

Gazette Times

VOL. 138 NO. 19 8 Pages Wednesday, May 8, 2019 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Local group participates in MS Walk held in Pendleton



Pictured at the MS Walk are back row (L-R): Dan Bennett, Bill McDowell and Danielle Burnside. Front row: Barb Orwick, Merilee McDowell and her grandson Henry Burnside.

The "Together we are Stronger" eastern Oregon MS Walk was held May 4 at Roy Raley Park in Pendleton for the 22nd year. The day started out with blue skies, warm weather and people with one purpose – to "End MS Forever." There were approximately 120 walkers who raised \$11,040.

Before the walk began, Louanne Wach, de-

velopment manager for Walk MS National Society announced that she had a script but decided not to use it. She asked the past and current leaders of EO Walk MS and a newly diagnosed person to share their stories. "Needless to say, it was very emotional," said Merilee McDowell, team captain of the All Saints Hope for a Cure Team. "It's hard to describe how you

feel when you stand in front of families, friends and leaders who are all there for one reason, to stop MS in its tracks. I've had MS for 42 years, which included many ups and downs, just like many others who have this disease," she added.

Walk MS is the largest fundraiser of the National MS Society. In 2018 the Society invested \$36M, managing 340 projects with multi-year commitments of \$80M. Driving future breakthroughs, they hold training workshops to build a research workforce. The Society is forging global collaborations to speed solutions and a cure. They work closely with OHSU to further a cure for MS. "Donations to the NMS through Walk MS comes back to our small community and many communities like us," said a Walk MS coordinator.

McDowell told the Gazette that there is still time to donate to this important cause by contacting her at meri0120@gmail.com or Barb Orwick at eatbananas73@hotmail.com.

MCHD board approves Houser performance evaluation

The Morrow County Health District Board overwhelmingly approved the job CEO Bob Houser is doing in his performance evaluation at the district's regular meeting Monday night in Lexington. Board members scored Houser as excellent in numerous categories, commenting that he "meets and exceeds expectations as our CEO." Board member Aaron Palmquist, who is also the administrator for the city of Irrigon, told the board that he looked upon Houser not only as a peer in the administrative field, but also as a peer and friend. "He's done an excellent job of not only representing us but representing our district."

As per his contract, Houser will receive a cost of living adjustment that amounts to half of the cost of living increases for the district's employees. If the employees received a four percent cost of living increase, for example, Houser will receive two percent, with two percent being the minimum increase.

Houser's contract runs through December 2020.

At the meeting, the board also approved a proposed \$17 million budget for fiscal year 2019-20, up from \$16,164,031 for 2018-19. According to Chief Financial Officer Nicole

Mahoney, "The significant increases in this budget cycle mostly hinge on the expansion of the Irrigon Medical Clinic and additional staff in the Irrigon, Heppner and Lone Clinics and the full-time compliance director in administration."

Mahoney said the budget was built on conservative estimates in terms of revenue.

Mahoney said that new positions and staffing changes for fiscal year 2019-20 include a mid-level provider, medical assistant and increased hours for a coder at the Irrigon Clinic; a social worker and community health worker split between the Irrigon and Heppner clinics; a physician at the Heppner clinic and emergency room and medical assistant at the Heppner clinic as of September 2019; mid-level provider increased hours, medical assistant hours and clerical hours increased at the Lone Clinic; a compliance director; and increased hours in dietary and housekeeping. She said that the Lone Community Clinic will be open for family practice services an additional one-and-a-half days per week, which will increase access and patient visits.

Concerning provider

employment, Houser told the board that physician's assistant, Danielle Mateleska, who had been shadowing Dr. Russ Nichols at Pioneer Memorial Clinic, is now credentialed by four carriers and may see those patients without Dr. Nichols' direct supervision. Houser said that she is also working to become certified to do physicals and provide women's health services.

Houser also said the district has received some paperwork from a potential provider, Dr. Hejmanowski, but is still waiting for Oregon licensure and other paperwork. Board members expressed concern that Dr. Hejmanowski may not actually intend to hire on with the district. In that event, the recruiter hired by the district will not receive payment from MCHD.

Houser said that Terri Brandt-Correa, chief nursing officer with MCHD, will be leaving the district May 10 to take a new position in Colorado. Jamie Houck, RN, has accepted the interim CNO position and is currently shadowing Brandt-Correa.

The district still needs a Home Health/Hospice RN, a behavioral health counselor for the district, a community health care worker and a part-time dietician.

In other business, the

KayRene Qualls retires from Bank of Eastern Oregon

By Bobbi Gordon

KayRene Qualls, 66, of Heppner retired April 30 from the Bank of Eastern Oregon, where she had worked since 2003. She started her banking career at Klamath First Bank in 1997. That bank was then sold to Wells Fargo and eventually they intended to sell to Sterling Bank. At that time, employees were unsure what was going to happen when BEO took it over. BEO brought all of the employees over at that time.

