

O'BRIEN

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budgeting reasons. He says over the next three years they reduced again by two more and were then down to 17. He said at that time the county received around \$400,000 from the state gas tax and money was contributed from the county general fund. That changed in 2012 when state law said general fund money no longer could be used for roads. O'Brien said he started using money from the Finley Buttes landfill, and other sources to say solvent.

One of the sources of funds the Road Department has tapped into very successfully during O'Brien's tenure has been the use of grant money. "We're the best at writing grant applications," he says. He credits his "good team" with writing the applications, of which "we have received millions of dollars." He estimates the county has received over \$30,000,000 in grants over the past 18 years.

One of the distasteful things he has had to do in the county is return some roads to gravel that were asphalt. "We were the first county in the state to return roads back to gravel. It's not a fun thing to do." But he adds there were roads in the county that should never have been paved in the first place, and over time just could not be fixed with the assets the county had available.

Another accomplishment O'Brien is proud of is the establishment of a "functioning road committee." He says County Judge Louis Carlson said, "I want a functioning road committee." Judge Tallman was also an advocate of a good road committee, and one that covered the whole demographic of the county. O'Brien points out that in his first five years on the job the road department actually completed their five-year plan, which was not always the case. "Those road plans (which are put

together by the committee and the road department, and then taken to the county commission for approval) are our guide," on how the county's 1,000 miles of roads (400 paved, 600 gravel) are cared for. He said taking over the Willow Creek highway from the federal government and then maintaining that road is an example of a job the county handles well.

O'Brien says one of the biggest accomplishments during his time here was the realignment of problem intersections in the county. He points to the intersection of bombing range and Highway 207. "I told the crew when we were working on that: you just saved someone's life. You don't know who or when, but you did," he says of improving the dangerous intersection.

With a crew now of 17 people, and the Public Works able to receive money from SIP (Strategic Investment Program) energy projects in the county, the Road Department also has the responsibility of maintaining the county's three parks, the OHV, Anson Wright and Cutsforth. "I take lots of pride in our parks. There have been upgrades and I think they are getting better and better.

Also with the Road Department is the responsibility of the Lexington Airport. He says over the past 20 years they have seen construction of new hangars, the turning into shops of the old hangars and the taxiways and runway has been repaved. "That airport gets more use than a lot of people realize," O'Brien points out. "Guy (VanArsdale) started working on it, and we kept working on it."

Another area of responsibility for the Public Works Department is the maintenance of the county's 18 buildings scattered between the south and north end. He is happy that they were able to save and rehabilitate the clock and tower that

sits atop the courthouse building in Heppner. "Gary (Master Clock maker Gary Kopperud) did a beautiful job," O'Brien says of the restoration.

O'Brien says over the years he has served on "so many committees" and groups, including a stint on the school board, but says he thinks it is important officials do this to keep in touch with people especially networking at the state level.

As he prepares to leave his job with the county, O'Brien says the biggest challenge he sees facing Morrow County in the future is the growth and change in the north end. "People have to understand what is going on there," he says. "South County has to understand how fast and big this change is. An intersection in Boardman can get 4,000 cars per day, more than Heppner gets in many, many days."

After retirement O'Brien, 67, says he plans to keep himself active in the business he has known all these years through some consulting and maybe work with smaller counties that don't have a large staff. He also plans to spend time in his woodshop doing what his grandfather taught him years ago. He says wood working is definitely a generational love, since his grandfather learned from his father who brought the skill to America from Sweden. A grandfather himself, O'Brien says he also enjoys fishing.

And as he now prepares to depart for retirement Nov. 30, there is one thing he hopes will not change in the future of Morrow County, "I hope this county doesn't lose its character," he says. "I have worked with people from Hardman to Irrigon, and have found them to be good people. I hope the county doesn't outgrow its country nature. This is a good place to live," he says.

SUV attempts to elude Morrow County Sheriff



Green SUV gets stuck after attempting to elude officers.

Lawrence Allen Perrin, 41, and Angelique Lanae Kettlewell, 24, both of Irrigon, were arrested following a high speed chase and subsequent crash on Highway 730 and Powerline Road on Nov. 22. Morrow County Sheriff Kenneth W. Matlack attempted to stop a green SUV on Highway 730 outside of Irrigon by activating his emergency lights. The SUV immediately attempted to flee, traveling east towards Umatilla at speeds over 100 mph.

