

Park district to hold planning meeting

The Willow Creek Park District will hold an annual planning meeting on Monday, Jan. 18, at 1 p.m. at the Ione Community Church. The district board of directors will conduct regular business and also make plans for the upcoming season. The public is invited to attend. Written comments also may be submitted prior to the meeting by sending a letter to WCPD, PO Box 582, Heppner, OR 97836.

Nordic ski group kicks off season



Five participants in the Nordic ski club escaped the fog and gloom around Heppner on Saturday and enjoyed a day of skiing in fog-free sunshine at the OHV park. The group announced there was plenty of snow on the west side, so they will probably be taking advantage of skiing off Highway 207 or the 22 Road in the near future. Anyone who would like to give it a try is encouraged to let one of the club members know; they promise to try to get them up and skiing. Pictured around the warming fire are (L-R): Terry Harper, Steve and Molly Rhea, and Dan VanLiew, along with the group's ever-present canine companions. —Contributed photo

HEPPNER CITY COUNCIL

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for a minimum of 15 years, the expected length of the bond repayment, but could extend up to 25 years.

As in all previous agreements the city will own the land, building and firefighting equipment and then provide the rural district with all fire protection for the life of the contract.

In other fire hall business at Monday's meeting it was announced that the city has received a \$20,000 grant from an unnamed foundation to be used as matching funds for an additional \$45,000 for purchase of fire equipment.

Fire Chief Rusty Estes also gave his year-end wrap up and gave the following statistics for 2015: The fire department responded to 16 motor vehicle accidents, secured the helicopter landing zone 27 times, fought 20

wildland fires, two flue fires and eight structure fires, had 18 ambulance assistances, seven false alarms, two reports of people smelling smoke, one dumpster fire, three vehicle fires, and 355 chief calls. The department also provided mutual aid four times to Ione, one time to Boardman, three to Lexington and once to Pilot Rock.

In other business the city voted to extend the lease of its next door office to Tim Dickenson of Dickenson Chiropractic for \$450 per month. The agreement is for one year.

The council also heard a report from Public Works Director Chad Doherty, who highlighted some of the work his department did the past month including: replaced two water meters, replaced a broken water line at city hall that

had a leak, cleaned contact basins once, burned a brush pile at the sewer plant, did 10 septic dumps for commercial septic pumping companies to dump at the sewer plant for processing, hauled off two dead deer, did multiple de-icings, assisted with the light parade, hung up the Christmas banners and put lights on a tree at Heritage Plaza, cleaned off storm drains after a rain, started working on rehabbing picnic tables, replaced old weak barrier paper and cedar chips at the kids' play area, and hauled off material left after Baptist Church youth group cleaned the old pool area.

In other business the council made the following committee appointments for the coming year:

—Planning Commission: Four Years—Dave

Fowler, Cody High, Nancy Gochnauer, Jeff Bailey, Vi Wilgers, Don Stroeber, Patti Allstott.

—Budget Committee: Three years—Al Scott, Gayle Gutierrez, Steve Rhea, Tawny Miles, Tom Wolff, Joe Perry, Ralph Walker.

—Beautification Committee: One year—Martha Doherty, Vi Wilgers, Joanne Burleson, Merle Cowett.

—Fire Dept. Advisory Committee: Four years—Mike Jones, Dean Robinson, Jay Keithley, Steve Rhea, Hal Bergstrom, Council Member Corey Sweeney.

—Saint Patrick's Celebration Chairperson: One year—Joann Burleson, Sheryll Bates.

—Christmas Parade of Lights Chairperson: One year—Sheena Shank.

POW/MIA flag to fly at Boardman City Hall

Boardman City Hall has a new addition to its flag poles.

The Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag sits just below the American flag to comply with a new Oregon state law. House Bill 2892 was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown on May 28, 2015, and went into effect on Jan. 1. The new law requires that the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag be displayed with the Oregon State flag on public buildings in this state.

For more information, contact Boardman City Hall at 541-481-9252.