Qualls was born in Heppner and grew up in Condon. She went to school in Condon, then did one term at Eastern Oregon College before transferring to Fort Steilacoom College, near Tacoma, WA. She was studying to be a vet tech when she met her husband, Roscoe Qualls.

She and Roscoe were married in 1973 and moved to their home on Upper Rhea Creek in 1975. In the early days, she worked on the ranch before beginning her banking career. The Qualls have two children, John (Doshea) Qualls, Heppner, the senior vice-president for BEO and Mindy (Tracy) Journot of Pueblo, CO. She has five grandchildren; Sydney, Hayden and



KayRene Qualls is all smiles at her recent retirement party at Bank of Eastern Oregon.

Sophie Qualls, Kailea Sample and Maci Davidson.

KayRene related a little of the story about her being switched at birth at the hospital in Heppner. She said she found out about it ten years ago. Her brother was the first to know about it although there had been rumors about it before they knew for sure. "It's a long, long story," KayRene said.

When asked how it feels to leave her job and what she will miss she said, "BEO is a great company

to work for and I appreciate everything they have done for me. I won't miss the electronics. That is for young people these days." She added, "I will miss the people terribly. It is a very good crew that works there. I loved helping people, especially the elderly."

KayRene and Roscoe intend to do some traveling. They are looking at travel trailers so intend to do some camping and hope to travel to see their daughter more.

Umatilla County assumes responsibilities for onsite septic systems in Morrow County

Umatilla County Health and Morrow County Planning have announced that as of May 3, 2019 all program responsibilities for onsite septic systems in Morrow County have transferred from Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to Umatilla County Health. This means that Umatilla County is now responsible for conducting site evaluations, issuing construction permits, con-

ducting pre-cover inspections, storage of historical records and issuing authorization notices for most septic systems located in Morrow County. Additionally, Umatilla County will also be responsible for all pumper truck inspections in Morrow County, according to a news release from the county.

Umatilla County has been providing these services for Umatilla County

since Nov. 1, 2016 and according to the county the transition to local oversight has proven to be beneficial for county residents. "Umatilla County Health has a long-standing relationship with Morrow County and currently has additional partnerships with Morrow County Health Department administering the food, pool and lodging

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MCHD CEO Bob Houser

board:

-agreed to participate in a summer food program for children sponsored by the Morrow County School District with a \$5,000 donation. Board member Marie Shimer told the board, however, that the program would not be able to go into the lone area because it is located in the Lone School District and not the Morrow County School District. However, she said however, that any children in Morrow County could participate

in the program at the food program sites. Discussion was held concerning possible ways to enable the lone students to participate.

-learned the Willow Creek Valley Assisted Living Board met April 11 and approved the WCVL audit presented by auditor Wipfli unanimously. Census at the assisted living facility was reported at 14 residents, with the last two rooms "tentatively" spoken for. WCVL held an election of officers with Robin Bredfield elected chair, Nancy Snider elected vice-chair and Shirley George, secretary-treasurer.

-received the profit and loss statement through March, which showed a \$120,172 loss for the month. At the February board meeting, Dr. Russ Nichols noted the clinic schedules for March and

April were "very sparse," due to the departure of physician's assistant Amanda Fabian, and no new providers yet credentialed. He added at that time he was scheduled for appointments six weeks out.

Through March, the district had \$975,957 in gross patient revenue, less \$54,062 in bad debts and contractual and other adjustments for \$921,895 in net patient revenue, plus \$160,914 in tax revenue and \$2,997 in other operating revenue for \$1,085,806 in total operating revenue. Operating expenses totaled \$1,235,804, plus a non-operating gain of \$29,826 for a \$120,172 loss for the month and an \$11,035 average monthly year-to-date loss.

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ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

Join Us At Grant Morrow OHV Park
"Ride the Blues" and Poker Run
Saturday, May 11th

Morrow County Grain Growers Inc.

MORROW COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS
 350 MAIN STREET, LEXINGTON OR 97839
 CONTACT: JUSTIN BAYLEY, 541-989-8221 EXT 204

*Offers only by model and are subject to availability. Model and financing offers valid on select 2019-2020 new and complete Polaris ATVs, Side-by-Sides, UTVs, Generators, and ACP models purchased between 5/1/19 - 4/30/20. All availability of models and offers may vary by store. An open loan method allows for 12 month term at a 0% APR rate \$25 per \$1,000 financed, and with a 60 month term at a 0% APR rate. \$1,000 down payment required. \$100 per month payment. Financing offers may vary by store. See your local dealer for details. Minimum Amount Financed \$1,000. Maximum Amount Financed \$20,000. Other qualifications and restrictions may apply. Financing prohibited on other products. See, Use, Service, and registration are required and may not be financed. Provision may be modified or discontinued without notice at any time in Polaris' sole discretion. **Riding off-road vehicles can be hazardous to yourself and others. If permitted, be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protect on clothing. Always use seat belts and buckles in their cars equipped. Never drink or drug driving, and avoid excessive alcohol and drug use. Riding and stunts should not be attempted. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-542-2164 for additional information. Check local news before riding on roads. ©2019 Polaris Industries Inc.