

Gazette Times

VOL. 139 NO. 13 6 Pages Wednesday, March 25, 2020 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Lexington resident sews, donates Covid-19 masks

Sandi Pointer of Lexington, a busy mom of three grown kids and a doting grandmother, not to mention an employee of the Morrow County Public Works Department, was looking for an opportunity to help during these times of crises. So, when the Stanfield quilt shop put out a request to all sewers and quilters for their help in supplying masks in the fight against COVID 19, Pointer leapt for it.



Sandi Pointer



Granddaughter Jude, the recipient of many outfits made by grandma, the source of scraps made into masks.

After Googling a couple patterns, Pointer sewed 56 masks and distributed them to Pioneer Memorial Hospital, a special transportation office in Kelso and Woodland, Washington, a nursing home in Longview, Washington, and staff at her Public Works office. Sandi says she was able to do around 10 in a half hour, with her two sons testing and helping with the fit. She says she made masks until she ran out of elastic.

Sandi said she had taken the elastic out of two queen fitted sheets to use the fabric for something else but hung on to the elastic. "I had several (fabric) scraps too big to throw away, but not big enough for anything much else," said Pointer. She had material left over from making granddaughter Jude's dresses, quilts, Valentine bags and Easter baskets, "So, I felt I could do it."



Masks Pointer made, preparing to ship off.

"It looked easy enough, so I gave it a try and, after getting an assembly line type production and my two sons testing and helping with fit, I had some masks going

pretty good." (Editor's note: Not all facilities accept homemade masks, so it is best to check with those facilities prior to sewing and shipping.)

Local businesses adapt to shutdown

By Bobbi Gordon

Area businesses have adjusted hours, changed to take-out only and implemented new sanitizing and cleaning processes due to the shutdown caused by the Coronavirus. Some have set up delivery options and are focusing on keeping their business open and their employees working.

The Heppner Gazette-Times, as media, is considered an essential business so will remain open and the newspaper will continue to be published. All news and advertising must be received by 5 p.m. on Mondays.

Bucknum's is open for curbside service only from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5 to 8 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Call 541-676-5274 to place orders as people are not allowed to wait inside. Check Facebook for the menu.

Breaking Grounds Coffee will remain open but asks customers to call in all coffee and food orders to limit the amount of contact time. They will continue to practice all safety guidelines required for restaurants.

As of March 21, Two Old Hags Pizza decided to close down completely to protect themselves, family, employees and their customers. They will reopen as soon as it is considered safe.

Murray's Drug will remain open to serve their customers. They have a new handicap system in the main entrance and ask that it is pushed by using your elbow. If you are sick, they ask that you please stay home and they will deliver your medications to you.

Heppner Market Fresh will remain open regular hours. There will be no can or bottle returns accepted at this time.

The Neighborhood Center in Heppner is currently closed except by appointment for food boxes. Donations of household and clothing are not being accepted at this time but donations of food, toiletries and diapers are needed. For additional information check their Facebook page.

All Oregon Trail Libraries are closed. Virtual services are available and Heppner staff may be

Volunteers band together to help others

By Bobbi Gordon

Cody High and Theresa Crawford of Heppner have formed a group of volunteers to help anyone in Morrow County who may need assistance due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The group, Morrow County- People Helping People, began on Facebook and is already up to over 50 volunteers.

High stated on the Facebook page, "We are in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic. Each day we are facing new challenges and hurdles. Theresa Crawford and I came up with the idea for this group with the concern that the very rural way of living that we all love here in Morrow County could provide added difficulties if we started down the same pathways other nations have gone down."

He continued, "The very space that we love and hopefully will keep us all safe and healthy will add hardships for some members of our community to get some of the basic needs we all sometimes have taken for granted. Together we can make a difference for all of Morrow County. If we stop thinking about others as from here or there and just think of them as our

Joel Peterson runs for commissioner

Joel Peterson is running for Morrow County Commissioner, Position One in the upcoming primary election to be held in May. In doing so, he is continuing a family tradition of public service begun by his grandfather, Oscar Peterson, a Morrow County judge and founding member of the Port of Morrow.

