

Boardman County fair is 'shear' to be a good time

renames street for Umatilla Electric CEO

At their last council meeting, Boardman City Councilors unanimously voted to pass a resolution renaming a street after Umatilla Electric's Chief Executive Officer Steve Eldrige.

Building is already underway for Umatilla Electric's new operations center on Puskarich Avenue, which prompted the name-change request. Puskarich Avenue will now be NE Eldrige Drive.

In the resolution it states Steve Eldrige has had a significant presence to the growth of the Boardman area with



his service as an engineer since 1972 and as the CEO of Umatilla Electric Cooperative since 1990. It also states Eldrige has announced his retirement in 2016.

The city recognizes the capital, personnel, and operational investment by Umatilla Electric Cooperative's construction of the operations center in Boardman for continued economic development.

Currently there is only one other business on NE Eldrige Drive, which was notified of the street name-change request.

In other city business, councilors saw a presentation of the police department's new body cameras and Tasers.

Also, the council approved the city manager to sign the closing documents for the sale of city property to Love's Travel Stops, which is expected to close on Aug. 6.

The next meeting of the Boardman City Council will be Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 7 p.m. in the Boardman City Hall Council Chambers.



Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Queen Macy Gibbs and brother Keegan Gibbs get in some last-minute preparations as they shear a sheep Monday night before fair while Shane Rodriguez looks on. The Morrow County Fair and Rodeo will take place Wednesday through Sunday, Aug. 19-23; see more photos PAGE EIGHT. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

Canyon Creek fire continues to threaten Grant County

JOHN DAY, Ore.—With so much smoke in the air, it's sometimes difficult to tell where it's coming from, and whether it's close to home or farther away. However, it's a safe bet that much of the smoke hanging over Morrow County right now comes from the Canyon Creek Complex fire in Grant County.

The Canyon Creek Complex is currently estimated at 43,738 acres. It was started Aug. 12 by a lightning strike just south of John Day and Canyon City. So far it has threatened more than 500 structures and destroyed more than 50, 26 of them homes. At the last update prior to press time, it was still considered 0 percent contained.

It's also not only a big deal to locals; officials say it is the number-one priority nationally for resources. Additional firefighting resources continue to arrive from around the state and country. Approximately 561 firefighters are current-

ly assigned to this incident and more arrived Tuesday to assist.

Monday firefighters constructed and improved fireline in the north. They also focused on the south. Structural firefighting crews worked directly around homes, while air resources dropped retardant and bulldozers cut a line to slow the spread of fire. Several homes were saved due to the direct action of fire crews.

Tuesday evening at 5:30 p.m. a community meeting was held at Grant Union High School's old gym with incident commanders, fire crews and local officials will be on scene to provide information.

Several communities are under Level 3 and Level 2 evacuations. An American Red Cross shelter has been established at the Mt. Vernon Community Center.

The Red Cross is transitioning to providing financial and relief services for displaced residents. Those

County court shows resolve concerning wolves, right to bear arms

By Andrea Di Salvo

Morrow County Court signed two resolutions last month concerning issues close to the hearts of many Eastern Oregon residents. The resolution R-2015-10, in support of Second Amendment rights, was signed in response to the passing of Oregon Senate Bill 941.

Senate Bill 941 was enacted during the Oregon Legislative Assembly's 2015 regular session and signed into law by Govern-

nor Kate Brown. It went into effect on Sunday, Aug. 9.

According to the bill's summary, SB 941 "Requires private person to complete transfer of firearm by appearing with transferee before gun dealer to request criminal background check or shipping or delivering firearm to gun dealer in certain circumstances. Specifies exceptions for family members, law enforcement, inherited firearms and certain tem-

porary transfers. Punishes violation by maximum of one year's imprisonment, \$6,250 fine, or both, or maximum of 10 years' imprisonment, \$250,000 fine, or both, for second or subsequent offense. Authorizes Department of State Police to notify appropriate law enforcement agency when, during criminal background check performed prior to transfer of firearm, department determines that recipient is prohibited from possessing firearm. Authorizes court to prohibit person ordered to participate in assisted outpatient treatment from purchasing or possessing firearm during period of treatment if certain criteria are met. Declares emergency, effective on passage."

In plain language, Sen. Doug Whitsett (R-Klamath Falls), states, "The new law requires a criminal background check to be performed by a third-party licensed gun dealer prior to most private firearm transfers. Both the person transferring the gun, and the person receiving the gun, must appear in person, before the gun dealer, and must bring each firearm to be transferred with them." Whitsett also added that "transfer" did not always mean "sale," but could refer to leaving a firearm with a friend for safekeeping.

Whitsett, who himself voted against the bill, also says that, during the bill's debate in the legislature, local elected officials from two-thirds of Oregon's counties opposed it, and that many local governing bodies have passed resolutions or ordinances in support of their constituents' Second Amendment rights.

Morrow County is among those officially opposing the bill. The resolution R-2015-10 quotes both the U.S. and Oregon constitutions and declares that "state and federal lawmakers continue to propose measures aimed at restricting all firearms and ammunitions," as well as calling the bill an "unfunded mandate."

The resolution concludes by stating that the county "strongly supports the right of the people to keep and bear arms," and "vigorously opposes any state or federal law that unfairly and unconstitutionally restricts these rights..."

On another note, the county court drafted R-2015-11 urging the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to delist gray wolves under the Oregon Endangered Species Act. The issue is on the agenda at Fish and Wildlife meetings scheduled for this fall.

Gray wolves were listed as endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1973, but federally delisted in Oregon east of highways 395, 78, and 95 in 2011.

At the state level, the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission implemented a Wolf Conservation and Management Plan in 2005, updating it in 2010 to focus on building a self-sustaining population with the

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Fire operations Tuesday on the Canyon Creek Complex included protecting a powerline on the west side to avoid damage and interruptions to service. -Contributed photo

wishing to make monetary donations on behalf of displaced residents can contact the American Red Cross Mountain River Chapter at redcross.org/cascades or in person at the shelter located on Ingle Street in Mt. Vernon.

Closures

ODOT crews are currently working on U.S. 395 between Canyon City and Seneca, which has been closed since Aug. 13 due to the Canyon Creek complex fire. Numerous signs and guard rail posts need to be replaced along the fire-damaged route, and over a hundred hazard trees removed. Falling rock and debris due to fire-related erosion issues is another key safety concern that ODOT says crews must attend to. ODOT plans to open the route by the end

of the week, with some limitations.

An emergency fire closure is in effect in the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness area. A copy of the closure order and map is available at <http://inciweb.nwccg.gov/incident/4495/>. Forest Service personnel have assisted with escorting campers and other recreationalists out high-use areas, coordinating with Grant County Sheriff's Office and other local agencies to facilitate the closure.

Fire activity will likely have some effect on hunting; for more information contact <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/>.

Additional information on the Canyon Creek Complex can be found on

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Free Talking Rock tour this Saturday

The City of Heppner is inviting everyone for a free bus tour of the town's Talking Rocks after the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Parade this Saturday, Aug. 22.

Participants who want to learn more about the

community's history are asked to meet in front of Heppner City Hall at 11:30 a.m. The tour is expected to last approximately one hour.

For information, call 541-676-9618.



Right: History buffs are invited to hop on board for a free bus tour of Heppner's Talking Rocks this Saturday after the fair and rodeo parade. -Contributed photo

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