HEPPNER Gazette Times

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VOL. 137 NO. 14 8 Pages Wednesday, April 4, 2018 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Three candidates file for county positions

Raymond Akers

Don Russell

Mike Gorman

Three candidates have announced they will run for county positions in the May 15 primary election.

Raymond Akers has announced he has filed for the Morrow County Commissioner Position 2; he will run against incumbent Don Russell. Also filing before the deadline was current Morrow County Assessor Mike Gorman, who will again run for the assessor position. Gorman is running unopposed.

Raymond Akers was born in 1972, son of Ralph and Alberta Akers of Boardman. His father was born on the Creek Ranch, two miles down the creek from Ione and his mother was originally from Wichita, KS.

Akers has been married to his wife, Tanya, for 20 years and are parents to three children, Ethan, Tiffany and Haley, who all attend Heppner Junior Senior High school. Raymond attended school in Morrow County, where he has been a resident since 1978.

In 1995, Akers joined the Operating Engineers Local 701, which covers all of Oregon and five counties in southwest Washington. In 2007, he was appointed to the executive board representing District 4, serving members in 14 eastern Oregon counties and two counties in southwest Washington, serving for nine years.

From 2008 to 2016, Akers was employed with West Extension Irrigation District as the operations manager. His duties included operating and maintaining the canal systems, planning, budgeting, scheduling projects and overseeing district operations.

"Be it Boardman, where I was raised, Heppner where I have family,

-See COUNTY CANDIDATES/PAGE THREE

Easter Bunny makes appearance

The big bunny was quite the popular rabbit Saturday during the annual Elks Easter Egg Hunt held at the city park in Heppner Saturday morning. Above is Jace, 2, and Jaden, 1, of Lexington with their chance to visit. Below: A large crowd of parents and kids turned out to gather the eggs spread around the park. Many had the chance to sit on the bunny's lap too. *-Photo by David Sykes*

CBEC to conduct internet feasibility phone survey

Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative will be conducting a phone survey during the first few weeks of April to aid in the development of an internet fiber feasibility study. The electric co-op has partnered with a professional phone survey company, the Glengariff Group, to conduct the survey.

Members of CBEC are asked to accept phone calls from the group and answer questions to determine Fiber-To-The-Rural-Home internet connectivity (FTTRH) interest.

The callers will ask about your current internet service, your satisfaction with your current speed of internet connectivity, affordable pricing levels and other internet service related questions. According to a spokesperson, high-speed, fiber-based internet connections have become the national standard for today's farming and ranching business decisions, as well as business, education and household communication needs.

CBEC is very interested in facilitating the ability for all their consumers to have access to high-speed, affordable internet connectivity. Any questions or concerns about the callers, or the survey itself, can be answered by calling either the Heppner or Condon CBEC offices.

Austin Morter and Emily Taylor rewarded at State FFA Convention

Two members of the Ione FFA Chapter earned their State FFA degree during the 90th State FFA Convention held last week in Redmond. Austin Morter and Emily Taylor rose to the top ranks amongst FFA members and were rewarded with the highest level of membership.

Austin Morter and Emily Taylor rose to the top ranks amongst FFA members. *-Contributed photo.*

The Oregon FFA State degree requires FFA members to have: received the chapter FFA degree; been an active member of FFA for at least two years; completed the equivalent of at least two years of systematic school instruction in agricultural education; have earned and productively invested at least $1,500 or unpaid placement hours; demonstrated leadership ability; have a satisfactory scholarship record; have participated in the planning and completion of the chapter's program of activities; have participated in a total of 30 activities with at least five FFA activities above the chapter level; have participated in a minimum of 10 school and/or community activities and completed at least 25 hours of community service in a minimum of two different activities.

"I'm very proud of these two. The application and presentation isn't easy and they persevered," said advisor, Erin Heideman. "I look forward to them applying for their American Degree in a year or so."

Community Counseling Solutions opens new Heppner offices

Ribbon Cutting held Monday

Ribbon Cutting at the new Community Counseling Solutions facility in Heppner. L to R: Dave Roberson - project engineer with Kirby Nagelhout , Dan Brinton - project superintendent with Kirby Nagelhout, Pete Baer - architect and principal owner of Pinnacle Architecture, Jason Terry- senior project manager with Kirby Nagelhout, Mark Lemmon -Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) board chair, MaryAnn Elguezabal - CCS board member, Tiah Devin -CCS board member, Kimberly Lindsay – CCS Director and Sheridan Tarnasky- CCS board member. *-Photo by David Sykes*

Flag raising at the new facility. Project Superintendent Dan Brinton (left) and Navy veteran Louis Bisson raise the flag at the new Community Counseling Solutions facility in Heppner. *-Photo by David Sykes*

By David Sykes

On a crisp spring day Community Counseling Solutions Monday dedicated its new offices in Heppner with a ribbon cutting ceremony, special flag raising, tours of the building and snacks and refreshments for the public.

Located on Sperry Street, the building is the culmination of efforts by many people, but most of all CCS head Kimberly Lindsay, who always said she wanted to keep the new headquarters for the multi-service, four-county mental health organization right here in Heppner. CCS had been renting office space from Morrow County on the second floor of the Gilliam Bisbee Building.

When introducing everyone for the ribbon cutting ceremony Lindsay praised the work of staff, board members and contractors for their hard work and dedication on the project, and said this "beautiful new building" was the result of all their efforts.

Also, during the dedication was a special flag raising ceremony. Navy veteran, Louis Bisson, donated the flag he had received upon retirement from the service. Bisson said the flag had flown over the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor and was given to him when he retired as a Chief Petty Officer. He wanted Community Counseling Solutions to have the flag, so it would have a place to be flown.

CCS has grown in responsibility and coverage area over the years, and now offers a wide variety of behavioral health services to Morrow, Wheeler, Gilliam and Grant counties, including individual, family, and group therapy, gambling counseling, alcohol and drug treatment, 24/7 crisis intervention services, psychiatric consultation and medication management. It also cooperates with other organizations including residential and acute psychiatric services and school programs and offers case management for developmental disabilities in five counties.