Justice Court Report

Morrow County Justice of the Peace Ann Spicer has released the following Justice Court report:

—John Melvin Healy, 60, of Heppner was found guilty of Maintain Dog as a Public Nuisance and fined \$260.

Marriage Licenses

The Morrow County Clerk's office has released the following report of marriage licenses:

January 7, 2016: —Victor Ruben Sanchez, 25, of Boardman and Zulema Avila Garcia, 25, of Boardman.

Boardman appoints planning commissioners

At their Jan. 5 council meeting, Boardman City Councilors appointed Cynthia Navarro and re-appointed Adam Cole to the planning commission. Both commissioners will serve three-year terms ending Dec. 31, 2018. This is the first appointment to the Boardman Planning Commission for Navarro and the second appointment for Cole.

The planning commission is comprised of seven members appointed by the city council and is a

permanent advisory body to the council on matters related to planning and development. The commission holds monthly public meetings to consider land use and zoning matters presented by staff, such as plan amendments, zone changes, conditional use permits, variances and tentative subdivision projects. Meetings are the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at Boardman City Hall. Currently the planning commission has two vacancies. Interested parties should

contact Boardman City Hall at 541-481-9252.

In other city business, councilors approved the new fee schedule for services provided at city hall and a 3 percent processing fee for all non-utility credit/debit card transactions \$500 and more. Also, councilors set Jan. 30 for their annual goal-setting workshop.

The next Boardman City Council meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 2, at 7 p.m. at the Boardman City Hall council chambers.

Sheriff's Report

November 24 (cont.): —Heppner ambulance responded to a call concerning a male in Heppner who was choking on a dry piece of chicken. The subject was breathing and able to talk but not able to get the chicken down. Patient was transported to Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

November 25: —Morrow County Sheriff's office was advised that Gilliam County Sheriff's Office served Edward Allen Jr., 42, a Morrow County restraining order.

—A female out of Echo advised that her juvenile stepdaughter stole her medical marijuana and she would like to make a report.

—A male in Irrigon advised that he believed over the last two months someone had been putting sugar in his gas tank.

—A female in Heppner advised a van slid through her backyard. She wanted contact with the city to have them put gravel in the area. She advised she would exchange information with the driver and handle it herself.

—MCSO received report of a PT Cruiser all over the road on I-84 west, Boardman, traveling about 60 mph. MCSO responded and cited Richard M. Tworek, 46, for Failure to Maintain Lane and Operating Cell Phone While Driving.

—Gilliam County Sheriff's Office requested assistance with a suspicious call on I-84 in the Boardman area; the passenger in a taxi called 911 needing assistance and then the taxi driver got on the phone and advised they did not need assistance. Gilliam County dispatch got the taxi to pull over and the passenger got out and started running down the freeway. MCSO responded to assist.

—A person at Irrigon Shell reported a vehicle backed into another vehicle in the parking lot. The caller stated the suspect vehicle hit the other vehicle multiple times trying to leave, then the driver got out of the vehicle and took off on foot. The subject was described as a teenage-looking male, possibly intoxicated. MCSO and Boardman PD

responded. MCSO arrested Tomas Dominguez Juarez, 18, for Failure to Carry and Present Driver's License, Failure to Perform Duties of a Driver with property Damage, and Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants, bac .05. the subject was also cited for Driving Uninsured and No Ops.

November 26: —A person in Irrigon advised Morrow County Sheriff's Office that he heard something inside his house; he advised that he wanted a deputy. MCSO took it under investigation.

—A person on Chase St. in Heppner advised that in the last 45 minutes three or four cars had attempted to get up the hill and had slid back down, nothing hit, no one hurt. The caller wanted MCSO advised. City of Heppner was notified.

—A deputy advised of a vehicle parked at the bottom of Chase/Cannon in Heppner. It was not parked in a good location.

November 29: —A man in Irrigon advised MCSO that his wife and another male took his truck. MCSO

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Other views on the Hammond case

"Mr. President, free the Hammonds."

