

A great weekend for a great event

Heppner hosts the fourth annual Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway ride



Bicyclists from all over the Northwest came to town for the fourth annual Blue Mountain Century Scenic Bikeway ride last weekend. -Contributed photo

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Sen. Hansell holds town hall



Oregon Senator Bill Hansell (R-Athena) stopped by Heppner to discuss "The good, the bad and the ugly" from the 2015 Oregon legislative session. Hansell answered questions and gave attendees a recap of bills that were passed—or defeated—in the Oregon Senate this year. He covered topics that ranged from a water funding package he helped pass to his frustration over a growing urban-rural divide in the state. Hansell was in Heppner as part of a series of town halls across the district. Above: Hansell talks with a gathering of locals at Heppner City Hall. Below R-L: Hansell stands with locals Gerry Arnson and Bob Jepsen. -Contributed photos



More West Nile found in Morrow County

Low levels of West Nile virus still persist in Morrow County with two more mosquito pools testing positive for the virus.

West Nile virus, a mild flu-like disease spread by mosquitoes, has been reported to have been found in two testing sites in Morrow County Oregon, according to Oregon Public Health officials. The mosquitoes were collected on the nights of Sept. 8 and 9 near Irrigon and Boardman. These are the fifth mosquito pools to test positive for West Nile virus in the area, with the first being detected on Aug. 10 on the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge. Health officials are ad-

vising people in Morrow County to take precautions against mosquitoes in order to avoid the risk of infection.

"The risk of contracting West Nile virus may be low, but we do encourage people to take appropriate precautions to protect themselves against mosquito bites," said Greg Barron, Manager of North Morrow Vector Control District. "We will continue our mosquito control operations by larvaciding, utilizing our Ultra Low Volume (ULV) truck mounted sprayers and possibly some spraying by helicopter to reduce adult mosquito populations," Barron said.

Mustang Diner opens its doors



Jim Rice (left) and son David Rice stand in the newly-renovated dining room of the Mustang Diner in Heppner, located at the site of the old bowling alley. The family-owned business is now open; the Rices plan to maintain regular hours of 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week. The menu features breakfast items, burgers, sandwiches and steaks, as well as a nightly special of the chef's choice. Along with food, the restaurant has a collection of old-time Heppner memorabilia, as well as other antiques for diners to peruse. -Photo by David Sykes

Second round of local grant funds available

Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) has announced it has funds remaining from the first round of requests for grant funds and will be offering a second round of funding.

These funds are to be used for community and public enhancement for South Morrow County. Applicant organizations must have a current 501(c)(3) public charity status from the IRS and be a local organization, club, special -See SECOND ROUND FOR GRANTS/PAGE TWO

Ag science award honors a history of hard work and community connection

By Andrea Di Salvo

A local program received long-overdue recognition this year.

The Heppner agricultural science program received the OVATA Program of the Year (Secondary/Middle) Award from the Oregon Vocational Agriculture Teacher's Association at the association's summer conference at the end of June in Yamhill, OR. The award is the highest honor the association can give to a program.

The award is different from many in that, rather than being nominated, Ag science teachers must apply

for the award. Heppner Ag Science Instructor and FFA (Future Farmers of America) Advisor Beth Dickenson did just that, hoping to gain recognition for the hard work put in by both the students and the community over the years.

"There's a lot of different things kids compete in, a lot of different things they learn," said Dickenson, "but I thought it was a neat opportunity for the whole chapter to get recognized, because some of the hardest workers are often in the

background."

"This was an opportunity for the whole program—whether they graduated five years ago or just earned their first degree—for the whole program to be recognized," she added.

The chapter was judged for the instructor's teaching philosophy and instruction, how involved students are in experiential learning, and involvement in student organizations like FFA. Chapters that applied for the award were also evaluated on how effective they were at forming partner-

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Heppner Agricultural Science students proudly display their OVATA award for Outstanding Secondary/Middle School Program. -Contributed photo

Skinny Bull Ag Museum keeps the past alive through one couple's passion for history

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If you've driven through Irrigon lately and looked at the location of the former grocery store, (behind the Bank of Eastern Oregon) you can't help but notice a collection of old farm equipment...balers, tractors, plows, etc. Next time, stop in and visit with Wayne and Wanda Schnell who have opened the Skinny Bull Ag Museum with an

assortment of their personal collection. The museum opened March 21, and is open Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. They are closed Wednesday and Thursday.

The museum got its name from Wayne's long-time friend, Ray Fox (who has passed away). Wayne used to farm and raise hay, and sold his hay to Fox's feedlot. The two friends

joked and teased each other all the time. Wayne would kid Fox about how skinny his bulls were at the feedlot, and Fox would respond that it was Wayne's fault because of the weedy hay he sold to Fox. Before Ray Fox passed away, Wayne shared his dream of having the museum, and promised to name it "The Skinny Bull Museum" in Ray Fox's honor.

Wayne and Wanda have been married for 12 years.

Wanda used to belong to a car club in Umatilla. One day Wayne came to the club and they met. Wanda was a process mechanic for 25 years at Lamb Weston. Wayne laughs, "I started having Wanda come out to

my place to work on my equipment. After a while, I couldn't afford her anymore, so I had to marry her!"

Wayne was raised in Camas, WA and worked as a machinist until they went

out on strike and he decided to go do something else. A friend told him about a farm for sale in Irrigon, and that's how he ended up raising alfalfa and orchard

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