

DEQ issues air quality advisory Public hearings to be held

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality has issued an air quality advisory for Central and Eastern Oregon as smoke from fires throughout the Pacific Northwest continues to affect Oregon.

The new advisory covers Crook, Baker, Deschutes, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Jefferson, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wasco, Wallowa and Wheeler. Conditions are expected to last until Thursday.

On Monday at 9 a.m., conditions in Madras, The Dalles and Enterprise were moderate. Conditions in Sisters, Bend, Burns and Baker City were unhealthy for sensitive groups. Conditions in Prineville, John Day and Cove were unhealthy. Conditions were very unhealthy in La Grande and hazardous in Pendleton.

Local smoke levels can rise and fall rapidly. Residents can view current air quality conditions at DEQ's Air Quality Index at <https://oraqi.deq.state.or.us/home/map>. The index is also

available on smart phones by searching for OregonAir in the app store.

The color-coded Air Quality Index ranks air quality as follows: green is good; yellow is moderate, which is unhealthy for extremely sensitive groups; orange is unhealthy for sensitive groups such as children, the elderly, pregnant women and those with respiratory conditions; red is unhealthy for everyone; purple is very unhealthy for all groups and maroon is hazardous.

County health officials encourage residents to take the following precautions:

-Reduce time spent outdoors when smoke is present.

-Use an indoor high-efficiency air filter (HEPA) or electrostatic precipitator in your home to help create one or more rooms with cleaner air to breathe.

-Set your air conditioning or heating unit to recycle or recirculate when at home or in your car.

-Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water.

-Reduce other sources of indoor smoke and dust, including burning cigarettes, candles, gas or propane ranges, wood burning stoves and furnaces and vacuuming.

-Reduce the time you engage in vigorous outdoor activity.

-If you have heart or lung disease or respiratory illnesses such as asthma, follow your health care provider's advice about prevention and treatment of symptoms.

-Consider maximizing time in air-conditioned homes or buildings during smoky periods or visit public, air-conditioned places such as libraries, community centers, senior centers, restaurants and retailers for relief from smoke.

Oregon's monitoring network does not capture air quality conditions in all communities so it is important for residents to gauge air quality conditions where they live and take appropriate actions to protect themselves.

Public hearings will be held by the Morrow County planning commission in Heppner on Aug. 28 starting at 7 p.m. The hearings, at the Bartholomew building, are for applicants who have applied for permits pertaining to their land or possible changes to their land and offers adjoining property owners and interested parties the opportunity to voice support or opposition to these requests.

The first request is from John Flynn, who has applied for a conditional use permit to allow Ruggs Ranch to operate as a guest ranch.

The second is to authorize a land partition on property owned by Lyle and Virginia Peck, which would divide the land into two separate parcels.

During the month of July, the Morrow County Planning Commission approved the Gala Springs

subdivision to be built just west of the Boardman city limits. The subdivision will consist of 14 lots proposed at two acres each.

Morrow County Planning Department and staff issued four zoning permits in July authorizing the construction of buildings in support of farm operations. Also issued was a permit within the port industrial area for industrial activities and a zoning permit for a substation on farm land in support of farming activities.

The planning department works cooperatively with the Morrow County Sheriff's Office handling code enforcement issues. At this time there are over a dozen open code enforcement cases with a half dozen cases being closed in July. Through the summer months the majority of the cases are recreational vehicles being used as dwell-

ings, which is not allowed in Morrow County without proper permitting.

Housing has been a discussion in Morrow County for several years. Starting in September, the planning department will be working with all five communities to accomplish a buildable lands inventory and housing analysis to better understand our current land inventory and housing stock, leading to potential comprehensive plan and development code amendments to facilitate new housing development. The current work should wrap up by March of 2019.

The Morrow County Planning Department encourages you to visit their website for information on the planning commission, code enforcement, special projects and much more. The website is available at <https://www.co.morrow.or.us/planning>.

Fire crews respond to new ignitions following lightning

Fire crews on the Umatilla National Forest are responding to new smoke reports following passing thunderstorms Sunday evening and Monday morning. Significant lightning activity occurred across the entire forest, with new incidents on the Umatilla National Forest reported to the Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center (BMIDC) and John Day Interagency Dispatch Center (JDIDC). More smoke reports are expected throughout the next few days as the heavy smoke in the area lifts and weather conditions improve. Additional fires were

detected following thunderstorms Monday.

Local initial attack resources have been busy responding to these incidents. With the limited visibility due to the heavy smoke in the area, fire detection has been a challenge. Fire managers have used thermal detection through a software program called MODIS and infrared detection from a National Guard aircraft to help identify new fires. The use of aerial resources for suppression efforts has been hampered due to the heavy smoke that has settled into the area.

On the North Fork John Day Ranger District, the Harrison Fire was reported on Aug. 20 at 8:11 p.m. within the Greenhorn unit of the North Fork John Day Wilderness. The fire is burning in grass and open timber approximately 16 miles west of Sumpter, Oregon and 2 miles south of Olive Lake. Based on thermal detection from MODIS, fire managers estimate the fire to be 30 acres in size. Firefighters are hiking in this morning to get a better size up and develop a suppression plan.

