

The Official Newspaper
of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES
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Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Bobbi Gordon..... Editor

All News and Advertising Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.

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For Public/Legal Notices: public/legal notices deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be required at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).

For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.

For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Obituaries

George V. Hermann

George V. Hermann, 80, of Baker City, OR passed away at St. Alphonsus Medical Center in Baker City on Jan. 16. A funeral service was held on Jan. 22 at the First Lutheran Church in Baker City with Pastor Ian Wolfe officiating. Interment took place at the Hermiston Cemetery in Hermiston, OR on Jan 23.

George was born on Nov. 1, 1938, in Chicago, IL to Gottlieb Hermann and Ottilie Hunt, moving to Oregon at the age of six. He attended Lexington High School in Lexington, OR and graduated in 1957.

From his high school years until 1964 he worked as a ranch hand. In 1964 he purchased and operated a gas station. After owning the gas station until 1969, he decided to train to become an Oregon State Police Officer. During his career, he was a Senior Trooper for OSP and an OSP Training Officer. He worked for the Oregon State Police for 25 years before retiring in 1994.

On Nov. 27, 1977, he married Maxine Kranz in Reno, NV and they raised three daughters. George was a lifetime member of the Elks and he enjoyed hunting, fishing and fly tying.

He is survived by his wife of 41 years, Maxine Hermann of Baker City, OR; his daughters, Donna Sherbondy of Weiser, ID, Sandra Hermann of Dallesport, WA and Holly (Randy) Kinsey of Eielson AFB, AK; five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

George is preceded in death by his parents, Gottlieb Hermann and Ottilie Hunt; brothers, Henry Welke and Al Welke and a sister, Elsie Welke.

Memorial contributions in honor of George may be made to Meadowood Speech camp through Gray's West and Co. Pioneer Chapel at 1500 Dewey Ave., Baker City, OR 97814.

To light a candle in honor of George or to leave a condolence for his family, please visit www.gray-swestco.com.



George Hermann

School district recognizes board members

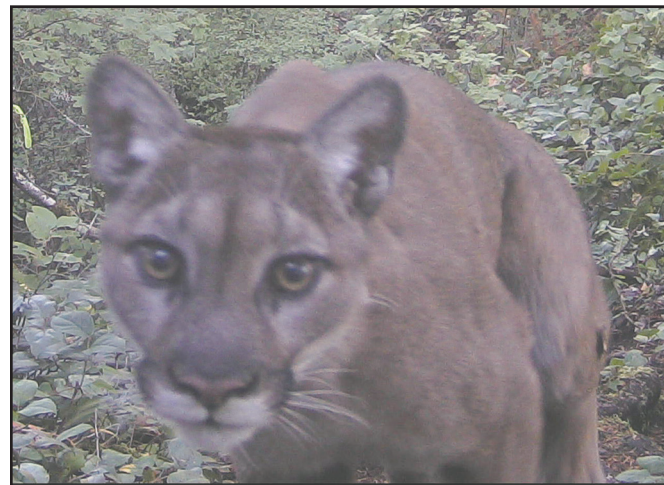
January is School Board Recognition month and the Morrow County School District plans to formally recognize the school board members at the February board meeting.

The members to be recognized are Becky Kindle, Richard Cole, Andy Fletcher, May Killion, Brian Kollman, Barney Lindsay and Marcie Rodelo.

Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said the MCSD board members are always working hard for the district's students. "Being a school board member takes time, energy and patience and sometimes it's a difficult job, but our board members go the extra mile for students in all three of our communities, Boardman, Heppner and Irrigon. We appreciate all of them," Dirksen said.

Guest Editorial

Oregon cougar management: Looking back to be more effective looking ahead



ODFW removed this cougar that returned to the scene of a fatal attack on an Oregon hiker in September. (ODFW photo)

By **Jim Akenson**

Jim Akenson is a wildlife biologist, book author and Conservation Director for the Oregon Hunters Association (oregonhunters.org). He invested much of his career in researching the Northwest's predators.

The fatal cougar attack on a hiker in the Mount Hood National Forest last year was a tragic thing. Evidence evaluation indicated the cougar was a female in good health. Is this a surprise? Not really. Cougar numbers are at all-time highs for our state, and the distribution of these cats encompasses the entire state. What has accounted for this cougar population expansion from an estimation of less than 3,000 in the mid-1990s to well over 6,000 today? Some of the answer is biological, some is social and much is connected to management capabilities and practices. We need to find a way to return to this socio-biological balance, and looking to the recent past might just be the best bet – back to a time when hound hunting was a legal and effective management tool in Oregon.

What are the consequences of there being double the number of cougars in Oregon? These effects are best described as alarming and pattern changing. One such pattern is for prey animals, specifically deer, relocating to human development areas to avoid a higher predation risk. This relocation is also drawing in cougars that will go where the next meal can be found. Many hunters and state wildlife managers report that deer are now less abundant in the wilder mountain, high desert and canyon regions of our state. Meanwhile, Oregon cities are wrestling with the number of deer inhabiting city limits and cougars are showing up in backyards and schoolyards.

As cougars become more comfortable in human-altered landscapes, the probability of negative encounters with humans, as well as pets and livestock, increases.

So, what is the solution? Biologically, it is plain and simple – more intensive cougar management through various hunting techniques. With an estimated population of 6,400 cougars and roughly 14,000 people hunting cougars and harvesting from 250 to 300 cats per year, this only equals a harvest rate of 4 percent, which is not enough to even flatten the ever-rising cougar population curve.

