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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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David Sykes ..... Publisher  
Bobbi Gordon ..... Editor

All News and Advertising Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.  
For Advertising: advertising deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Cost for a display ad is \$5.25 per column inch. Cost for classified ad is 50¢ per word. Cost for Card of Thanks is \$10 up to 100 words. Cost for a classified display ad is \$6.05 per column inch.  
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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.

# AARP Tax-Aide announces tax stats

**By Bobbi Gordon**  
The AARP Foundation's Tax-Aide program provided free tax assistance and preparation during the 2019 tax season, beginning in February and ending in mid-April. The tax assistance was offered in Heppner, Boardman, Hermiston and Pendleton.  
According to Joan Heihn, a facilitator for the program, the volunteer preparers processed 821 e-file returns, 21 paper returns and 14 returns for prior years as well as countless others that were started and the client did not need to file or chose not to file.  
The highest number of returns were processed in Hermiston with a total of 534. The volunteers in Pendleton processed 146 and 136 in Boardman. This year assistance was offered in Heppner on three Fridays

in March, where 31 returns were processed.  
"Considering that we had terrible weather and volunteers being out for a variety of reasons, I think those numbers are amazing," Heihn told the Gazette. "We are a small workforce of nine preparers and four facilitators and we should be proud of what we accomplished this year," she concluded. The program will be seeking additional volunteers in the fall to be trained for the next tax season.  
The assistance provided through Tax-Aide was available to those with low or moderate incomes, not just adults over 50. AARP membership is not required. Volunteers are trained and IRS-certified each year to ensure they are aware of the latest changes to the U.S. Tax Code.

# AWANA club hosts awards



Medal of Merit winners for Bible Memory Verses (L-R): Jaime Cavan, Journey Cavan and Lizzie Finch. -Photo by Andrea DiSalvo.



AWANA Grand Prix trophy winners (L-R): Frank Di Salvo, third place for speed; Journey Cavan, second place for speed; Lizzie Finch, winner for the fastest car and most creative design; Jaime Cavan, second place for design and Moira Di Salvo, third place design winner. -Photo by Andrea DiSalvo.

The local AWANA Bible Club, a joint ministry of five local churches, concluded its club year with an awards program and Grand Prix car races on Sunday afternoon, April 14 at Willow Creek Baptist Church in Heppner. There were 18 club members and six leaders who raced a five-ounce derby car in the annual races.  
The first-place trophy for speed went to Lizzie Finch, second was Journey Cavan and third to Frank Di Salvo. The top three awards for the most creatively designed cars were claimed by Lizzie Finch, Jaime Cavan and Moira Di Salvo. The adult winner was Sparks leader John Collin of Ione. His "AWANA Ark" car was the overall speed champion of the night.  
In the Sparks group for K through third grade, Top Attendance awards went to Emillia Cavan, Sofia Di Salvo and Sophia Serrano. AWANA Game Sportsmanship Awards were given to Emillia Cavan and Mathew Kline.  
In the Truth and Training Club (fourth through sixth grade), Medals of Merit for memorizing all 23 Bible passages from the weekly lessons were earned by Journey Cavan, Jaime Cavan and Lizzie Finch. Sportsmanship Awards were given to Brionna and Fernando Serrano, who also received Top Attendance Awards along with Journey Cavan, Lizzie Finch and Moira Di Salvo.

# Lexington struggles for fire fighters

Volunteers just not there

**By David Sykes**  
The Town of Lexington has a shortage of volunteer firemen and at last Tuesday's Town Council meeting it didn't get any good news that the situation would be improving.  
"The majority of our (Lexington's) population are older people and the younger people just don't seem to want to deal with it," long-time Fire Chief Charlie Sumner told the council about the shortage of volunteer firemen. Sumner said they are just not getting the volunteers like the town used to.  
"For a time I was the only one (fireman)," says Sumner, who added that without mutual aid assistance from the Heppner Fire Department he doesn't know what the town would do in the event of a fire. He said the volunteers at one point went up to 10 regulars and is now down to six. Sumner said he talked to Heppner Fire Chief Rusty Estes about the town joining the rural fire protection district, from which it could then receive protection, but was turned down. Concerning joining the rural district, Lexington Mayor Marcia Kemp said the town also approached the rural district in 2010 and asked if they could join. She says they were told the town needed to purchase a tanker to be eligible.  
Kemp also said the council was also told by town firemen that if the city built a new fire hall, which it did in 2012, that would attract new volunteers. "That hasn't happened," she pointed out. It was also discussed that the town has a shortage of equipment and needs a new fire siren.  
On volunteerism, Sumner said younger people, from which a fire department needs draws its people, "just don't seem to understand volunteerism." He said in order to get a fireman trained, certified and ready to serve, the department first must pay \$500 for training, and if that person misses one training class, "they don't get certified," he said.  
The council didn't seem to have answers for the shortage. "We need to explore the options," Kemp said. "We also need to be prepared when Charlie Sumner retires," she added.  
In other business at the monthly meeting Kemp refused to consider one candidate who applied for appointment to a vacant town council position. Tim Shulte and Curtis Thompson both turned in letters of interest to be appointed to the spot, however Kemp said she would not allow Thompson to be considered or even voted on for the council. "I cannot do this," Kemp said. "If we do approve him, we will be faced with a harassment charge," she said. Kemp alleges that Thompson "harassed" a city employee and that disqualifies him from being on the council. When asked by councilmember Bill Beard what Thompson did, Kemp would not elaborate saying there could be "liability" if it were talked about in open meeting. She did say there are recording cameras in the Lexington city hall.  
Kemp did not site her authority as mayor to block consideration of the candidate. The town charter says that "in case of one or more vacancies in the council, the council members whose offices are not vacant will appoint qualified people to that position." It also says that vacancies shall "be filled by an appointment by a majority of the entire council." Under the qualifications of elected officials' section of the charter, it says "only qualified electors, within the meaning of the



Ribbon cutting of the new Lexington Fire Hall in 2012. The town has a new fire hall but not enough firemen to use it.

state constitution, who are residents of the city for at least one year prior to the election shall be eligible to hold an elective office. The council shall be the final judge of the qualifications and election of its own members." According to the charter the mayor "shall have a vote when necessary to break a tie."  
"One candidate is not going to be considered, period," Kemp said. She tabled the appointment without a vote of the council until next month's council meeting. "But that person (Thompson) will not be considered because of the harassment," she concluded.  
Apparently, there is also friction between the other council appointment candidate Tim Shulte and current councilmember Bill Beard. The two exchanged



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harsh words during the council meeting when discussing an encounter the two apparently had over a dog problem. Beard claims Shulte threatened to "go get a gun" during the confrontation, with Shulte denying the claim saying he has never owned a gun.  
In other business at the meeting Kemp urged the town to put in for a grant to get some Welcome to Lexington signs put up. "We need some signs," Kemp said. The council voted to apply for a Willow Creek Valley Economic Development grant for the signs.  
Kemp also urged the council to consider putting in a playground park in the town, saying people want a park and a place where kids can play. She said the town needs to do things to improve livability.

**DEADLINE**  
MONDAYS  
AT 5PM

**VOTE**

*John Murray*

**PORT OF MORROW COMMISSIONER**

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