

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

VOL. 134 NO. 42 10 Pages Wednesday, November 4, 2015 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

County hires new administrator

Morrow County ended its search for a new county administrator last Wednesday with the hiring of Gerald "Jerry" Sorte. Sorte's official start date is currently set for Dec. 1.

The Morrow County Court recently voted to hire an administrator to take over some of the current duties of Morrow County Judge Terry Tallman. Upon Tallman's retirement at the end of 2016, the county court plans to eliminate the judge position and operate with a full-time administrator and three part-time commissioners.

As a stipulation of his employment, Sorte, 35, will live within Morrow County. Sorte brings with him wife, Misty, and their two young children, who plan to arrive just before Christmas.

Sorte was raised in Corvallis, OR and attended Corvallis schools. He graduated from Oregon State University with a degree in political science and minor in economics and then obtained a master's in public administration from the University of Missouri.

He is the son of Bruce Sorte, the OSU Extension Community Economist for Eastern Oregon who has worked several times with local organizations like Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group.



Jerry Sorte

Jerry Sorte also has a strong planning background, including previous work experience as a planner in Polk County, OR for about eight years and his current position as assistant director of -See COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR/PAGE THREE

Heppner, Ione send teams to state tournaments

Mustang football enters first round of playoffs, Lady Cards aim for volleyball quarterfinals



Above left: Weston Putman keeps an eye on the TigerScots as he runs the ball, but Weston-McEwen didn't even come close to shutting down the Mustang powerhouse team last Friday in its final regular season game. Heppner enters the first round of playoffs at home this Saturday at 3 p.m. -Photo by Sandra Putman



Above right: It's the last set of the game, and the Cardinal girls are down and ready, with Tristan Estabrook (left) and Maggie Flynn (standing) in front. The girls won the second-round game to advance to quarterfinals this week. -Photo by Sylvia Sandford -See more sports pages THREE and FOUR

New Infant Day Care Center opens in Heppner

A new Heppner Day Care Infant Center has opened in Heppner. The center will take infants from six weeks to three years old. The center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and will have a staff of three. As of last week the center had already proven popular, with seven of its eight slots taken. People can stop and get an application and sign up on the waiting list, however. It is located at 278 Main St. in Heppner.

To take care of the infants the center has a kitchen and will serve breakfast, lunch and a snack. Food is provided except for formula. The three-person staff is trained in CPR and first aid.



The new Infant Day Care Center is open and not taking "customers." Pictured (L-R) are Manager Lynan Scott, Lindsay Roy, Grady Henderson having fun on the rocker, and Grady's dad Austin looking on. -Photo by David Sykes

"We are ready and excited to get started," says manager Lynan Scott.

G-T Trophy Corner



Aaron Smythe of Hardman went on a walk across the road recently and spotted some turkeys, so he went home and got his shotgun, and then went back, snuck up and shot the closest one to him—a hen—for his first turkey. Cross that off the bucket list. Then, since his dad wasn't home to help him, he called John Wight at Pettyjohn's to ask him how to properly take care of it. Happy Thanksgiving! -Contributed photo

Taylor, Gorham resign from fair board

Two vacancies remain

The Morrow County Fair Board has two empty slots with the retirement of long-time members Rod Taylor and Nancy Gorham, both of whom stepped down at the end of the fair this year.

Remaining members are Angie Hanson, Pat Tolar (chairperson), Zachary Lantis and Rhonda Hamby.

Taylor, 48, had been on the board for 10 years, serving as chairman for seven years, as well as a member at large for several years. While not a native of Morrow County, he has lived here since the age of five. He now lives in Ione and owns Double T Farming in partnership with his brother.

When asked why he joined the fair board a decade ago, he joked, "My wife came home one night and said, 'You're on the fair board.' But," he added, "I've enjoyed every bit of it

over the years."

After 10 years, though, he says it's time for something different. Other commitments like Ione City Council had started to conflict with the board, and "I thought it would be a better deal to let younger people come in and start trying to do it," he said.

Gorham, 44, has served on the board for six years, most recently as chairperson, but also in two stints as vice chairperson and some time as member at large. She now lives with her family in Boardman, but was raised from second grade in

-See FAIR BOARD OPENINGS/PAGE TEN

Teen contracts bubonic plague after hunting trip near Heppner

Public health officials say the disease remains rare in Oregon

A case of the "black death" is likely linked to a hunting trip in the Heppner area, state and local officials report.

The Oregon Health Authority's Public Health Division and the Crook County Public Health Department are confirming a case of bubonic plague in a teenage Crook County girl. It is one of eight human

cases diagnosed in Oregon since 1995.

The girl is believed to have acquired the disease from a flea bite during a family elk-hunting trip near Heppner that started on Oct. 16. The family was hunting in the Heppner Unit, but no more precise location was available ac-

-See BUBONIC PLAGUE/PAGE FIVE

Nominations open this week for Town & County

Nominations for Heppner Chamber of Commerce's Town and Country Community Awards will be accepted starting this Friday, Nov. 6, and running through Friday, Dec. 11.

The theme for the event will be "An Evening with the Stars." The event will be held on Thursday, Jan. 14, at the Morrow County Fairgrounds. The month-long nomination period is intended to give community members time to get nomination forms in for community members for "Woman

of the Year," "Man of the Year," "Business of the Year," "Citizen-Educator of the Year," "Lifetime Achievement" and "Youth Award."

Nomination forms will be available at the chamber office, Bank of Eastern Oregon, Kuhn Law Office, Community Bank and the post office. The completed nomination forms need to be turned in the chamber office or Kuhn Law Offices no later than Friday, Dec. 11, to be considered for the 2016 community awards event.

Warm October still low on rainfall

According to the National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged warmer than normal during October, but rainfall was still below normal.

The average temperature for October was 55.8 degrees, which was 4.5 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 67.9 degrees, which was 3.7 degrees above normal. The highest was 81 degrees on the 11th. Low temperatures

averaged 43.7 degrees, which was 5.3 degrees above normal. The lowest was 33 degrees, on the 25th.

Precipitation totaled 0.53 inches during October, which was 0.61 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation of at least .01 inch was received on 10 days with the heaviest, 0.15 inches, reported on the 29th.

Precipitation this year has reached 5.42 inches, -See OCTOBER WEATHER/PAGE FIVE

WCVEDG announces second-round grant recipients

Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) has announced the recipients of the second round of Community and Public Enhancement Grants awarded to local groups last month.

In July, WCVEDG announced that it had received funds from the Colum-

bia River Enterprise Zone Board (CREZ) to be used for community and public enhancement for South Morrow County. Earlier this fall the group awarded a total of \$34,141.49 in funding to local organizations. It has now announced at addi-

-See WCVEDG GRANTS/PAGE SIX

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