

Two Heppner youth represent county at state spelling contest

Serenity Rodriquez and Jackson Coiner, both of Heppner, will be representing Morrow County this year at the Oregon Statewide Spelling Championship. The championship will have 63 spellers coming from 27 counties in Oregon to challenge their spelling skills at the Oregon State Fair in Salem on Saturday, Sept. 2. KOIN 6's Andrew Dymburt will be the master of ceremo-

nies for the championship. Students competing in the championship have won their school, district and county written spelling contests.

This is the ninth year Oregon Spellers has sponsored the Oregon Statewide Spelling Championship. Oregon Spellers is an all-volunteer group funded solely by donations and sponsored by the Oregon

Association for Talented and Gifted (oatag.org). Oregon Spellers was formed after the Oregon Department of Education ended its support for the spelling contest in 2009. Local and regional coordinators are sought to expand the program to areas not currently participating. For more information, please check out their website at www.oregonspellers.org.

Following the championship, Mr. Dymburt will also emcee The Bee at the Fair — a just for fun verbal spelling bee sponsored by Oregon Spellers. The bee is open to all Oregon State Fair patrons.

For more information, contact us at oregonspellers@kaynor.net or check out their website at <http://www.oregonspellers.org>.

HEALTH DISTRICT

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ment and a maintenance vehicle.

Endoscopy services have been curtailed since the state required ventilation changes months ago. The state has not yet approved the remodel, which has reduced vital patient services and funding for the district.

Out of that \$179,000 amount, the board approved spending up to \$20,000 for the purchase of the maintenance vehicle and \$39,000 for the purchase of microbiology equipment. They also approved purchase of Microsoft Office Standard 2016 and Microsoft Office Pro Plus 2016 for \$26,326.75 with cash on hand.

Also at the meeting CEO Bob Houser reported that the Board of Medical Examiners informed the district that they will not act on a recommendation to license Dr. Gayle Johnston, a physician newly hired by the district, until mid-September, with a final decision planned the first part of October.

Houser anticipated an earlier approval by the medical examiners since Dr. Johnston is already licensed in the state of Washington; however, he added, the current time frame is “the norm.” He said that Dr. Johnston will be working

part-time with the district until she is licensed to see patients.

The board also heard a teleconference presentation from Wes Thew of the Wipfli CPA and consulting firm on the district's debt capacity concerning proposed funding for remodeling or rebuilding Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Pioneer Memorial Clinic. Wipfli provided several scenarios with varied funding amounts and interest rates.

The Wipfli report indicated that the district's revenue has been growing at a rate of three percent per year. Also, board members Leann Rea and Aaron Palmquist commented that large increases in taxing income for the district are anticipated, both of which would make remodeling or rebuilding more feasible for the district.

In other business, the board:

- learned that the district has received a \$20,000 grant from Wildhorse to go toward the Irrigon Medical Clinic expansion project. Houser said that the district has also applied for a \$25,000 grant for the project from Oregon Community Foundation. The district also received a \$50,000 grant for the Irrigon Medical Clinic parking lot expansion project from the Irrigon Community

Enhancement Funds, which were made possible through CREZ II funding.

- learned from local pharmacist and MCHD Board member John Murray that the proposed expansion of his pharmacy business into Boardman will not proceed (*see story PAGE ONE*). After learning of his expansion plans, members of the Columbia River Community Health Services voted to start their own pharmacy in Boardman, to be affiliated with their federally-funded clinic. Unlike public boards such as the Morrow County Health District, the CRCHS Board is not required to have open meetings or publish budgets or funding sources. Ann Murray told the Gazette that they curtailed their expansion plans because their private business could not compete with a federally funded pharmacy and that two pharmacies could not successfully co-exist in Boardman.

- heard from Houser that the district may or may not continue their lease with Lee Langan for the Home Health and Hospice office in Boardman after January 1, 2018. Some problems exist with the current building that limit accessibility for their patients, including a non-operational elevator. The district had tentative

plans to move the Boardman Home Health and Hospice office into space at the Mountain Valley Land building that the Murrays had planned to purchase for their pharmacy.