Umatilla PD attempted to deploy spike strips, but

were unsuccessful when the vehicle turned right onto Powerline Road at a high rate of speed. The driver lost control of the vehicle, spinning it around where it came to rest on the south shoulder. After attempting to travel in reverse, the SUV got stuck.

The driver and female passenger were both taken into custody by MCSO and UPD without incident. Both were transported and lodged at the Umatilla County jail on numerous charges.

Heppner library announces new books for November

The Oregon Trail Library District Heppner Branch has announced the following new books for November 2017:

Fiction: Blowback – Valerie Wilson, Death Swatch – Laura Childs, The Lovely Bones – Alice Sebold, The Old Gray Wolf – James D. Doss, A Column of Fire – Ken Follett, Enemy of the State – Kyle

Mills, I Know a Secret – Tess Gerritsen, Sisters – Lily Tuck, Stay With Me – Ayobami Adebayo, The O'Malleys of Texas – Dusty Richards, The Trapped Girl – Robert Dugoni.

Non-Fiction: The Four – Scott Galloway, The Liberation of Kuwait, Country Humor and Country Tears – Jeanne King.

Mustang Basketball kicks off with 'Blue and Gold Madness'

The Heppner Mustang girls' and boys' basketball programs will be holding their "Blue and Gold Madness Night" on Tuesday, Dec. 5, at Heppner High School. Doors will open at 5 p.m.

Fans are invited to come meet the teams and watch them run drills, com-

pete in contests and participate in other fun activities. There will also be a fund-raising raffle for many sport-related items and a dessert auction.

Both Coach Wilson and Coach Rosenbalm invite the community to the HHS gym to get a sneak peek of this year's teams.

Community lunch menu

Christian Life Center volunteers will serve lunch on Wednesday, Dec. 6, at St. Patrick's Senior Center. Lunch will include meat loaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, roasted carrots, broccoli Waldorf salad, hot rolls and lemon bars for dessert.

Milk is served at each meal. Suggested donation is \$3.50 per meal. Menu is subject to change.

Chamber chatter and community happenings

Now through Friday, Jan. 12, nominations will be accepted for Heppner Chamber's Annual Town and Country Community Awards. Pick up nomination forms at the Bank of Eastern Oregon, Heppner Chamber, city hall, Community Bank and the Post Office to submit nominations for Man and Woman of the Year, Business of the Year, Youth Award, Citizen-Educator of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award. The nomination forms can be dropped off at Kuhn Law Office or the Heppner Chamber of Commerce or emailed to heppnerchamber@centurytel.net. Contact the Chamber office at 541-676-5536 for more information.

Now through Thursday, Dec. 14, the Rewards Cards program starts for shopping local. Start collecting your rewards cards when you shop local at participating businesses. The denominations are \$10, \$20 and \$50 and cannot be given on payments to accounts. Bring your family and come out to spend a great evening on Thursday, Dec. 14 and spend your rewards cards on prizes that have been

donated by local and out of town merchants. There will be pictures with Santa, a dinner available for purchase and Scrooge will also be there. Contact the Chamber if you have any questions at 541-676-5536.

Now through Wednesday, Dec. 20, Community Bank Charity Drive Food Bank. Drop off any monetary donation to the Heppner Community Bank and they will match up to \$500 at .50 cents on every dollar collected. The donations will support The Heppner Neighborhood Center.

Saturday, Dec. 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Annual Artifactory Holiday Bazaar at St. Patrick's Parish Hall. This bazaar is sponsored by Heppner Day Care. Vendor applications can be obtained by contacting Andrea Nelson at 541-720-4399 or Petra Payne at 503-507-9670. Applications may also be completed online by visiting the Heppner Day Care Facebook page.

Thursday, Dec. 7, Heppner Downtown Merchants Open House organized by the Heppner Chamber. Check out all that is going on during the day by our

local merchants and plan on staying after the light parade until 7 p.m. to take in the activities and pick up a couple of Christmas presents while you are at it. Contact the Heppner Chamber for more info at 541-676-5536.

