 inches below normal.

The highest wind gust was 35 mph, which occurred on the 28th.

The outlook for July from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above-normal temperatures and near- to below-normal precipitation. Normal highs for Heppner during July are 85.7 degrees and normal lows are 53.9 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 0.33 inches.

This was the warmest June on record. The previous warmest was 68.4 degrees in 1992.

Harvest brings low yields so far



Chelsea Geer, a nine-year Morrow County Grain Growers employee, oversees the dumping of a grain truck driven by veteran farmer Bob Harrison in the Lexington elevator. Wheat harvest started in the northern part of the county as early as June 23 and is already underway around Lexington. MCGG employee Duane Disque says early yields were as low as 12 bushels an acre, though numbers have improved as harvest moves south, reaching as high as 20 bushels. With harvest just getting started in the south end, Disque says time will tell what the yields will be around Lexington and Heppner. -Photo by David Sykes

WCVEDG seeks economic input from OSU specialist

Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) has asked OSU Extension Economist Bruce Sorte to visit with businesses and government agencies in the valley and suggest two or three projects that he thinks will have significant long-term economic impacts across our three communities.

WCVEDG says these visits will take about an hour, and will be informal and confidential. Sorte will be in the area at different times from July through September. He will submit a final report to WCVEDG in early October.

Before Sorte drafts his

report, WCVEDG also will schedule a community-wide meeting in September in order for those who have not participated in the discussions to provide their ideas.



Bruce Sorte

Bruce's work is being funded in part by the OSU Extension Service.

Anyone with questions about the project, contact Sheryll Bates at the Heppner Chamber of Commerce, 541-676-5536, or Sorte, 541-737-1403.

Sorte works across Oregon, usually staying in a travel trailer, wearing an OSU shirt or hat; individuals also are encouraged to visit with him "on the street."

Gateway Café to open in Heppner

By Andrea Di Salvo

For those who have been looking for a place to go for a sit-down dinner on a Saturday night, the search may be over this week. The Gateway Café on Heppner's Main Street will begin serving dinner Fridays and Saturdays starting July 10. The Gateway Café will offer a full menu, as well as a children's menu, from 4-8 p.m. those days.

Alvin and Lynda Liu of Heppner purchased the empty restaurant several months ago. This is the third business the couple will own and operate in Heppner; they already run the Northwestern Motel and RV Park and the Cornerstone Gallery, which they said will continue to serve breakfast, lunch and espressos. Alvin Liu also has catered locally for several years.

Split into three floor levels, the restaurant features general seating on the lower levels and a space for larger gatherings upstairs. They also have a children's play space and a popcorn

machine they plan to use to offer complimentary popcorn. "Once we figure out how to use it," Lynda Liu says.

The menu is small but full service, featuring appetizers like pot stickers and Buffalo wings, several salads, desserts, sides and several entrees. Entrees range from the \$25 ribeye to an authentic teriyaki chicken dinner for \$10. Several menu options are also marked as gluten free.

For now, the restaurant will only be open for dinner on Fridays and Saturdays, though Alvin Liu said he will take on catering and private parties other times during the week. While the hours of operation are limited, Alvin Liu stressed that they will be consistent. Eventually, they said, they would like to be open six days a week and be able to hire staff. For now, though, they want to fill a gap they see in the community.

"(We're doing this) for the community," said Lynda Liu, adding that motel guests often ask for



Lynda and Alvin Liu stand at the front counter of the Gateway Café, which will open in Heppner this week. Until they are able to expand and hire more staff, the Lius say customers will be asked to order food and pay at the front counter. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

a place to eat dinner. "We have people coming to the motel all the time and looking for a place to eat, and there's nothing open."

"I want Heppner to live," she said.

"We want to fill a need

but not compete with what other people are already doing," added Alvin Liu.

Locals have been eyeing the restaurant space looking for signs of life since word spread that the Lius purchased it, but the couple

says they've undergone a series of frustrating delays in getting the restaurant back into business.

Setbacks have included the expected work of cleaning, painting, decorating and getting appliances working, but also a fire and a broken pipe that caused a flood at the motel, and a disconnected pipe that flooded the Gateway Cafe storeroom.

Lynda Liu said they had just replaced the storeroom flooring to comply with health standards. "We lost \$500 right there," she added. They also had to shell out nearly \$3000 for new fire extinguisher for the kitchen, also to comply with safety regulations.

"We did the best we could with what we had," said Lynda Liu.

Helping along the way

-See GATEWAY CAFE/PAGE TWO

Eastern Oregon speed limit bill approved by legislature

HB 3402 increases speed limits on select highways and freeways in Eastern Oregon

Salem, OR—HB 3402, which raises the speed limit on select highways and freeways in eastern Oregon, received final approval from the Oregon Legislature last week. The bill allows for modest increases in the allowable speed limit for rural areas on select sections of highway.

While local highways will not be affected by the bill, the speed limit would be raised to 70 mph for passenger vehicles on the section of I-84 between The Dalles and the Idaho

state line.

Rep. Sherrie Sprenger, a former sheriff's deputy, spoke in favor of the bill, arguing that the portions of highway impacted by the bill are so remote and so infrequently traveled, a higher speed limit would be safe and appropriate.

During the House public hearing in April, information was presented that showed that automobile engineering has advanced to a level that makes a modest speed increase reasonably safe. The Oregon

Department of Transportation supports the increase and noted that the current average speed driven on Oregon roadways is over 70 mph.

"Many constituents from across eastern Oregon have sent emails and made phone calls in support of this bill," said Rep. Greg Barreto. "I'm proud to have been a part of this bipartisan effort to update our speed limits and improve the quality of life in Oregon."

-See SPEED LIMIT INCREASE/PAGE TWO

Boardman man killed in motorcycle accident

Oregon State Police say alcohol may have been a factor in the motorcycle accident that killed Boardman man William R. Brooks last Friday, though investigation is ongoing.

On July 3 about 11:20 p.m., OSP troopers and other emergency personnel responded to the report of a motorcyclist down at the I-84/Hwy. 730 interchange near Boardman.

According to OSP Sgt. Seth Cooney, a 2002 Harley Davidson operated by Brooks, 58, had been traveling westbound on Hwy. 730 when he attempted to take the westbound on-ramp onto Interstate 84.

Police say preliminary investigation indicates Brooks passed the on-ramp entrance and attempted to navigate through the median in an attempt to re-enter

the on-ramp. He apparently was ejected when his motorcycle struck a culvert. A passing motorist discovered Brooks and called 911.

Emergency crews pronounced Brooks dead on the scene.

OSP was assisted by Boardman Fire and Ambulance, Morrow County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

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