The largest of the fires,

the Gilman Fire, is approximately 650 acres in size near Gilman Flats on the Heppner Ranger District. The fire is burning on both Umatilla National Forest and Oregon Department of Forestry protected lands. The fire was reported at 6:19 p.m. and is burning in primarily grass with some timber. One Umatilla National Forest engine and one Oregon Department of Forestry engine are on scene. A Type 3 team took command of the fire Tuesday.

The Cupper Canyon Fire is located on the Heppner Ranger District approximately 4 miles NW of Monument, OR. The fire was reported at 12:37 p.m. and is burning in grass, brush and timber. The 60-acre fire threatens a structure approximately one half of a mile away. With assistance from the Oregon Department of Forestry, fire crews have the fire currently 60 percent lined. Resources on scene include one helicopter, two Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATs), three Oregon Department of Forestry engines, one Umatilla National Forest engine and one hand crew.

The Low Ridge Fire consists of two fires located within the Mill Creek Watershed near Indian Ridge approximately 17 miles SE of Walla Walla, WA on the Walla Walla Ranger District. The fires were reported at 4:53 p.m., burning in grass and timber. One fire is less than an acre in size and fully lined. The second fire is approximately 2.5 acres and was staffed Monday night. Containment efforts continued Tuesday. The fires are staffed by five smokejumpers with two engines and a 10-person hand crew en route.

Additional thunderstorms are forecasted for Wednesday afternoon. Air quality is expected to be at unhealthy levels over the next few days.

Fire officials want to remind everyone that the current fire danger rating remains at EXTREME and Public Use Restrictions involving campfires and chainsaw use are in effect.

Chamber announcements

Thursday, Aug. 23 from 5-6:30 p.m., Open House for The Loop Morrow County Transportation at the Bartholomew Building. The Loop will be holding two open houses for gathering information and ideas for growing Morrow County Public Transportation. These projects will be funded by the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund. If you are unable to attend this meeting, there will be a meeting in Boardman on Thursday, Aug. 30 in the Wells Spring room at the Port of Morrow.

Friday, Aug. 24 the Lexington Grange will sponsor the Back to School 5K Fun Run. Registration begins at 6 p.m. and the run at 6:30 p.m. The proceeds from the run will go towards the Grange Scholarship Fund, benefiting south Morrow county graduating seniors. The run will begin and end at the grange building (66296 Marquardt Rd, Lexington). There will be fun prizes and drawings for participants as well as an ice cream social following the run. Pre-registration can be done online by visiting lexingtongrange726.com or following the link: <https://goo.gl/forms/at6JdNLMK-TvnJOjf2>. The cost for the run is \$15 or \$25 with an event shirt.

Saturday, Aug. 25 at 9 p.m. (or at dark), Ione

Summer Movies in the Park will show the 1995 version of Jumanji, rated PG.

Sunday, Aug. 26 from 6 to 8 p.m., Ione Music in the Park will feature Absolutely Nobody, with the Joe Lindsay and Corey Cooley families. Concessions available by Tacos Hometown at 5 p.m. The event will be held at the Ione City Park and is sponsored by Morrow County Unified Recreation District and the Ione Library Board.

Monday, Aug. 27 at 6 p.m., Town Hall with Morrow County Board of Commissioners to review plans for new north Morrow County building to be constructed in Irrigon, at the Heppner City Hall Conference Room. The current facility has reached its capacity and is need of a great deal of repair and commissioners felt it was better suited to be torn down and a new structure put in its place. The design and floor plan will be available.

Saturday, Oct. 20, 4th Annual Oktoberfest Auction and Dinner. This event is a benefit for The Woolery Project and will be held in the big tent on the Port of Arlington peninsula. A prime rib dinner prepared by Paradise Rose Chuckwagon Catering will be served. There will be dinner music by One Hum and

Wheeler County Ramblers, a huge silent and live auction (with 2 Henry Tribute Edition rifles). Dance music will be provided by Countryfied. Tickets are \$35 each and may be purchased at MCGG-Wasco, Thrifty Food Center-Arlington, Condon Chamber, Murrays Drug-Condon and Dinty's Market-Biggs Junction. More information is available on the Woolery Project Facebook page at www.facebook.com/thewooleryprojectinc or via email to info@thewooleryprojectinc.org.

New books available at Heppner Library

The Heppner branch of the Oregon Trail Library District has released the list of new books available in June and July.

The new fiction books are: Ride the Savage Land – William W. Johnstone, The Last Town – Blake Crouch, The Eight Mountains – Paolo Cognetti and The Only Story – Julian Barnes.

Non-fiction books available are: Whiskey Tango Foxtrot – Kim Barker, Frommer's Easyguide to Disney World, Universal and Orlando 2018 – Jason Cochran, Credit Repair – Ama Loftsgordon, The Handy Geology Answer Book – Patricia L. Barnes Svarney and The Potatopia Cookbook – Allen Dikker.



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MUSIC IN THE PARK
CONCERT SERIES

Sunday August 26 6-8pm
ABSOLUTELY NOBODY
Joe Lindsay, Corey Cooley & Families
at Ione City Park

EVERYONE INVITED,
BRING CHAIRS
AND COOLERS
Concessions by
Tacos Hometown
Ione's Music in the
Park will have
Performances
Through September