

HEPPNER

# Gazette Times



VOL. 138 NO. 33 6 Pages Wednesday, August 14, 2019 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## 2019 Morrow County Fair begins today



Above: Firefighter Terry Johnsen sets up the Umatilla National Forest display at the Morrow County Fair.

Below: Exhibitors wait to check in their fair entries. -Photos by Giselle Moses.



## Firefighters make progress on HK Complex fire



The fire camp at the OHV Park includes tents and other facilities for the personnel fighting the HK Complex fire.

By Bobbi Gordon

Firefighters are making progress on the HK Complex fire, 15 miles north of Monument on the Heppner Ranger District, due to rainfall and cooler temperatures over the weekend. The fire, started by lightning, is 2,707 acres in size and is about 78 percent contained. Nine fires in the complex are 100 percent contained. A fire camp has been set up at the Morrow County OHV Park and many agen-

cies are working together to get the fires contained. The press release for August 13 states approximately 200 personnel have been removed from the incident and Northwest Incident Management Team Six will be transferring command of the HK Complex to a local Type Four team August 14. There has been minimal fire behavior and temperatures are forecasted to be in the 70s to low

80s. Public use restrictions pertaining to recreational chainsaw use, smoking and off-road travel have been lifted on the Umatilla National Forest. A portion of the 21 Road remains closed to allow for fire traffic. With many resources leaving the fire camp, many vehicles and equipment are expected to be on the roads. Drivers are asked to use caution and obey posted speed limits.

## Governor Brown announces Morrow County Justice Court vacancy

Governor Kate Brown has announced that she is accepting applications for a judicial vacancy on the Morrow County Justice Court created by the planned retirement of Judge Annetta Spicer. According to a press release, "The Governor thanked Judge Spicer for her dedicated judicial service and announced that she will fill the position by appointment. Judge Spicer's retirement takes effect December 31, 2019."

Interested applicants should mail or deliver their

completed application forms to Misha Isaak, General Counsel, Office of the Governor, 900 Court Street NE, Suite 254, Salem, OR 97301-4047. Forms must be received by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, August 28, 2019. Forms emailed by 5 p.m. on the closing date will be considered timely so long as original signed forms postmarked by the closing date are later received.

The release says, "Governor Kate Brown fills judicial vacancies based on

merit. She encourages applications from individuals with a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences." It says ORS 51.240 sets forth the qualifications for office. The ORS stipulates residency requirements as well as training and background requirements.

To receive answers to questions about the appointment process, or to request an interest form, contact Shevaun Gutridge at 503-378-6246 or shevaun.gutridge@oregon.gov.

## Several cleanup issues on way to resolution



A small pile of debris is all that is left of the burned-out house on Linden Way. -Photo by David Sykes.

By David Sykes

Two property cleanups the city of Heppner has been wrestling with the past several months appear on the way to resolution, the Heppner City Council was told Monday night. A burned-out house on Linden Way and an auto repair business downtown are in the process of cleaning up.

The house on Linden Way burned down April 2, however the burned-out shell was up until recently and not being removed by the property owner. The city had considered cleaning up the property and then placing a legal lien on the property for the cost of the cleanup. However, at an early council meeting, neighbor Jay Keithley, who had complained several times about the smell and danger of the next-door burned-out structure, offered to take care of the cleanup in exchange for ownership of the property. That deal between him and property owner Megan Futter was apparently made and Keithley immediately began cleaning up. By Tuesday it was nearly done. Monday night City Manager Kraig Cutsforth told the council that things worked out pretty well and the only cost to the city was some minimal attorney's fees. He said an asbestos study that might have been required was waived by the Department of Environmental Quality, which helped reduce the cleanup cost.

The city has also been contending with a cleanup at a local auto repair business. The city had notified Brannon Auto Repair that it needed to clean up its property on 126 E. May

St. or would be subject to fines. The city had, however, at the same time sent Brannon a letter saying the business was in violation of a city zoning ordinance. That violation could subject the business to an additional fine of \$435 per day.

Owner Marty Brannon said he knew the property needed to be cleaned up and he immediately started that effort, however he took exception the zoning violation threat, pointing out that his business has been used for many years by various auto repair businesses and should therefore be grandfathered in.

Monday night Heppner resident Katherine Melby Turner told the council she had researched the formation of what is called the "Downtown Zone" that prohibits auto repair businesses. She read a three-page statement to the council which in part said she found in the minutes of an August 4, 2003 planning commission meeting when the stricter Downtown Development code was adopted, that all the current businesses are grandfathered in and therefore allowed in the new zone. Across the street from Brannon's business is a tire store which also does front end alignments and brake work. That business, however, was not sent a letter from the city for zone violations.

Turner told the council the way the city handled the zoning violation and the threat of fines "got many of us pretty riled up." Turner also asked some questions she said many in the community were talking about: "It actually makes some of our citizens wonder about collusion between Kraig

Cutsforth, city manager, and his sister Kim Cutsforth, Chairperson of the Howard and Beth Bryant trust which is contributing to the renovation of the William and Bisbee Building. I have heard the following questions come up in conversation:

1. Are they trying to put Marty out of business because they need more parking or a truck delivery point for the new hotel?
2. Are they afraid it won't look good to have an auto repair facility right outside the new hotel?
3. If they needed parking, they should have had a plan before they started development.
4. Do they want that land to expand the entrance or area of the new hotel?
5. Does the city manager go to the council to discuss potential code violations or does he send the certified letters out without the Council knowing about anything this serious which could put people out of business?

All this speculation and guessing hopefully would never have occurred if this situation had been handled in a more professional and unemotional way," she told the council in her statement.

Following the council meeting Kraig Cutsforth told the Gazette-Times the clean up enforcement had nothing to do with his sister and the Howard Bryant Trust. He pointed out that the new hotel project next door to the auto repair business is owned by a separate entity, not the trust. A separate legal entity has been set up to take ownership of

-See CLEANUP/PAGE THREE

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