

Gazette Times

Heppner Day Care hires multi-site director

Heppner Daycare has announced the hiring of Katelyn Adams as its multi-site director and preschool teacher.

Adams has taught in early childhood special education for eight years in both Oregon and Idaho. She and her family will be relocating from Idaho to Oregon as her husband, Brad Adams, has transferred in his career.

Katelyn Adams was raised in Pendleton, OR. She went to high school at Pendleton High School, where she was involved in Rhythmic Mode competitive dance. Brad Adams was raised in Heppner, where he was involved in athletics nearly year-round. Together, they have three boys, who will begin their education at Heppner Elementary School and at the preschool.

Solar eclipse presentation tonight

Are you curious about the solar eclipse? Would you like to learn more about it?

Morrow County Undersheriff John Bowles will be giving a presentation tonight, Aug. 2, to inform and prepare the community concerning the historic event that will affect everyone later this month. The total solar eclipse will take place Monday, Aug. 21.

The presentation will start at 7 p.m. and is open to the public. The meeting will be held in the Heppner City Hall conference room. Those planning on attending are asked to RSVP to the Heppner Chamber at 541-676-5536; refreshments will be served.

On the Inside....

- Obituaries and Death Notices.....**
.....PAGE TWO
- View from the Green.....**
.....PAGE TWO
- Engagements & Anniversaries.....**
.....PAGE THREE
- DA & Justice Reports.....**
.....PAGE THREE
- Shrine Players.....**
.....PAGE FOUR
- Garden Highlights.....**
.....PAGE FIVE
- Real Estate.....**
.....PAGE SIX
- Classifieds & Legals.....**
.....SEVEN & EIGHT
- Boardman Quilt Show.....**
.....PAGE EIGHT
- Music in the Parks.....**
.....PAGE EIGHT

Murrays to expand to Boardman

Health district continues to discuss remodel/expansion of Heppner facilities

By April Sykes

Murray's Drug is expanding into Boardman, John Murray told the Morrow County Health District Board at its regular meeting Monday night in Ione. John and Ann Murray, who reside in Heppner, currently have a pharmacy in Heppner and one in Condon.

Murray told the board that the Murrays have purchased the pharmacy from Good Shepherd, which had been operating out of Boardman Select Market. He said he plans to relocate the pharmacy to the Mountain Valley Land Co. building, which Murray's Drug has also purchased, located across the street from the market. Murray said that they plan to have their son, Sean, operate the pharmacy. The pharmacy will be called "Murray's

Boardman Pharmacy."

Murray said that the Mountain Valley Land Co. office will also remain in that building.

MCHD CEO Bob Houser told the board that the district plans to move the Boardman MCHD Home Health and Hospice office to space within the Mountain Valley Land building following completion of remodeling to accommodate home health and hospice, anticipated around the first of January. Houser said that the district currently has a Home Health and Hospice building leased in Boardman, but believes MCHD can break the lease fairly easily.

Houser said that he also plans to contact Rocky Mountain Physical Therapy, which provides physical therapy for the district at

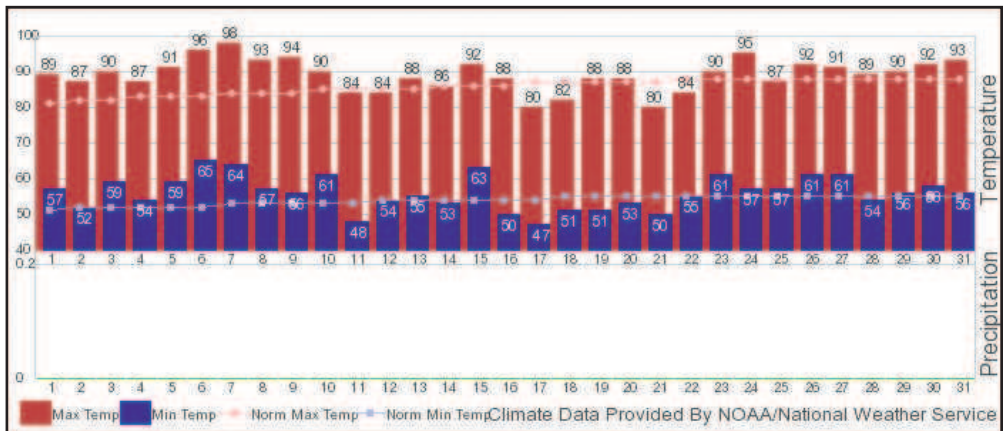


John Murray



Ann Murray

Warm July eases into August scorcher



July was warmer than normal according to the National Weather Service.

July temperatures in Heppner averaged warmer than normal, a trend that is expected to continue into

August according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton. The average tempera-

ture in July was 72.5 degrees, which was 2.7 degrees above normal. High temperatures averaged 89 degrees, which was 3.3 degrees above normal. The highest was 98 degrees on July 7. Low temperatures averaged 56 degrees, which was 2.1 degrees above normal. The lowest was 47 degrees on the 17th.

On 11 days, the temperature exceeded 90 degrees.

In addition to being hot, it was dry—no precipitation was measured during July, bringing rainfall for the month to 0.33 inches below normal. Despite a strong start, precipitation this year has reached 8.32 inches, which is 0.67 inches below normal. Since October, the water-year precipitation at Heppner has been 12.64 inches, which is 0.41 inches below normal.

