

Glowing with Mustang Pride



This congratulatory sign glows prominently from the home of Gary and Barb Watkins in Heppner. It's the second sign Gary Watkins has made for a Mustang champion football team, the first being at their last state championship in 1992 (pictured below). -Contributed photos



The Watkins home in Heppner glows with Mustang pride thanks to the handiwork of Gary Watkins.

To celebrate the Mustang football team's recent state championship, Wat-

kins created an eight-foot by eight-foot particle board sign that reads "Merry Xmas Mustangs 2015 State Champs." The sign stands near the Watkins home on the hill near the high school where anyone driv-

ing toward the school can see it. However, Watkins wanted the sign to really send a message. So, after wife Barb Watkins drew the lettering for the message on the sign, he proceeded to drill quarter-inch holes along the lettering, through which he pushed white Christmas lights—nearly 2,000 holes for nearly 2,000 lights.

Watkins, who describes himself as a die-hard Mustang fan, says some people ask him if the sign wasn't a lot of work, to which he replies, "Not nearly as much work as those kids and coaches put in."

This is the second time Watkins has constructed a Christmas greeting for a victorious Mustang team. The first was after the Mustang football state championship in 1992. That time, he said, he didn't have a shop in which to construct the sign.

"They got these huge, big plyboards and he brought it into my living room," remembers Barb Watkins. "He started drilling holes for this sign, wood chips flying everywhere."

This time, however, Watkins constructed the impressive sign in a security of his shop. He did note, though, that he could see a way to save himself some work in the future.

"I'm going to save this sign this time," he says. "I told coach Grant and coach Payne that it would be real easy to turn that five into a six or an eight."

Heppner JV defeats Honkers

The Heppner Mustang boys' junior varsity basketball team won their game last week by a score of 48-34 over the Arlington Honkers.

It was a close game in the first quarter. Arlington has a 6'7" freshman post player who has some skills and scored eight points in the quarter. It took a while for the Mustang defenders to get a handle on him, but they held him to just seven points for the rest of the game. It turned out to be a good battle of post players as Wyatt Steagall scored six points of his own in the first quarter. The score ended up tied at 10-10 after one quarter of play.

Heppner outscored the Honkers in the second as Coby Dougherty attacked the basket and scored six points. The score at halftime was 19-16 in favor of the Mustangs.

It was the third quarter where the real difference was made. Dougherty would attack the hoop and drop off passes to Steagall, who then finished at the rim with a score. Steagall had eight points in the quarter. The Mustangs put up a total of 18 points to only eight for Arlington. Heppner led at the end of the quarter 37-24.

The Mustangs scored 11 points in the fourth quarter and Arlington finished with 10. The Heppner JV



Jake Lindsay leaps for the basket over the heads of the Honkers during the junior varsity game last week. -Photo by Sandra Putman

team got the win by the final score of 48-34.

Steagall led the team in scoring with 15 and Dougherty was next with eight. Kevin Smith and Trent Smith finished the game with seven points each. Kaden Corbin racked up five points for the Mustangs. Beau Wolters, Dakota Howard and Cason

Mitchell all scored two points each in the game.

The JV team plays three games this week. On Tuesday they hosted the Sherman County Huskies. On Friday they travel to Imbler to play the Panthers. The team will then finish the week by hosting the Grant Union Prospectors.

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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petition in Chicago.

In other business, the board:

-learned from Superintendent Dirk Dirksen that Irrigon Junior/Senior High School will become a 3A school next year and will remain at that level for at least two years. He said that IJSHS will join Riverside Junior/Senior High School in that OSAA category and both will be traveling to Burns, also a 3A school, for sports competition, which is a long travel time for both.

-discussed the process for superintendent evaluation and decided to remain with the current plan this year but streamline the process for next year, starting with a board work session in August.

-heard from Dirksen concerning federal and state education regulations. He said that educational requirements will remain but will be monitored at the state rather than federal level.

-heard from board members concerning the Oregon School Board As-

sociation conference they attended.

-approved a trip request from Nelson for her and around eight students belonging to the HJSHS Art & Culture Club to travel to Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, in June. The board's approval was contingent on insurance coverage when traveling out of the U.S. Students on this trip will need passports. Nelson said the trip would give the students an international feel, but with only around six hours in travel time.

-received the following enrollment report for December: A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irrigon-269; Sam Boardman Elementary, Boardman-340; Heppner Elementary-171; Irrigon Elementary-195; Windy River Elementary, Boardman-214; Heppner Jr./Sr. High School-154; Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School-379; Riverside Jr./Sr. High School-400; Morrow Education Center, Irrigon-42; total-2,164.

-approved policy on "Local Wellness Program," and Student Hazing/Harass-

ment/Intimidation/Menacing/Sullying/Cyberbullying/Teen Dating Violence/Domestic Violence.

-received the following employment action: resignations/non-renewals-Lucia Zavala, Irrigon Elementary School education assistant; extra duty contracts-Marie Cain, RJSHS head volleyball coach, 2016-17 season; Megan Fischer, IJSHS head junior high girls' basketball coach; Darcee Mitchell-IJSHS assistant junior high girls' basketball coach; Robert "Jody" Saunders, IJSHS assistant high school girls' basketball coach; Ken Thompson, IJSHS assistant high school wrestling coach.

-approved annual organizational details, including designating district positions, custodian of funds, borrowing limit, facsimile signatures, budget officer, newspapers of records, legal counsel, insurance agent of record, depositories for district funds and auditors.

-heard the following announcements: Christmas break, Dec. 18-Jan. 3, school resuming Jan. 4;

Elks holds annual Hoop Shoot



On Dec. 13, the Heppner Elks Lodge held its annual Hoop Shoot Free Throw contest. Twenty-five participants ages eight to 13 shot 25 free throws during the contest in hopes of advancing to the Northeast District Hoop Shoot in Hermiston in January. The following participants have earned that spot: for the 8-9-year-old girls, Hallee Hisler; for 8-9-year-old boys, Jackson Coiner; for 10-11-year-old girls, ZaBrena Masterson; for 10-11-year-old boys, Brock Hisler; for 12-13-year-old girls, Sydney Wilson; and for 12-13-year-old boys, Casey Fletcher. Other participants included Katie Spivey, Zaleta Masterson, Lynn Williams, Ireland Martin, Zandra Masterson, Janelle Blakley, Madelyn Nichols, Damien Sheeships-Ball, Aden Lathrop, Zander Fisher, Cody Fletcher, Caden George, Isiah Martin, Joe Sherman, Jacob Finch, Trevor Nichols, Jordan Sweeney, Derrick Smith and Kason Cimmiyotti. -Contributed photo

Heppner wrestling to get new mat

The Morrow County School District has ordered a new custom wrestling mat for the Heppner program. The 40-foot by 40-foot mat is a lightweight foam mats with an antimicrobial finish. The mat will feature a 30-foot wrestling circle and a six-foot Mustang

logo. Unfortunately, it will be 10-12 weeks before it is delivered.

"It is a significant investment by the school district of nearly \$10,000 into your wrestling program," says Heppner Wrestling Coach Mark Lemmon. "It

represents recognition to a legacy of the past and current wrestlers who have made this program a success over the last 10 or so years, and their sweat and blood contributed in proving that we can wrestle in south Morrow County."

CONGRATULATIONS TO RYAN SMITH & THE HEPPNER MUSTANGS WRESTLING TEAM ON THEIR VICTORIES AT THE 2015 MUILENBURG TOURNAMENT

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