

Demolition clears way for future plans at old mill site



The Port of Morrow is demolishing some of the buildings at the old Kinzua Mill site, hopefully to make way for future development. -Photo by David Sykes

By Andrea Di Salvo

A pile of rubble is all that remains of part of the structure at the old Kinzua Mill site outside of Heppner, also known as the South Morrow Industrial Park.

The property has been owned by the Port of Morrow since about 1999. Port General Manager Gary Neal says it has been a goal

of the Port to demolish certain buildings at the site that would not be remodeled in the future.

The structure being torn down is part of the old plywood warehouse.

"(It) needed to be demolished since prior to the Port having ownership of the site," Neal says. "We finally received a couple of proposals to remove the

structure and went ahead and authorized the contractor to do the work."

The other building the structure is attached to, explains Neal, is used by the Morrow County Court for storage. For example, the building was used to house the Morrow County Courthouse clock tower during its

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Recently mounted surveillance camera has people questioning purpose

Sheriff's Dept. says not being used for traffic violations

By David Sykes

A new sheriff's camera, that looks straight down Main St. in Heppner, is not being used to catch routine traffic violations, the Morrow County Sheriff's Office said.

"I don't know why this is causing such a stir," Undersheriff Steve Myron told the Heppner Gazette-Times last week. "We have had cameras in Morrow County for years and no one ever said anything."

He said, however, that since the department recently mounted a camera on a power pole next to the Gilliam Bisbee building looking straight down Heppner's Main Street, the department has been receiving calls from citizens wondering what the purpose is. A blue light flashing on the camera has also caught people's attention. In addition, there is also a new camera mounted in Lexington at the intersection of Highways 74 and 207.

Myron, who applied for a grant to buy the cameras and is responsible for these, and all the other cameras operating in the county, said many people suspect they are being used to detect traffic violations and then issue tickets, which he said can't be farther from the truth.

He said the cameras are not being monitored 24 hours a day by a person at the sheriff's office but will be used mainly for tracking vehicles in case of a crime or emergency. He said if a crime were reported with a vehicle description somewhere in the county, then the dispatch office in Heppner could look at various cameras and try to find out where that suspect was headed. With the size of the county and deputies being



Recently mounted surveillance cameras in Heppner (pictured) and Lexington have caused inquiries as to their purpose. -Photo by David Sykes

in different parts of the county, the cameras will be an aid to law enforcement in tracking down suspects or vehicles involved in accidents. The cameras are recording continuously 24 hours a day. After 30 days, they record over themselves, so are not archived, Myron said.

Citizens had also been curious about the camera's purpose since the city of Heppner announced last month there would be a "stop sign blitz" or concentrated effort by law enforcement to crack down on people running stop signs. "For the next two weeks, the on-duty officer will be patrolling in areas where this problem is most predominant," the city said in a June 24 news release.

Sheriff Ken Matlack also said the cameras are not being used for traffic tickets, but rather to alert deputies to a suspect vehicle's direction, or if there is an emergency management situation where the department would have to direct traffic or look for other traffic hazards.

Matlack said that, even though the cameras would not be monitored, if a crime

were committed in view of the cameras, the recordings would be reviewed and used as evidence.

In South County the cameras are located on Main in Heppner, on top of the sheriff's office and at the Kinzua Mill site looking toward the highway, as well as one in Lexington. In North County they are located on the Boardman water tower, the Boardman rest area, exit 165 at the Port of Morrow on I-84, and the Irrigon skate park.

Myron said the system is set up in such a way that a deputy could log on to the cameras with their smart phone, but that the bandwidth is so small the pictures are "very slow."

He also said although some of the cameras can "pan" or move around, this feature has been disabled so the cameras cannot look at people's yards or houses.

"I hope this puts people at ease. We don't want to look in someone's yard or monitor people," Myron said.

Sheriff Matlack said he hopes anyone with concerns about the cameras will contact him or his office.

Additional jail time for ranchers' range fires?

—Resentencing delayed to October

The following article was originally published in *Western Livestock Journal*, July 10, 2015.

By Theodora Johnson, WLJ Correspondent

An eastern Oregon family with a long history in ranching is fighting to keep its cow/calf operation afloat against an onslaught of blows from the federal government. Two members of the Hammond family have already done time in federal prison for setting these fires, they are facing a resentencing—now scheduled for late October—that could land them back in prison.

