

Assisted living residents get a new yard

By Bobbi Gordon

JoAnne Burleson of Heppner began creating what the residents call the new front yard at Willow Creek Assisted Living a year ago, but ran into a few problems with water pressure and weather. It was completed this summer with the help of many volunteers. "It's been a chore, been tough," she said.

Burleson was asked to take on the project and received funds from the Bryant Trust fund. She said she couldn't have done it without the help of Mike Duncan, Jerry Healy, John Murray, Mark Miller, Tim Dickenson, Jack Meligan, Greg Grant, Dave Fowler, Pettyjohn's, Nancy and Dick Snider and Bill and



JoAnne Burleson headed up landscaping project, shown with the plaque installed in her honor. — Photo by Bobbi Gordon

Sherry Ewing. Volunteers donated funds and hours to prep the space, do the landscaping, pour concrete, install furniture and plant flowers, shrubs and trees.

A plaque has been installed at the site thanking Burleson for the countless hours she contributed to make the space a reality.

Deputy Aaron Haak cleared in shooting

A grand jury found no criminal wrongdoing in deputy Aaron Haak's Sept. 22 shooting of an armed man near Boardman.

Monday afternoon the grand jury watched police video footage from the shooting and heard testimony from the state police detective who investigated the case. After reviewing the evidence, the jury decided to not pursue charges.

The shooting victim, Efrén Hurtado Jr., 26, of Boardman, is recovering at a Portland hospital, and was well enough to talk to police, in spite of taking a bullet to the head.

Haak, of Heppner, said he parked his police car behind an older Chevy Tahoe

on the westbound side of Interstate 84 near the exit for Boardman in the early morning hours of Sept. 22. Other officers noticed the vehicle the day before, and Haak indicated he was going to make sure state police tagged it for towing.

As Haak approached, he said he did not expect anyone to be inside. That's when Hurtado opened the rear passenger door, looked out and pointed a gun at the deputy, according to reports.

Haak said he quickly fired two rounds. One missed and the other struck Hurtado in the side of the head, dropping him. The bullet, however, did not penetrate the man's skull.

Haak indicated he rushed back to his car for cover, called dispatch and waited until other police arrived minutes later.

According to reports, police approached the SUV and found Hurtado unconscious with a revolver next to his hand.

A decision has not been made about charging Hurtado, who told police he knew when Haak was approaching the vehicle that he was a police officer, but otherwise gave guarded answers. Circuit court records show Hurtado pleaded guilty to methamphetamine possession in Dec. 2015 in

—See SHOOTING/PAGE THREE

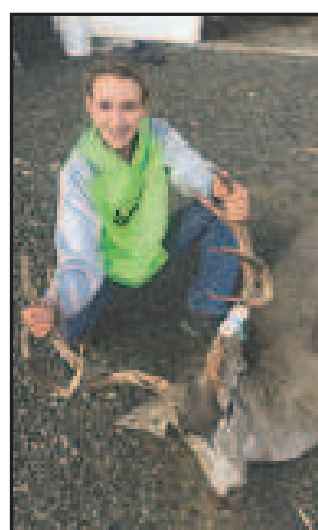


Erin West harvested a non-typical 6X7 buck on opening day at the family ranch up Rhea Creek. This is her third consecutive successful hunt and at 33 weeks pregnant. —Contributed photo



Patience paid off. Aaron Smythe scouted this buck before the season and jumped it opening day. It didn't present a good shot, so he passed. Sunday evening he ran across it again and took the nice 3X4. Assisting with skinning is his dad, Scott and uncle Tim Rankin. —Contributed photo

Heppner Gazette-Times Trophy Corner



Harley Anderson, 13, daughter of Colin and Erin Anderson shot her first buck, a 4X4, opening morning around 8:30 a.m. on her parents' property. —Contributed photo



Chace Jones, Heppner, took his first white tail. —Contributed photo

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to drop your picture taken, have your picture taken, drop off photos, mail them to PO Box 337 in Heppner, email them to editor@rapidservice.net or text cell phone photos to 541-980-6674.

OSP searches for poachers



OSP is asking for the public to help identify these two men that may be involved in the illegal killing of three elk in the Heppner unit. —Contributed photo

Two individuals that were caught on camera on private property are being sought by the Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division. The subjects were contacted and told they were on private property in Morrow County.

After the photo was taken, at least three elk were

illegally killed between Sept. 16 and Sept. 23 and much of the meat was left to waste. Troopers believe the two subjects in the photo were involved in the illegal taking of the elk and waste of the animals.

There is believed to be a third person with the two subjects who were camped

in the area of Martin Prairie off of Forest Service Road 21 in the Heppner Unit.

If anyone has any information they are asked to contact the Oregon State Police Senior Trooper Michael Mayer at 541-561-7581.

Booster Club provides bags to athletes



Pictured: (Front Row L-R) Carson Brosnan with wrestling bag, Hunter Nichols with cross country bag, Coby Dougherty with football bag, Maddie Nichols with track and field bag, Kevin Smith with boys' basketball bag. (Back Row L-R) Beau Wolters with baseball backpack, Morgan Correa with softball backpack, Sophie Grant with volleyball backpack, Claire Grieb with girls' basketball backpack. —Contributed photo

The Heppner Jr/Sr used to provide traveling High School Booster Club teams with dinner when provided team bags for nine they come to Heppner to of the school's high school play, send students on disports programs this fall. The organization regularly and support team camps supports all athletic, academic and extracurricular programs in a variety of ways. In addition to the money to every class, team, team bags, Booster Club club and extracurricular funds have recently been group each fall after its

annual fundraising event. The Booster Club dinner and auction will be held on Oct. 14 at the Heppner Elks Club. A dinner, fun games, raffle, silent auction and live auction will take place. Everyone is welcome to attend to support the Booster Club and the work they do for the students.

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County signs tax agreement with new wind farm

Could pay up to \$3.6 million per year

By David Sykes

Morrow County has signed a 15-year tax agreement with the new Wheatridge Wind Energy Facility that could have the company paying up to \$3.6 million per year instead of property taxes. The agreement, called a SIP (Strategic Investment Program), allows the company to get a property tax break for creating economic activity and jobs here.

Details of the agreement have the company paying the regular property tax rate on the first \$25 million in

investment, then \$8,000 per mega-watt up to a possible maximum of 450 MW. There is also a Community Service Fee (CSF) up to \$500,000 per year and spread among various taxing districts. The total of all these payments would not exceed \$3.6 million. In addition to these funds Wheatridge has agreed to pay the schools in the county \$1 million per year, of which \$600,000 will go to science, technology, engineering and mathematics studies, and \$400,000 to art and music programs. It was not disclosed how the funds

would be divided up between the two school districts in the county.

How much of the proposed wind farm's property tax bill was reduced with the agreement has not been disclosed by the county, but the project when completed was estimated to have a total value of around \$600 million.

Wheatridge is planning a year 2018 construction of the up to 292-tower wind farm, and it will be built North of Lexington to Butter Creek and be partially located in Umatilla County.

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