Throughout the years, he has served multiple organizations in the county including Morrow County Planning Commission, Bank of Eastern Oregon, Valby Lutheran Church, Morrow County Wheat Growers League, Jordan Elevator Corporation, Ione Community Agri-Business Organization, Ione School Board and Ione Education Foundation. He served as chairman of all of those organizations at least once and has also served on budget committees for the Port of Morrow and Ione Fire Department.

Peterson stated, "My service on the planning



Joel Peterson

commission in particular gave me experience with issues facing all of Morrow County. I found the public hearing process to be very helpful when faced with difficult choices. Many times we made better decisions because we could understand the perspectives of those being affected. As commissioner, I promise to keep listening."

Peterson was born in Heppner and attended Ione schools, graduating in 1975. After earning a degree from Pacific Lutheran University in engineering physics and a

minor in computer science, he returned to Ione to farm. He has been married to Lea Mathieu, an educator and minister, for 26 years. Lea has taught in Ione, Heppner and Boardman. Their three children attended school in Ione.

Joel grew up with cattle and now raises wheat, so says he knows ranching and farming firsthand. He is involved with pasture ground south of Hardman farmland south of Ione and irrigation ground near Boardman, giving him a personal perspective on Morrow County's agricultural needs.

"I believe that a leader is someone who puts others in the best position to succeed," continued Peterson. "As commissioner, I would do that by hiring excellent people and letting them use their expertise to the fullest. I will do my best to ensure that Morrow County's growing economy remains strong for all of us."

County declares emergency, closes facilities to public

No cases in Morrow County - four test negative

By David Sykes

In an effort to slow the spread of the Coronavirus, the Morrow County Commission last week declared a state of emergency and shut down all public access to its buildings across the county. Only the Sheriff's Office and the Circuit Court will remain open. County employees will be working to help the public; however, citizens will need to make contact by phone or email.

As of Tuesday morning, there have been no deaths or cases of the virus detected in the county. Four people have tested negative. In neighboring counties Umatilla has two cases, Grant has one and Gilliam and Wheeler both have zero.

At a meeting last week the county also announced it was discontinuing the practice of rotating meetings around the county and will hold all meetings

until further notice at the Bartholomew Building in Heppner. Also at the meeting the county turned down a request to have the Sheriff's Department conduct background checks for a newly formed volunteer group called People Helping People (see related story). The group had asked the Sheriff's Office to do checks on volunteers who would be making trips to people's homes during the governor's recently enacted stay at home order delivering food, supplies and needed items. The sheriff's office was going to make sure the volunteers did not have any background issues since the people will be going to elderly people's homes. The commissioners heard the request but denied the help saying they did not want the county's name attached to the group's efforts because of possible liability issues and that granting

help would also open the door to other groups asking for county help. Commissioners said they did not want the sheriff to do the background checks in case something happened, then the county would be blamed. Organizer of the new volunteer help group is Cody High of Heppner, who has so far signed up 50 local people to do the volunteer work.

The commission also held an emergency Coronavirus meeting on Thursday, March 19 and mostly discussed county personnel issues and measures to keep county employees safe and healthy. It was also decided at that time to hold a weekly meeting of a newly formed committee to monitor the county's response to the virus. Other county officials also meet on a regular basis to discuss the "fluid" situation with the virus.

neighbor."

The group has recruited a volunteer leader in each of the Morrow County cities. In Heppner, Theresa Crawford is the leader and can be reached at 541-561-0629. Lexington's volunteer leader is Tonja Lemmon Morissette, 541-561-8953. Also in Lexington, Will Lemmon and Ralph Klock of Morrow County Grain Growers have agreed to man the drop-off site at MCGG, 350 Main Street.

Jeff Clabaugh of Ione is the volunteer leader there

and can be reached at 971-517-0548. Jim Doherty, whose number is 541-571-0584, has volunteered in Boardman. In Irrigon, contact the Columbia View Community Church. Claudia Guerra has volunteered to be the translator so all of the messages distributed by the group are also available in Spanish.

The goal of the group is to help if someone is hungry or unable to get something they need. Everyone is asked to donate if they are able or reach out if they

need something. At this time, financial resources are not available.

"We have put names out of individuals in each community who have stepped forward to help. If someone is hungry or lacking something, we all should reach out to help regardless of our current hometown. If you have a need, reach out. If you can help, reach out. Our choices will determine if this is a major disaster or a defining moment of unity," Cody noted.

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