

HEPPNER 50¢ Gazette Times

VOL. 137 NO. 47 6 Pages Wednesday, November 21, 2018 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Plaque marks spot first power pole was placed by Columbia Basin Electric

It was in 1948 and 18-year-old Billy Gentry was there. He dug the hole (by hand) to put in the co-op's first pole

By David Sykes

So you think you got a tough job? Well maybe you should talk to Heppner's own Billy Gentry, who at 18 years of age was digging holes for power line poles - by hand. Working for the newly formed Columbia Basin Electric co-op Gentry recalls what a hard job it was. "We used a spade and a spoon shovel," he says recently when he attended the mounting of a plaque honoring that first pole. He says on a good day the crew could dig and place four power poles. On a tough day? "One." The holes all had to be six feet deep, and "when we got into rock, we used the dynamite," he says.



Gentry stands next to a bunkhouse where he lived while tending sheep on the old Glavey Ranch on Upper Rhea Creek. He was 10 years old when he first went to work there, before getting on with the electric co-op.

Right: Heppner's Billy Gentry shows plaque recently installed commemorating the first power pole Columbia Basin Electric installed back in 1948. -Photos by David Sykes.

The 89 year-old Gentry took a walk down memory lane last week and went back to the very spot on the old Glavey Ranch (now belonging to the Qualls family) on Upper Rhea Creek where he helped place that first pole. Gentry came to Oregon from Missouri with his family when he was a young boy, riding in the back of a Model A Ford. "My mom and I sat in the back with a blanket to keep warm," while dad and two uncles rode in the front. Some of the roads weren't very good back then," he recalls.

There were a lot of people coming to Oregon from Missouri to work back then, Gentry relates. "They came for the money. The pay was better out here." He remembers his first crew, one other man from Missouri and "four Irishmen." "They were straight from Ireland," he says. And how did that work out? "We did fine once I learned how to talk to them," he said not elaborating any further than that.

He pointed to a nearby bunk house where he first lived and worked with



but a sub-station he designed and work he had done on transformers and other equipment during his long career with the co-op.

Gentry remembers the attitude of the people in the brand-new electric co-op's service district. "Some of them didn't think we would ever get power out to these ranches," he recalls, "and they refused to pay the \$5 membership fee." But it happened, and the farms and ranches from Hardman to Lonerock, and all in between, got their electrical service. "They said it was going to take five years. We got it done in three." Gentry remembers.

Next year the co-op celebrates its 75 years of operation, and yes, they do now have powered hole digging equipment, but it's still the hardworking dedicated people like Billy Gentry, who keep that electricity flowing day and night to the homes, ranches and businesses in our service area.

MCHD recognizes safety champions



Bob Houser CEO presents safety awards to Nate Kennedy, Mike Snow, Danny Sharp and Toni Young.

Morrow County Health District recently recognized employees for their outstanding effort to enforce safety activities across its hospital and clinic locations. The third quarter safety champion winners were recognized for their continued diligence to prioritize the safety of its employees and community.

Toni Young, MA won for her work in the endoscope room, ensuring that all equipment is properly sterilized and safe for patients. "This is a very important job that ensures that our equipment is up and running and in good

working condition," housekeeping manager Tina Davidson said.

Danny Sharp, Nate Kennedy and Mike Snow, Maintenance Department, were honored for the job they did remodeling the emergency department and the main nurses station to accommodate the new Omnicell electronic medication and supply management system. "They all display great attitudes when working on a project and are willing to make last minute changes if need be," quality manager Beck Sanders, RN said. "They work very hard to assure our buildings are

safe."

Additional nominations this quarter were: Tina Davidson, housekeeping manager; Mindy Smith, nurse manager; Heather Smith, CMA; Laurie Wood, pharmacist and Jennifer Palmer, pharmacy technician.

The Morrow County Health District safety committee consists of Bob Houser, CEO; Danny Sharp, president; Terri Brandt-Correia, committee secretary; Toni Nichols, Pioneer Memorial Clinic representative and George Nairns, Willow Creek Terrace representative.

