

FBLA students compete at state competition



Pictured back row (L-R): Cason Mitchell, Jayden Mitchell, Zavier Glover, Casey Fletcher, Roy Collins and Derek Smith. Front row (L-R): Mrs. Collins, Kennisyn Wilkins, Madison Combe, Claire Grieb, Cami VanArsdale, Hunter Nichols, Blake Wolters, Carson Brosnan, Kason Cimmiyotti and Cody Fletcher.

Twenty-one Heppner High School students spent the first weekend of April competing at the state FBLA competition in Portland, OR, with many students placing in the competition.

Jaiden Mahoney placed second in Agribusiness; Madison Combe, Jenna McCullough and Claire Grieb placed second in Hospitality Management; Cason Mitchell and Hunter Nichols placed second in Sports Management; Cami VanArsdale and Keegan Gibbs placed fourth in Entrepreneurship and Casey Fletcher, Gavin Robinson and Zavier Glover placed fifth in Sports Management.

BEO opens loan office in Hermiston

BEO Bancorp and its subsidiary, Bank of Eastern Oregon, announce the opening of a Hermiston Loan Production Office located at 1475 N. 1st Street; formerly the EONI location. The office will be staffed by veteran bankers Lucas Wagner, Jared Lathrop, Jennifer Berry and Melissa Samms.

Additionally, Bank of Eastern Oregon has hired veteran bankers in Pendleton. Tracy Hamby and Jennifer Mulvihill join the existing Pendleton staff of Mike Short and Shayne Wagner. Their office is lo-

cated in the Sierra Building at 202 SE Dorion, Suite 102, Pendleton.

Bank of Eastern Oregon has also added staff to its Island City Loan Production Office. David Stirewalt, Craig Nightingale, Carly Davis and Jack Wright join Kristy Nelson at our Union County office located at 10201 N. McAlister Rd., Island City, OR.

In announcing the new office and additional staff, president and Chief Executive Officer, Jeff Bailey said, "We are pleased to have the opportunity to add to our presence in Umatilla

and Union Counties, both with an office in Hermiston, as well as additional staff in our existing locations.

These bankers are well respected in the industry and bring many years of banking experience with them to Bank of Eastern Oregon. Their knowledge of the local markets and a loyal customer following will serve our bank well. I welcome these bankers to our banking family. I am confident that their customers and prospective customers will enjoy Bank of Eastern Oregon's brand of banking."

Elementary school holds mock training exercise



Brandi Sweeney, Jessica Lentz, Tiffanie Greenup, Darcy Robinson, Jennifer Jaca, Missy Cutsforth and SRO Ken Kippley participated in the mock gas leak exercise.

Heppner Elementary School held a mock gas leak exercise recently, with Morrow County School District staff and volunteers pitching in to help. The exercise focused on the re-unification process of getting the students back to their families after such an event.

During the exercise, which began at the elementary school, the group followed the process to safely evacuate the students to the re-unification site at the fairgrounds. The process to be followed includes order and careful documentation to allow students to be reunited with their parents.

Morrow County Sheriff's Office participates in this type of training exercise with all schools in Morrow County, working with community partners to keep everyone safe. School Resource Deputy Ken Kippley assisted in the training process to keep it running smoothly.

Local woman encouraged by MS news

Potential 'game-changer' in fight against multiple sclerosis

By David Sykes

Local woman Merilee McDowell, who has multiple sclerosis and is an active fundraiser and advocate to find a cure, says researchers at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland say they've had a breakthrough in treatment of the disease. So much so they are calling it a "potential game-changer."

Researchers say they've developed a compound that can lead to the repair of a protective cover for cells in the brain and spine. That cover, called myelin, is often damaged in patients diagnosed with MS.

"This is a huge breakthrough," says McDowell. "To repair the damage that's been done is huge for everyone with MS."

Two of the senior authors involved in the study say the drug they helped create is a first for the treatment of multiple sclerosis. "There are no known drugs currently available that stimulate myelin. That's the one big problem remaining with MS therapy," said Tom Scanlan, Ph.D. at OHSU.

Doctor Dennis Bourdette said he expects it will be a few years before the compound is ready for clinical trials. McDowell said she has met Dr. Bourdette



Merilee McDowell with grandson Henry Burnside at an MS walk fundraiser in Heppner.

and had a meal with him when she was in Washington DC.

McDowell has been active in organizing MS walks in Heppner for many years, which have raised thousands of dollars toward researching a cure for the disease. And fulfilling her role as an advocate for peo-

ple who have the affliction, McDowell says she is going to contact her legislators about "keeping the cost of the drug down so everyone can afford it when it's approved," which she says is probably years away. She said she may try and get into the study in the early stages of testing.

Health District tax levy to be on ballot

A continuation of current levy

By David Sykes

Morrow County voters will be asked to approve a five-year Morrow County Health District tax levy to help with funding the district. The levy is a continuation of the one currently in place and approved in 2014.

The district says it will use the revenue to maintain and expand services throughout the county and "continue to advance the quality of care provided in each patient care area as

well as ensuring that our facilities, technology and infrastructure, workforce of 124 employees and 67 volunteers continue to meet the needs of our communities."

The district says the levy is essential to maintain emergency medical services throughout the county with paid full-time staff, replacement of ambulances, equipment and recruitment of additional providers and specialists. It says the levy is necessary as the perma-

nent tax rate will continue to be insufficient to fund district operations.

According to estimates from the county assessor's office the proposed levy will generate approximately on average \$702,741 per year in fiscal years 2019-2020 through 2023-2024 for a total of \$3,513,705.

Ballots with the levy included are scheduled to go into the mail May 1 and are due back to the clerk's office by May 21.

Podiatry services now available in Morrow County

Board certified foot and ankle specialist, Dr. Kessa Mauraas, of Mt. Hood Podiatry, is now serving Morrow County residents at Morrow County Health District's Pioneer Memorial Clinic in Heppner. Currently, Dr. Mauraas will see patients from one to two Fridays per month, with the potential of increasing her time in Heppner based on the needs of the community and patients.

While podiatric medicine and surgery encompass many areas, Dr. Mauraas is most passionate about diabetic foot ulcer prevention,

wound healing, and limb salvage. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 73,000 amputations of lower limbs are performed on those with diabetes in the U.S. every year.

Dr. Mauraas is committed to educating patients about the prevention of foot related medical conditions, providing them with as many resources as possible so that in her words, "they don't become a statistic." She also shared that too often, a skin injury or a small wound can quickly



Dr. Kessa Mauraas

escalate to something more serious when there is a delay in receiving a medical evaluation and appropriate treatment.

Questions for Dr. Mauraas regarding her services in Morrow County, or to inquire about an appointment, contact Mt. Hood Podiatry at 541-386-1006.

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