Reducing human threat, increasing deer and elk survival and bringing a cougar population back in balance with other interests in our state will require increased management action and efficiency. According to the 2017 Oregon Cougar Management Plan, the success rate for 2016 cougar hunters was 1.9 percent, with 13,879 people reporting that they did hunt cougars. Contrast that with 1994 data, the last year that dogs were allowed in conservatively controlled, limited-entry cougar hunting, showing 358 people hunted cougars and harvested 144 for a success rate of 40.2 percent. Bottom line: hunting efficiency with dogs is dramatically higher and provides wildlife managers a reliable tool for maintaining the cougar population within its management objectives.

Oregon's cougar management and record keeping are divided into six zones, each of which is assigned a desired harvest quota to keep the population in balance with the varied activities of all Oregonians. Employing the current limited management methods, only one of the six zones has met the harvest quota in recent years. A criterion for quota establishment is complaint frequency. By far the most cougar complaints are recorded on the west side of the Cascades, including the coastal region, in Zones A and B. This is also where the bulk of the human population lives. More than 350 cougar complaints per year were received during the last decade in these two zones. Unfortunately, this recording system was not initiated until 2001, so we don't have data for the time before the dog ban of 1994. We do have records for administrative actions connected to human safety and pet conflicts before and after the dog ban of 1994. For eight years before the ban, they averaged only four per year, and then seven years after the dog ban these complaints increased to 27 per year – nearly a seven-fold increase.

Oregon does have a legislatively authorized agent program wherein highly vetted houndsmen are permitted to lethally remove cats to reduce human conflict and bolster deer and elk survival. These agents work closely with ODFW district biologists. Even with this program in place, cougars are steadily increasing in Oregon, where hunting them is very impractical without the aid of dogs. At present, the law authorizing the use of agents is up for renewal, and hopefully it will receive legislative support and then be applied more broadly for both reaching zone harvest quotas and to help curb the upward statewide population trajectory.

Community lunch menu

Willow Creek Baptist volunteers will serve lunch on Wednesday, January 30 at St. Patrick's Senior Center. Lunch will be clam chowder, coleslaw, cucumber salad, bread sticks and hay stack cookies for dessert.

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

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Ellis Project opposed

To the editor:

I would like to provide you with my concerns regarding the Ellis Project.

My name is Ladd Dick and I was born and raised in Heppner (class of 1962), a business owner (1967-1972) and a part owner of a family cabin on Lake Penland, where I spend as much of my time as possible.

The information I received indicates that 30 to 100 miles of roads would be closed. This should be an exact number and the roads to be closed listed and shown on a map. I will never be comfortable with allowing an unknown number and miles of roads to be closed. Who makes this decision and why hasn't it already been made? This is like a blank check with no limit on the amount. This is National Forest, not a National Park. It is publicly owned and road closures limit my access to areas which I have enjoyed since I was a child (born in 1944).

I protested new logging roads (1960's and 1970's) that were being built within yards of existing roads but now the pendulum has moved way too far in the other direction. I am an avid hunter and fisherman but am now limited to a short distance from my vehicle. I am not handicapped but this could be seen as a violation of Americans with disabilities rights. Is this an attempt to make certain areas available only to private hunting groups on our public land? That is the result of road closures in other areas of the National Forest where I have hunted in the past. These road closures were the result of washouts which were never repaired due to a lack of funds (a convenient way to achieve road closures), not a planned road closure.

When I have requested projects for the Forest Service to consider the

response has always been no funds are available. How do funds for a project which will limit my access to areas which I love become available. Why are funds available to close roads but are not available to repair damaged roads? Road closures will only benefit special interest groups.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns with the Ellis Project.

Ladd E. Dick
Oak Harbor, WA

Editor's Note: According to the summary of the project obtained from the US Government Federal Register, "The Heppner and North Fork John Day Ranger Districts propose the Ellis Integrated Vegetation Project (Ellis Project) to reduce overstocking, improve ecosystem health and enhance resilient landscapes by creating and maintaining heterogeneous vegetative conditions at multiple scales. As a result, this action will reduce the risk of uncharacteristic disturbances; enhance vegetative communities; provide well-distributed, high quality wildlife habitat for associated species; aid in protecting values at risk; promote the health and safety of the public and firefighters; and contribute to social, cultural, and economic needs. The project area is approximately 15 miles southeast of Heppner and seven miles west of Ukiah, Oregon, in Morrow, Umatilla, and Grant Counties. Based on internal and external issues raised early in proposal development; and the scope, scale, and potentially significant beneficial impacts to distribution of wildlife, forest health, and fuels reduction, the Umatilla National Forest plans to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS)."

Chamber meeting rescheduled

The annual meeting of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce has been rescheduled for Thursday, Jan. 31 in the senior center dining room. Persons attending are asked to enter from the outside door on the Willow Street side of the building. The lunch of a French dip, green salad and a cookie, catered by Heppner Market Fresh, will be served beginning at 11:45 a.m. Lunch will cost \$10 per person and RSVPs are required no later than Jan. 28.

There will be a tour of the Gilliam-Bisbee building beginning at 12:40 p.m. David Allstott with Allstott

Construction will be there to show how it looks now and what it will look like upon completion. No hard hats will be required.

Those attending and not eating lunch or those wishing to attend the tour of the Gilliam-Bisbee building should also RSVP by calling 541-676-5536.

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to Sheryll Bates at 541-676-5536.



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