Cutsforth gives up-date on trust projects

Over \$1.2 million given out in the community so far



Howard and Beth Bryant Trust Administrator Kim Cutsforth gives a run-down to the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week on the many on-going and completed projects funded by the charitable trust. -Photo by David Sykes.

By David Sykes

The Howard and Beth Bryant Trust has been busy this past year giving out grants to worthwhile local projects, Trust Administrator Kim Cutsforth told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week.

Since its inception one and a half years ago the trust has given out over \$1.2 million to various local projects including money to the schools for classroom and sports improvements, the little league for field improvements, OSU extension for equipment, the city of Heppner for a new gazebo and a new roof on the St. Patrick's Center and to the Health District for ambulance equipment. Cutsforth says money has also been given to the cemetery, Ag Museum, Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo, Heppner Daycare and to the Willow Creek Park District. She said here has been a total of \$619,000 grants given out so far this year.

However, the most ambitious project scheduled to receive funding from the trust, is the renovation of the old run-down Gil-

liam-Bisbee building in downtown Heppner into a community activity center.

Morrow County recently donated the building to a newly formed Heppner Community Foundation that will handle the renovation. The county set aside \$235,000 in funds to help with the upgrade and the Bryant Trust plans on providing an as-yet undisclosed amount toward the project. However, Cutsforth has said in the past the donation from Bryant will be "substantial." "We are going to restore the building 'back to look like the original,'" she told the Chamber luncheon last week. "We are going to make it something that everyone will be proud of."

Cutsforth said plans for the restored building include a large area downstairs for the community to hold various events, both public and private, such as weddings. She said there are plans for a full commercial kitchen and bar with enough tables and chairs to seat 245 people. The upstairs will be completely gutted and remodeled

into four suites and space to accommodate up to 40 overnight guests.

There will be open rooms with kitchenettes and a social-type gathering hall. Some rooms will have private baths and extra baths will be located outside the rooms. A fitness center with exercise equipment will be built for the guests. An elevator will be installed to access the upstairs.

To begin the renovation, all asbestos will be removed from the building and engineers will complete floor plans on the project. Local builder David Allstott has been selected as the main contractor on the project. Cutsforth said they hope to have the building done by November of 2019.

The building has a water problem in the basement, which Cutsforth says they hope to alleviate by changing the way storm water is removed from the property. She says presently rain water from the 4,000 square foot roof drains directly into the basement, which they will divert to the

-See TRUST UPDATES/PAGE FOUR

Clay target team approved



Erin Hansell-Heideman

The Morrow County School Board, at its regular meeting Nov. 13 at Sam Boardman Elementary School, gave the go-ahead on a proposal for Heppner and Ione schools to enter into a cooperative agreement to create a clay target/marksmanship team under the Oregon state High



Sam Boardman Elementary kindergarten teacher Anne Coleman (right) demonstrates a kindergarten science project to Erika Patton (left), MCSD business manager and Marie Shimer, SBE Principal.

School Clay Target League with the proviso that insurance is provided.

Presenter Erin Hansell-Heideman said students in sixth through 12th grade are eligible to participate if they have a league issued

Student Athlete Firearm Education certificate or a Hunter's Safety Card and meet all school activity eligibility requirements.

Cost for participants -See CLAY TARGET/PAGE FOUR

G-T closed for Thanksgiving

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed in observance of the Thanksgiving Day holiday Thursday, Nov. 22 and Friday, Nov. 23. Normal business hours will resume Monday, Nov. 26. We wish everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving weekend.

TIS THE SEASON TO SHRED SOME POWDER.

POLARIS HOLIDAY SALES EVENT

REBATES UP TO **\$2,000**

FINANCING AS LOW AS **3.99% APR** FOR 36 MONTHS

Morrow County Grain Growers Lexington, OR 541-989-8221