

Country roots run deep at Morrow County Fair



Young rabbit growers listen to the judge during livestock showing at the Morrow County Fair last week. See more fair and rodeo photos PAGE EIGHT. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

Sun gazers clog roadways, slow traffic in Morrow County



A line of cars snakes into Heppner after the solar eclipse Monday. The heavy traffic clogged highways north to the Columbia, requiring extra patrols and a deputy directing traffic at the edge of Heppner. -Photo by Megan Futter

Conservation corps partners youth and nature for a winning combination

By Andrea Di Salvo

A few local youth got a chance to spend some time in the great outdoors this summer while developing crucial work skills thanks to a program developed by the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps (OYCC). As part of the OYCC Summer Conservation Corps (SCC), South Morrow teens Sydney Qualls, Charles Cason, and Leo and Reiah Waite and OYCC Crew Leader Curtis Harper of Heppner worked with Forest Service

staff to complete maintenance and conservation projects throughout the Umatilla National Forest.

The OYCC was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1987 "to emulate the Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s" according to the program's annual report. The original goal of the OYCC was to "establish a disadvantaged and at-risk youth work program in order to perform conservation work of public value in the most cost-effective

manner..."

The paid positions are open to youth ages 16 to 21. The summer jobs are posted and students need to fill out an application to be included in the program.

"It's aimed for at-risk youth. The point is to get kids out working in the woods, get them some job skills, hopefully steer them in a more positive direction," said Harper, adding that the definition of "at-risk" was pretty broad, meaning "at risk for not

meeting the expectations of their community." He also said that if no specifically at-risk students applied, other youth could be accepted if they met the requirements of age and Oregon residency. There are no other requirements.

"That's kind of the point, to develop skills," he said. "I got the best kids I could have gotten," he added.

According to OYCC documents, 75 percent of participants statewide must meet the disadvantaged and at-risk requirement.

The SCC is the largest of the OYCC's state-funded programs, and is funded primarily through the Oregon Lottery. Its stated goal is to run an SCC in each of Oregon's 36 counties. To that end it provides grants to local providers who facilitate the program—the local partner in Morrow County is the Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO), which

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Cutsforth named interim county administrator

The Morrow County Commission has appointed Kim Cutsforth the interim county administrator until a new permanent administrator can be found. Current administrator Jerry Sorte recently resigned.

Cutsforth was most recently administrator for the City of Heppner and is currently the administrator of the Howard and Beth Bryant Community Foundation. She will start on the job Aug. 28.

"The advent of a Morrow County Administrator has in many ways allowed

the board of commissioners the ability to concentrate our efforts to concentrate on needed projects and policies. With a plethora of these on the docket ranging from energy, health care, transportation, cash handling, federal forest plans and infrastructure, it was a must that we not lose momentum.

"As a stopgap, it is good to have a local professional lend her service. This will allow myself and my fellow commissioners the ability to forge ahead," commission Jim Doherty said after the appointment.



Kim Cutsforth

Ryan Neal joins IMESD board

Pendleton – The InterMountain Education Service District (IMESD) appointed a new member to its board of directors in July 2017. New board member Ryan Neal will fulfill the remainder of the board term of former member Kathy Neal. Kathy served on the board for 17 years and resigned in June.

Ryan will represent IMESD's Zone 1, which consists of Morrow County,

Ione, Ukiah, Pilot Rock and Umatilla school districts.

Ryan lives in Boardman and is the general manager of Port of Morrow warehousing. He and his family moved back to eastern Oregon in 2015, and Ryan is an active volunteer in his community. He serves on the boards of the Kiwanis Club of Boardman and the Boardman Chamber of

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Court reviews DHS, other documents in Baker case

The sex-crimes case of Corey Scott Baker, 40, of Ione will take another step on the road toward trial Thursday as the Morrow County Circuit Court reviews sensitive records relating to the case. Baker earlier this year pleaded not guilty to charges of first-degree rape and sexual abuse of a girl younger than 14.

The records under review in the hearing include documents from the Oregon Department of Human Services in Boardman and the Mount Emily Safe Center in La Grande, a nonprofit that conducts forensic in-

terviews of abuse victims.

Baker's attorney Nick Patterson filed motions with the circuit court requesting a judge review in chambers the records related to Baker and others, including the alleged victim, according to court records.

Circuit Judge Eva Temple signed orders in mid-July to produce the records. Temple may cancel Thursday's hearing if she completes the review before then.

Baker is currently scheduled for a trial by jury on Jan. 22.

Auction surprise provides school supplies for needy kids



Pictured L-R: Kevin Gray (MCGG General Manager), Emily Taylor (Ione FFA), Ashley Price and Brooke Tolar (Irrigon FFA), Jeff Wendler, (Threemile Canyon Farms), John and Jana VandenBrink (JVB Dairy), Sam Bellamy (Lexington Pump/Heppner Christian Church), Lou Lyons (Elmer's Irrigation), Marie Linnell (Lamb Weston), Morgan Orem (Ione FFA), Jacee Currin, Tyler Carter and Kolby Currin (Heppner FFA). -Contributed Photo

The Morrow County Fair Youth Livestock Auction received a surprise item last week.

Jacee Currin, a member of the Heppner FFA chapter, donated her extra market

hog to be auctioned off with the proceeds to go to the Morrow County elementary schools. With the cooperation of the three FFA chapters in the county (Heppner, Ione and Irrigon) "ready for

school" backpacks will be purchased and distributed to less fortunate kids in the Boardman, Irrigon, Ione and Heppner elementary

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