Thank you East Oregonian editors but that would only be the first step. Rep. Greg Walden said it better in a speech Jan. 6. "Hopefully the country, through this, understands we have a real problem in America, how we manage our lands and how we are losing them... I have seen what happens when overzealous bureaucrats go beyond the law and clamp down on people."

The Hammonds ranch has been enduring relentless government oppression, harassment and tyranny from overzealous bureaucrats since 1970. Why would government officials target the Hammond Ranch? The Federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has systematically driven virtually all the other private ranchers out of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge (MNWR). All except the Hammonds. Beginning in 1970 the BLM/FWS revoked 32 of 53 grazing permits of MNWR area ranches and significantly raised the fees of the remaining 21 permits.

In 1980 there were still 31 ranchers that refused to sell their heritage. The BLM/FWS flooded their ranches, destroying their property and forcing them to sell their now worthless ranches. In 1980 the BLM attempted to take away Hammond water rights in court and lost. The law has been changed so the government will never lose water rights court cases again.

In 1994 the BLM built an illegal fence around a Hammond ranch water source. The Hammonds rightfully objected and the Harney Co. Sheriff arrested Dwight Hammond and he spent two nights in jail. Because the BLM actions were illegal, no charges were filed. The BLM and the FWS continued their illegal attack against the Hammonds by barricading a public road that connected their ranch and revoking their grazing permits without cause or a court order. By now the Hammonds knew they would get no support from the local Sheriff's department, so they had no choice but to endure the government tyranny against them.

The Hammonds were next informed the "Oregon Fence Out Law" now only applied to ranchers, not the government, forcing the them to sell cattle on portions of the ranch they could not afford to fence. By the turn of the century, Hammonds were the last ranchers left within the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

No matter what the BLM and FWS did, the Hammonds would not yield their ranch or their heritage. That is when the BLM, FWS and local government officials came up with a brilliant plan. Use the courts and a 1996 terrorist law to arrest and convict these ranchers that refused to yield their land and heritage, and use the press to brand them as arsonists.

Once the Hammonds were convicted as arsonist/terrorists, the next step was to push the ranch into bankruptcy and force the Hammonds to sign a right of first refusal so they have no choice except to sell their ranch to the BLM.

The arsonist charge against the Hammonds is the greatest miscarriage of justice in modern Eastern Oregon history. The Hammonds had permission from the BLM for the range improvement fire in 2001 and the BLM admitted in court the fire improved the BLM range. The government attempt to use a young disgruntled grandson to frame the Hammonds was dismissed as not credible by Judge Hogen. The 2006 backburn fire started by the Hammonds saved their land from multiple fires that were threatening their ranch. The government presented no evidence to prove that any BLM land was burned by the Hammond back fire.

In contrast there have been multiple times where BLM-started fires have destroyed private property and cattle and not once has the BLM or FWS been held accountable. The U. S. government and local government officials need to admit they have failed to honor their constitutional responsibility and immediately work with local ranchers, loggers, farmers and citizens to restore our God-given liberty and heritage. Sherriff Ward has done nothing to aid, support or protect the Hammonds and needs to be recalled before he instigates bloodshed.

(s) Stuart Dick, Irrigon

College workshop planned at HHS

High school seniors who are interested in attending college or trade school but who need money to do it are invited to an Oregon College Goal open house on Wednesday, Jan. 27, from 4-7 p.m. in the Heppner High School library. Juniors and parents are also welcome to attend to obtain FAFSA (Free Application for Federal

Student Aid) help, scholarship information, OSAC (Office of Student Access and Completion) deadlines and college applications. Free money will be given to the first 10 seniors who sign up with Mrs. Payne.

For more information, contact Petra Payne at 541-676-9138 or paynep@morrow.k12.or.us.

made contact and determined it was a civil issue.

—A person in Irrigon reported that someone slashed all four tires on their van the night before. They requested contact.

—A male in Ione reported that he had been assaulted five to 10 minutes before by a male subject. He

advised the subject punched him three times in the face.

The caller declined medical but requested deputy contact. MCSO arrested Curtis Scott Thompson, 30, for Criminal Mischief II. The suspect was released on his own recognizance to appear when notified by the district attorney.