

Overtaken garbage truck results in hazmat call

An overturned garbage truck south of Heppner resulted in a hazardous materials call last Wednesday afternoon.

The garbage truck apparently started across a wooden bridge on private property on upper Rhea Creek, about 12 miles south of Heppner, when it broke through the bridge, overturning and landing in the creek.

According to Heppner Fire Chief Rusty Estes, it was a struggle for the driver to call 9-1-1, since the phone line to the property had been severed during the collapse; the emergency call actually came from a rural mail carrier who came in contact with the driver.

Heppner emergency services were the first responders on the scene, including Heppner rescue, Morrow County Sheriff's



The Hermiston hazmat crew responded to an overturned garbage truck on Upper Rhea Creek last week. -Photo courtesy of Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services

Office and the Heppner ambulance for the driver. The driver was transported to Pioneer Memorial Hospital with unknown injuries.

When the crews realized the truck was leaking oil and hydraulic fluid into the creek, they began containment measures but also

called Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services, which handles all hazardous material calls for northeast Oregon. Also called to the scene were an environmental company from the Tri-Cities and two tow trucks to pull the vehicle from the water.

The eight-man Hermiston hazmat crew arrived about three hours after the incident and continued the containment work started by Heppner crews. That included removing oil from the water and adding additional booms, long connections that float above and below the waterline to keep oil and debris contained. The team also removed oil and hydraulic fluid from the truck.

Hermiston battalion chief Jim Davis said gasoline and diesel spills were the most common calls for the hazmat team.

Hermiston Fire & Emergency Services also advised anyone who used water out of Rhea Creek to watch for oil and plan on using secondary water for a few days till fluids dissipated.

His Little Feet comes to Heppner



His Little Feet will be in concert tonight in Heppner. -Contributed photo

His Little Feet International Children's Choir will present a live concert today, Feb. 24, at 6 p.m. at St. Patrick's Parish hall. Admission is free but an offering will be taken for His Little Feet.

His Little Feet is an organization that seeks to help children around the world as well as equip people to practically respond to the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children worldwide.

Through His Little Feet, children around the world in need are given the opportunity to be a part of the His Little Feet International Children's Choir. While the children are in the choir they also participate in the His Little Feet Life Training Academy, where they are tutoring and trained in academics, performing arts and life skills. The organization also works to help children in 26 countries around the world.

DOERNBECHER



Some of Heppner High's math students display just a few of the blankets handmade locally for the children at Doernbecher in Portland. -Contributed photo

-Continued from PAGE ONE

children's hospital. Morgan said he started collecting supplies for Doernbecher after working with St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

"About eight years ago St. Jude's contacted me about doing a Math-A-Thon with them. And we did that. Then I learned that our local kids would go to Doernbecher if they had needs. That's when we made the switch-over to them."

The math teacher has organized fundraisers for Doernbecher in two previous years, 2012 and 2013. They did well those years, raising \$4,800 and \$2,500 worth of supplies and donations.

This year, though, Morgan said the community really stepped up, collecting more than \$5,000 in items for Doernbecher.

"I was shocked at how much was donated," he said, pointing to one of several boxes stacked in his classroom. "That one alone weighs 40 pounds."

"I was really impressed with the students, how they made this a priority," he added. "Some of them donated their own money, bringing in buckets of

change from home."

One of the main areas of focus was school supplies. While school supplies may not be the first thing that comes to mind with a children's hospital, Doernbecher, like many children's hospitals, offers classrooms for children who are at the hospital for an extended period of time. According to the hospital's website, Doernbecher offers two classrooms, which are administered by the Multnomah Education Service District and funded by the Oregon Department of Education. The classrooms serve students from kindergarten through 12th grade—kind of like a one-room schoolhouse. The hospital says its priority is to meet students where they are, medically, emotionally and academically, which means they need a wide variety of supplies. Morgan says the HHS fundraiser did a lot to help supply that need.