The highest wind gust at Heppner was 33 mph, which occurred on the 15th.

During the month of July, there were no lightning flashes detected in the vicinity of Heppner, according to Earth Networks.

With the first week of the month already climbing to triple digits, the outlook for August from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above-normal temperatures and near-to below-normal precipitation.

-See WEATHER/PAGE FIVE

Pioneer Memorial Clinic, to inquire if they would be interested in operating out of the Mountain Valley Land Co. building.

Also at the meeting, the board voted in favor of funding a feasibility study in the neighborhood of \$50,000 concerning remodeling/expansion at Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Clinic in Heppner. Dr. Russ Nichols told the board that that crowding at the clinic and hospital has reached a crisis point in terms of being able to provide services to the public, adding that the current cramped conditions create an atmosphere of extreme stress for providers. He and administration also said that even in a "slow" month like July, patients have been turned away because of lack of space.

The board indicated that the feasibility study may help the district focus on what the district needs in additional space, whether to

remodel or build and how to fund construction.

Administration has targeted five areas that could have significant growth potential, both in services provided and revenue growth:

- the lab, which has already outgrown the overflow space provided a year ago. The department has identified additional tests that could be run there, that are currently being sent out. The lab currently generates a "great deal" of revenue for the district; additional equipment means additional tests, which results in additional revenue, said administration.

- outpatient treatment areas. Currently Room 204 in the hospital serves as an Ultrasound and Dexa scan room and has also served as an emergency overflow room. The room is also a patient room that has had to be taken out of service to perform outpatient testing.

-See HEALTH DISTRICT/PAGE THREE

County forms committee to search for new administrator

Commissioner to take job in interim

By David Sykes

The Morrow County Commissioners will appoint a committee to find a replacement for county administrator Jerry Sorte, who recently resigned, it was decided last week.

The commission held a special Friday, July 28, meeting to decide what to do about the vacant administrator position. In the history of the county there had never been a paid administrator until Sorte was hired following the last election. At that time county government was changed, doing away with the full-time elected judge position, and instead going with three equal commissioners and a paid administrator. The commission discussed if they wanted to continue with that structure.

"This was an enormous historical change in the county government," commission chair Melissa Lindsay said. "And I want to commend Jerry Sorte for helping the county through that change." Sorte resigned to take a position in Sweet Home.

The commissioners took public comment on the administrative position and whether or not to fill the position, or perhaps go with a model more like Umatilla County, which divides oversight and administrative duties among the three commissioners. Every person who spoke to the commissioners urged them to continue with the administrator position. Robin Jones said she worked previously

for the school district before coming to work for the county and she likened the county administrator to a superintendent job. She said as an employee she favored having the full-time administrator for a boss. Heppner Chamber of Commerce and Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group administrator Sheryll Bates said she also favors an administrator over just commissioner oversight.

"The main goal of the commissioners should be to be out in the community meeting and talking to people," Bates said. She wanted the administrator to run day-to-day operations of the county.

Former commissioner LeAnn Rea, who was on the commission when they voted to change from the full-time judge to three equal commissioners, said it was "extremely important" the county went this way because the judge position actually involved three jobs: juvenile judge, county administrator and an elected commissioner.

"That is more than any one person should have," Rea said. "Commissioners should be policy setters not day-to-day operations. Hiring Jerry Sorte was one of the smartest things we have done," she said.

"Morrow County is a progressive county and as an employee I want an administrator," said Anita Pranger, head of the county transportation department The Loop.

"I have seen great value in an administrator," said Human Resources Manager Karen Wolff. "There is someone in charge of running the business of the county."

County Planner Carla McLain said, as someone in a remote location (her office is in Irrigon) from the county offices in Heppner, she had had a lot of benefit from having an administrator.

"I have someone to reach out and talk to and I have seen a growth in communication and conversation across departments," she said. She called having a paid administrator for the past 18 months a "grand experiment." "I would continue to support this grand experiment," she said. McLane also said having a full-time human resource person, an outgrowth of the administrator, has been very helpful also.

"I have been involved with special districts for some time and we are probably four months away from getting another administrator," commissioner Don Russell said. He said -See COUNTY COMMISSION/PAGE FIVE

Library district celebrates 25th anniversary



Morrow County Justice of the Peace Ann Spicer swears in OTLD board members (L-R) Kraig Cutsforth, Mary Jones, Lisa Constantine, Stephanie Loving and William J. Kuhn. -Contributed photo

Oregon Trail Library District is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Heppner and Boardman voters approved the special district in 1992. The original OTLD Board of Directors included Gerry Alldredge, David Youngbluth, Mike Wetherell, William J. Kuhn and Gary Marks. Irrigon later voted to join the district in 2000.

Ann Spicer, Morrow County Justice of the Peace, swore in the 2017 OTLD elected board of directors during the July 19 board meeting at the

Irrigon Branch. Current OTLD Board of Directors are Mary Jones, Stephanie Loving, Lisa Constantine, Kraig Cutsforth and William J. Kuhn.

Special events have been planned to celebrate the anniversary throughout the year. During October, district-wide Community Reads events will take place at all branches. The Oregon Trail: A New American Journey by Rinker Buck has been selected for this event.

November 1-2, Oregon -See OTLD ANNIVERSARY/PAGE EIGHT

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