- learned from Houser that a new vendor has submitted bids for testing the pressurization in the fire sprinkler system. He said that the system is still functional, but a leak in the system causes the air compressor to kick on and off and eventually burn out.

- learned that the district has hired Ian Murray, RN, for a position at Pioneer Memorial Hospital; and Jolene Favorite as a new medical assistant at Irrigon Medical Clinic.

- discussed the process for finding a new board member following the resignation of Jill Parker who moved out of the district.

- received the following profit/loss statement: MCHD had \$955,388 in gross patient revenue for July, \$5,699 for provision for bad debt, \$42,628 in contractual and other adjustments, \$124,699 in tax revenue and \$17,934 in other operating revenue for \$1,049,695 in total operating revenue; \$1,031,960 in total operating expenses, plus a \$10,610 non-operating gain for a \$28,345 gain for the month.

HHS plans open house, conferences

Heppner Junior/Senior High School will be holding an open house Wednesday, Sept. 6, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. All teachers at HHS will be available to showcase programs, meet parents and answer questions.

Seventh-grade parent/student conferences will be held Wednesday, Sept. 6. “Conferences will be scheduled with all seventh-grade parents/students to assist in the transition to junior high,” stated principal Matt Combe. “We will be contacting parents soon to set up conference times.”

“We have found that

beginning the year with open lines of communication has really helped all parties involved. Parents want to know how to best help their student; this has helped start a positive six-year relationship with our school and staff,” stated head teacher Greg Grant. “Junior high is such a drastic change in routine and environment, it is important to reach out to parents and students to develop relationships.”

For more information contact Greg Grant or Matt Combe at HHS.

WIGHT 100

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Utah, while her son is what brought her to Heppner in 1989. She said that twins run in her family and there has been at least one set in every generation.

Her son, Gary and his wife Jeri, and grandson John and his wife Shelley, are still in the area. Great-grandsons Adam and wife Natalia along with their children Cooper and Jaxson, and Riley and his wife Amanda with their daughter Remi also live here.

Arlene has two sons, Rick and Ken; Darlene has two children, Tony and Mary Lou.

When asked what tips she would give others in reaching a century milestone, Wight said, “Keep praying. Keep happy. That's my goal. I'm happy.”

She places a lot of emphasis on prayer. “I bet I'm the best prayer in the world.”

As for keeping happy, she stressed, “I've had friends wherever I went. People seemed to love me. I always loved everybody.” She says she thinks everyone likes her so well because she likes to laugh.

Her future goal is very clear, saying “I'm gonna go

with the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what I'm gonna do.”

As for any regrets she may have in her life, she didn't go into detail but said, “I think everybody has regrets.”

One tragedy did stand out in her mind; the time when her younger sister was murdered in the Portland area. She herself has no great love for Portland, she says, preferring a small town. “I've had so many close calls in Portland, I could write a book.” In fact, she said she started writing a book about her history once, but never finished it, although “I've had an interesting life.”

She said she likes to keep herself busy and does so by coloring with her colored pencils, reading books and her Bible and doing word search puzzles, sometimes while also watching television.

“I've been busy all my life, and I've got to keep busy. I keep busy sometimes with two things at once.”

During the party she shared with Ida Farra, “I think the whole place came. I never had a birthday with so many people.”

PHARMACY

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A news story in the East Oregonian reported that CRCHS has no plans to take over Good Shepherd's inventory or client files. Bejarano did not address the issue directly, but spoke to some uncertainty in Good Shepherd's relationship with Boardman.

“It is our hope and in the best interest of the Boardman and Irrigon communities that something can be worked out between Murray's Drug and Columbia River Community Health Services,” Bejarano said. “We want to make sure that the communities served by the GSCHS pharmacy in Boardman do not have a lapse in pharmaceutical services and residents can expect the same quality service that they have been receiving from the GSCHS pharmacy over the past five

years.”

The Murrays expressed their disappointment in the events but said that, given the close proximity of the pharmacies in a relatively small community, it was not practical to compete with the Boardman clinic.

“It is not financially feasible to have a second pharmacy in Boardman as the prescription volume is not high enough to support two, and it is too difficult for a private company to compete against one with government money available to it,” stated the Murrays. CRCHS is a Federally Qualified Healthcare Clinic and receives government funding.