"We have everything they need to run a school. There were fantastic businesses and people who brought in school supplies—from calculators to pens, pencils—every item a kid would need."

It wasn't all business, though. Morgan said they

also received donations of toys and books for all ages, as well as cash donations to buy supplies. The Heppner students also participated in two sewing nights, sewing new blankets for the children at Doernbecher.

"Some wonderful ladies in the community took charge of that," Morgan said, adding that Pam Norton was instrumental in the sewing nights, but that other local women also provided invaluable help.

"It would have been impossible to do without their skill and knowledge, not just in sewing but also in teaching the students to sew," he said. "They were great at working with the students."

Morgan also said he admired the students who took the time to come and sew blankets for the hospital.

"They had other things they could have been doing. And these were school nights; they'd come after school, or straight from sports practice—I had everything from seventh-grade girls to football players who had just won the state championship," he said. "It was really great to see kids excited about giving back."

The result, Morgan

said, was far beyond his expectations.

"I was happy with 10 blankets. My goal was 20. We have 57," he said, adding that about 15 quilts were made at home by community members and then brought in—some anonymously. "It far surpassed what I thought we would get."

Morgan said he hopes to take a small group of older students down to Doernbecher in March. While hospital policy won't allow them to hand out the items themselves, Morgan hopes to take his students on a tour of Doernbecher, talk with the teacher there, and give his students a chance to learn about jobs in the medical field and the education they require.

For the future, Morgan says he wants to run a fundraiser and supply drive for the children's hospital every two years. He also says he's stunned and grateful for the outpouring during this year's collection.

"I'm always amazed how supportive this community is of our kids and our schools," said Morgan. "This is just an example of how supportive people in this area are of a good cause."

Bass, Santoyo to represent UEC on D.C. Youth Tour

Hermiston, OR—Katelyn Bass, a junior at Ione Community School, and Lauren Santoyo, a junior at Hermiston High School, were selected to represent Umatilla Electric Cooperative at the 2016 Washington, D.C. Youth Tour June 9-16.

Katelyn is the daughter of Gary and Lani Bass and resides in Boardman.



Katelyn Bass

Katelyn has maintained a 4.0 GPA during her high school years, and is very involved in her school and community. She plays volleyball, basketball and tennis. Katelyn received the Scholar Athlete Award as a freshman and sophomore. This awards goes to those athletes who maintain a 3.5 GPA or better and participate in one varsity sport. For volleyball and basketball, her team was chosen to be part of the Top 10 academic all-state teams sponsored by the OSAA Dairy Farmers of Oregon. She has received Outstanding Achievement Awards in biology, physical science and band, and is in National Honor Society. She played the flute for five years and went to state last year with her band. By the end of her sophomore year she had a

little over 20 college credits. Katelyn is also involved in 4-H and FFA, where she shows her different breeds of fainting goats.

Lauren Santoyo is the daughter of Luis and Norma Santoyo and resides in Hermiston. Lauren has maintained a 3.8 GPA during her high school years. She is a member of Key Club, and is running for president of the DECA (Distributive Education Club of America) Club. She played volleyball during her freshman and sophomore year. She works at the school's Student Store and Kennison Concession. She is an active participant in the youth group activities held at Our Lady of Angels Catholic Church.



Lauren Santoyo

"We are excited to continue to promote this program and be able to find great candidates who will represent UEC in Washington, D.C.," said Connie Shrum, Manager of Member Services.

Katelyn and Lauren will join 1,500 other students from all over the United States on a week-long educational trip hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Katelyn and Lauren will get to speak with Oregon's state representatives at Capitol Hill, visit the World War II, Vietnam and Iwo Jima war memorials, the Smithsonian and Holocaust museums, hear motivational speakers, learn about electric cooperatives, and participate in many fun activities.

This opportunity was open to area high school juniors whose parents or guardians are members of Umatilla Electric Cooperative.

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