The fire, set in 2001, was a prescribed burn on Hammond's private property; a routine

range improvement practice. The other fire, set on Hammond's private property in 2006, was a back-burn intended to protect the ranch's winter pasture from a lightning fire on adjacent federal land. Combined, the two fires burned about 140 acres of federal land. Now, although two Hammond family members have already done time in federal prison for setting these fires, they are facing a resentencing—now scheduled for late October—that could land them back in prison.

The Hammonds hold grazing rights on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and own private grazing acres intermingled with

BLM land in the Steens Mountains. For 45 years, the Hammonds have used their BLM grazing rights and private property to run a successful operation. But now, their operation is being threatened not only by criminal and civil charges brought by the federal government, but with the loss of their grazing permits, as well. The BLM has refused to renew their grazing permits for two years running.

Although the family has refrained from making a public splash, the story is slowly getting out. Court documents are beginning to circulate. Those documents paint a picture of a family that serves on the local school board, volunteers



Photo of a controlled burn taking place in Nevada. -Photo courtesy of the Nevada BLM.

in community clubs and counsels, and donates time, money and meat each year to local youth organizations and senior groups. District Court Judge Michael Hogan, the federal judge who first saw their case, went on record calling the Hammonds "the salt of their community."

The fires

Why did Hammonds start the fires? According to court documents, the 2001 "Hardie-Hammond" fire was set under a long-standing plan between Hammonds and their BLM range conservationist to burn off invasive species on that section. They had called the BLM at noon that day to see

if burning was permitted. After being told there was no burn ban in effect, the Hammonds told the BLM that they would be setting a fire on that section.

The fire later spread to approximately 139 acres of public land, land that happened to be one of Hammond's grazing allotments. The Hammonds presented evidence that the spread onto public land was not intentional. However, back in 1999, a similar scenario had occurred (a prescribed burn on their land spread to public land), and the Hammonds had been warned that they would face serious

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Heppner hosts League of Oregon Cities meeting

Heppner was host to a League of Oregon Cities small cities support network meeting this past week. The meeting was held at Heppner City Hall, and officials from a dozen cities and organizations were on hand to discuss legislation, issues and programs facing small cities in Oregon.

Heppner City Manager Kim Cutsforth along with Sean O'Day, General Counsel of the League, were hosts of the meeting. Lunch was served to the guests.

Each representative, some mayors and some city managers, gave an update on events and issues facing their small Eastern Oregon cities, and O'Day presented a wrap-up of legislation affecting small cities from the recently concluded Oregon State Legislative session.

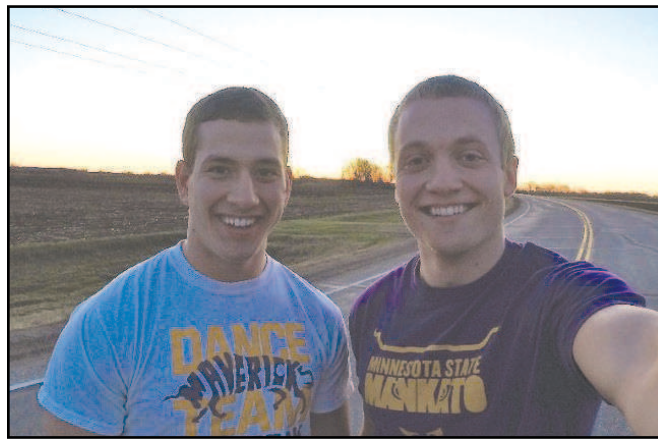
'Biker boys' work in tandem to fight cancer

A bicycle built for two usually brings to mind visions vacation pastimes, and maybe even the lyrics of old-time songs, but two young men have taken on a two-seater with a much more serious goal in mind.

Alex Kvanli and Mitch Gillen, both 22, embarked last month on a 70-day, 4,000-mile, cross-country bicycle ride to help fight cancer.

Kvanli, the nephew of local FedEx delivery driver Colene Baasch, says the ride is deeply personal for him.

"My four-year-old



Alex Kvanli and Mitch Gillen.

cousin, Cooper, passed away from a rare form of brainstem cancer in 2008," Kvanli wrote on the duo's GoFundMe page. "He

fought the disease for 13 months, inspiring many people with his courage and

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