The Murrays had planned to have their son, Sean, operate the Boardman pharmacy.

“Since he was fully committed, he will now be coming back to expand pharmacy services in Heppner and Condon,” they told the Gazette. Ann Murray also said that they had been moving along with preparations, including contracting to have sidewalks poured and ordering new signage, all of which had to be canceled.

The change also leaves MCHD in some uncertainty, as the health district had planned to leave its current lease and 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.

“Other” tobacco products. Our most recent statistics available (2015) show 26 percent of deaths in Morrow County were listed as tobacco related. In 2015 there were there are approximately 1,180 adult smokers in Morrow County and 500 suffering a tobacco-related illness. Another 24 percent routinely use smokeless tobacco.

Currently, there is no violation for people ages 18, 19 or 20 to possess tobacco products or inhalant delivery systems. Enforcement will take place at the retail locations that sell these products; effective immediately, retailers

COUNTY COMMISSION

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2.5 percent, or about \$230 per month plus benefits. The new position was not budgeted for in the current year. However, the county has a contingency fund of \$300,000 from which to pay for the new position.

In other business at the meeting the commission heard from Heppner citizen Jerry Olson who said he spent eclipse weekend at the county's Anson Wright park, and did not have a good experience. Olson said he had problems with his reservations, the small size of the camping spots, and the condition of the facilities. “More spots don't create more revenue, better spots do,” he told the commissioners. Olson, who is

a campground host himself at another campground in the state, says he knows something about parks. While at Anson Wright Olson said he talked to several people about their opinions of the park. “None of them were happy.” He said he ended up getting a different camping spot than the one he had reserved, and that some of the spots were so close together it was hard to open a door on an RV without hitting the neighboring camper. “I can't say I would never camp there again, but I would ponder it,” he told the commissioners. County staff told Olson that the public works department understands there are some problems there, and are working to correct them.

‘Tobacco 21’ bill raises legal age for tobacco

Contributed by the Morrow County Health Department.

On Aug. 9, Oregon became the fifth state to increase the sales age of all tobacco products to 21. This new law raises the minimum age to legally buy or obtain tobacco products and inhalant delivery systems from 18 to 21 years.

The new law, Senate Bill 754, known as Tobacco 21, takes effect immediately, with enforcement and fines to begin January 1, 2018. Proponents say this legislation will save millions of taxpayer dollars and thousands of lives, and improve health outcomes

for Oregonians.

“The passage of Tobacco 21 is a tremendous accomplishment for public health in this state, and the young people of Oregon,” said Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division Director Lillian Shirley. “Tobacco 21 is an evidence-based strategy that will help reduce youth initiation of tobacco. We know that most addiction to tobacco starts in adolescence—in fact, nine of 10 adults who smoke report that they started smoking before they turned 18, and almost 100 percent start before they turn 26.”

“We need to protect

kids with laws such as Tobacco 21 because new marketing tactics and products with hookahs, e-cigarettes and flavored vaping products put a new generation at risk of addiction,” she added.

Tobacco prevention challenges in Morrow County abound. According to the 2015 Morrow County Health Assessment, twice as many sixth grade students reported smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days as was reported at the state level. More than five times as many reported using other tobacco substances. In the 11th grade nearly 15 percent of students reported using

can no longer sell tobacco products, inhalant delivery systems or tobacco delivery systems to people younger than 21. There are no exceptions for sales and use of tobacco or inhalant delivery systems to persons under 21 years of age.

Retailers that sell tobacco products or inhalant delivery systems are required to display a sign stating the prohibition of tobacco product or inhalant delivery system sales to persons younger than 21. Failure to post a sign stating this would be a Class A violation. Enforcement of this law goes into effect Jan. 1.

“Morrow County resi-

dents have a reputation for total support of our youth,” said Molly Rhea, RN, Morrow County Health Department. “We need to wake up to the menace we have allowed to proliferate when we tolerate tobacco use by our young people.”

For more information about tobacco prevention and the work being doing in Morrow County, visit SmokefreeOregon.com. If you see a tobacco retailer selling tobacco to someone you know is under 21 and would like to let us know, please send an email to: Tobacco.Inspections@state.or.us.