Thursday, Dec. 7 at 5:30 p.m., Parade of Lights organized by the City of Heppner. Pick up a parade entry form at city hall. The parade will be start at 5:30 p.m., with all participants at the city park by 5 p.m. to line up. Contact the Heppner City Hall at 541-676-9618 for more information.

Sunday, Dec. 10 at 6:30 p.m., Free Community Concert with Christopher Duffley. This event is being sponsored by Community Counseling Solutions and will be held at Heppner High School. Concessions will be organized by the FBLA Club and will offer light dinner selections and will open at 5 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 14 at 6 p.m., Heppner Christmas Event at Morrow County Fairgrounds. A spaghetti dinner prepared and served by the Track and Cross Country Team parents will be limited to the first 200

people (you will receive a \$10 reward card for each meal purchased). There will be pictures taken with Santa and his elves from 6-7 p.m. for \$5. Scrooge will be around to grumpily hand over \$10 rewards cards and drawing of the rewards cards, raffle and penny board winners will wrap up the evening.

Thursday, Jan. 18 from 12 noon to 1 p.m., Heppner Chamber of Commerce annual luncheon in the Senior Center dining room. The Chamber Board decided to move the annual luncheon to Jan. 18 instead of right after the holidays. Mark the date and time on your calendar and plan on joining us. There will be more information available closer to the event.

Thursday, Jan. 25, Business Education and Training seminars coordinated by Boardman Chamber of Commerce. The Boardman Chamber is coordinating a seminar presented by Paul Hutter. The seminar will include morning and afternoon sessions with morning to be Health Care Update, marijuana in the workplace and Oregon overtime rules for manufac-

turers. The afternoon session will include discussion on motivating and retaining your employee. Cost for a half day as a Chamber member is \$200, \$250 for a non-member. Heppner chamber members will receive the member rate. Cost for a full day is \$350 as a member, \$400 for a non-member. Small businesses with 10 employees or less are offered a \$50 discount. Multiple employees from the same company may attend for one price. Contact the Boardman Chamber at 541-481-3014 for more information. Registration begins on Nov. 13.

Thursday, Feb. 8 at 6 p.m., Heppner Chamber's Annual Town and Country Community Awards Event at Morrow County Fairgrounds. Nomination forms are available now and tickets will be available for purchase soon. Plan to come and spend a great community evening as we celebrate our recognition of the Man and Woman of the Year, Business of the Year, Youth Award, Citizen-Educator of the Year and Lifetime Achievement Award.

First Friday Friends of Jesus to meet

First Friday Friends of Jesus will meet Friday, Dec. 1 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the All Saints Parish Hall on the corner of Church and Gale in Heppner. All children, ages four to 12, are welcome and there is no cost to attend. The morning will be filled with Bible stories, games, music and crafts. A free lunch is served. For more information call the Shared Ministry office at 541-676-9970.

Firewood season ends for winter

Personal-use firewood cutting on the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests will end Thursday, Nov. 30. Firewood permits will not be available again until May 2018.

The public is asked to take additional precautions when cutting firewood late in the fall when road and soil conditions become slick, soggy and saturated. Firewood cutters should be prepared for winter weather conditions. Mountain travel will require extreme care to avoid getting stuck in the mud or snow and causing resource damage to the land and vegetation.

Another concern for late season firewood cutting is the misidentification of live or dead western larch, a highly prized firewood also known as tamarack. Larch needles turn yellow and fall off at the end of the growing season, which can cause the tree to appear dead when in fact it is only dormant. Tips on identifying live larch are located in the firewood guide that accompanies each firewood permit.

Firewood permits can be purchased at any Umatilla or Wallowa-Whitman National Forest office or at several local businesses in the community. Permits cost \$5 per cord with a minimum purchase of four cords for \$20. A maximum purchase of 12 cords total, per household, is allowed from National Forest lands during the calendar year.

HJSHS to make holiday wreaths

Heppner High School will be accepting orders for holiday greenery for the workshop being held Dec. 11-14. Volunteers are also welcome to assist with the project.

Wreaths, swags, candy canes and crosses will all be available for \$20 each. Centerpieces are \$10-\$20.

Contact Beth Dickenson at dickene@morrow.k12.or.us or call 541-676-9138 for more information.

