

## Groundbreaking marks beginning of a building, completion of a dream

By Andrea Di Salvo

Shovels sliced into the topsoil along Riverside Ave. in Heppner Monday during the groundbreaking ceremony for a new fire hall. However, according to those who know, the few moments of ceremony and celebration gave no clue as to the long, difficult road that led to the groundbreaking.

"It took a lot of things all happening together to make it happen," said Heppner City Manager Kim Cutsforth. "We've been working on this shovel day since September of 2014."

And it all started with a woman named Ida Farra.

Farra, a long-time supporter of the Heppner Fire Department, started the ball rolling in July of 2014 with what Cutsforth and Heppner Fire Chief Rusty Estes referred to as a "substantial" donation. While Cutsforth and Estes weren't at liberty to name amounts,



A large group gathered to celebrate the groundbreaking of the new fire hall in Heppner Monday. Back L-R: Salvador Cortes, Tony Weich and Mark Patton of Port of Morrow, Jim Kindle, Don Bennett, Ryan Jundt, Dan Sharp, Jay Keithley, Skip Matthews, and Jim McElligott. Front L-R: Stacey Lauritsen, John Ripple, Dean Robinson, Ida Farra, Steve Rhea, Rusty Estes, Kim Cutsforth, Janet Greenup and Chad Doherty. -Photo by David Sykes

"It was extremely generous. Extremely generous," Estes said.

"(Without her) this would still be just a dream," he added. "She made it happen."

To put it in perspective, Cutsforth explained that, to date, \$76,000 has been spent on the project—minus any cost for the land and without so much as a nail having gone into the

WCVEDG holds annual meeting

## Economic group hears ideas on business recruitment, retention

By David Sykes

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) held its annual meeting last Wednesday and heard a report from Oregon State University Economist Bruce Sorte on the health of businesses and the economy of South Morrow County.

Sorte had some good news, and some not so good news, about what he discovered about the economy and future of Heppner, Lexington and Ione.



Featured WCVEDG speaker, OSU economist Bruce Sorte.

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## False alarm leads to high-speed chase, arrest

A false alarm at a bank in Irrigon last week led to a high-speed chase across North Morrow County, eventually resulting in an arrest.

Last Wednesday around 8:18 a.m., the Morrow County Sheriff's Office responded to a bank alarm call at the Bank of Eastern Oregon in Irrigon, according to a statement released by Senior Deputy Ryan Jundt.

As deputies arrived, Deputy Colleen Neubert noticed a black four-door Nissan pickup speeding away from the area. While Deputy Todd Siex spoke with bank employees and determined the bank call to be a false alarm, Neubert followed the speeding pickup south on S. First St.

The Nissan pickup failed to stop at the intersection of S First St. and SE Wyoming Ave., and Neubert attempted a traffic

stop on the vehicle. The driver of the pickup, later identified as Lawrence Allen Perrin, 39, of Irrigon, failed to acknowledge the police emergency lights and refused to stop.

The high-speed chase continued eastbound on SE Wyoming, where Perrin again failed to stop at the intersection of SE Wyoming and Division.

Neubert followed the pickup south on Division and called dispatch to advise she was in a pursuit.

MCSO deputies were able to maintain a visual on the vehicle throughout a pursuit that covered several county roads south of Irrigon and at times reached speeds of 95 mph. The pickup at times left public roads and cut across farm roads and farm fields.

Nearly 15 minutes later, around 8:30 a.m., the



Lawrence Allen Perrin

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## Remembrance walk/run to benefit local EMS

Coordinators of the annual Friends Helping Friends Remembrance Walk/5K Run have announced that this year's proceeds will go to Morrow County Health District for use in Pioneer Memorial Hospital and emergency services.

"Friends Helping Friends has helped us for several years," said Molly Rhea, Director of Nursing at PMH. "Doing so, they've emphasized home health and emergency services."

With that in mind, planned purchases by the district include a glidescope for the ambulance and a blood warmer for use in the emergency room and for elective procedures.

Rhea said the glidescope is a portable device used for intubation, or opening an airway for a patient who has difficulty breathing. The special feature on this glidescope is

the video input that will guide emergency medical responders as they insert the breathing tube, allowing



Pioneer Memorial Hospital would like to purchase a glidescope similar to this one with funds donated by Friends Helping Friends. -Contributed photo

them to more quickly and easily secure an airway in an emergency situation.

"The intubation will definitely have the ability to save lives," said Rhea, noting that many of the district's ambulance transports

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## MCGG employee hangs up keys after more than 30 years on the road

By Andrea Di Salvo

After nearly four decades with Morrow County Grain Growers, Hal Bergstrom hung up his hat—or his keys—this week. And, he says, retirement has been a long time coming.

"We could start working at seven or eight years of age, pulling rye or picking rocks, so it's been a long road here," he says. "I figure, 38 years, I've put my time in. It's time to let someone younger take over, someone who needs a job."

Bergstrom, 65, was born in Pendleton but raised in the Eightmile area; his dad and mom lived on the Frank Anderson ranch at Ruggs. During his teenage years, he says he spent some time working for Eric Anderson and Shirley Rugg before graduating from Heppner High School in 1970.

After high school, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy for four years, stationed in San Diego on the U.S.S. Kitty Hawk. After the Navy, he returned to the Heppner area, working again for a few years for locals like Anderson and Rugg, as well as Art Warren. Then, in the late '70s, he took a job with MCGG in Lexington.

Bergstrom says he spent his first three years in the shop working as a mechanic. He started driving truck for MCGG 35 years ago, and that's when things got interesting. He says he's driven everything from lowboys hauling machinery to trucks hauling grain, fertilizer or fuel. And, over those thousands

of miles of roads, he's seen a few things.

"Some of the things I've seen behind the windshield," he recalls. "If they had a video camera up there, some of the close calls you have when you're packing 65,000 pounds of dead weight."

He remembers, for instance, driving through cities like Seattle and Spokane when the teamsters were on strike, and wondering if it was safe to stop for gas because they might think he was "scabbing," or breaking the strike.

"It got pretty interesting," he adds with a bit of understatement.

Bergstrom says he was also known as "the repo

man," often having to go repossess machinery for the Grain Growers.

partner waded into the pond with chains to hook up the drills, he recalls, but they



Hal Bergstrom in days past.

"One time I went to Burns to repo a set of drills. When we found them, they were sitting in the middle of a pond," he says. His

couldn't pull them out of the pond with their equipment. "I had to actually

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## G-T Trophy Corner



Sage Ferguson, daughter of Charlie and Jodi Ferguson of Lexington, harvested her first elk last Sunday from about 400 yards (about the distance to the vehicle in the background) with one shot. She took the elk around the Gurdane area. Sage was a recipient of an elk damage program tag through Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. -Contributed photo

## Local artist to hold exhibit

Local artist Andrew Sykes will have an opening exhibit of his works at the Pendleton Center of the Arts, 214 N. Main St., Pendleton, beginning this Thursday, Feb. 4, from 5:30-7 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served.

Sykes, a Heppner High School alumnus, has a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Cornish College

of the Arts, Seattle. He is also employed as a graphic designer and digital printer at Sykes Brothers Printing, LLC, Pendleton, which he operates with his brother, Chris Sykes.

The show will run Feb. 4-29 and is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from noon to 4 p.m.



Andrew Sykes

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