

Haystack catches fire near Ione



A large haystack burned at the Snow-McElligott ranch behind the Emert shop on Sunday. The fire was believed to have been started by spontaneous combustion.

County has \$500,000 to help local businesses adversely impacted by the Coronavirus

By David Sykes

During the last county budget meetings \$500,000 was set aside by the county to be used to help small local businesses adversely impacted by the Covid-19 virus, and, at its July 22, meeting commissioners began laying the groundwork on how that money would be disbursed.

Commissioner Don Russell, himself a business owner, said he thought the funds should go out as probably a combination of grant and loan money. "I think I have settled on a combination of grants and loans. I know how tough it is to be a small business owner," he said. Russell said when the pandemic started and many of the local retail businesses were shut down for a time period, he talked to businesses owners who were concerned with taking on more debt during the pandemic. "They didn't know how much they wanted to go into debt. And I understand that," Russell said. "Which makes me more inclined to some type of grant - loan program."

County Administrator Darrell Green said some of the other assistance programs out there had "lots of strings attached" which, he said, makes it difficult to get. Russell said another problem was that some businesses obtained Payroll Protection Program (PPP) funds for as little as \$1,000 and that stopped them from getting other grants and loans. "Some of the PPP loans people got were as low as \$1,000 and that disqualified them from applying for other programs," He pointed out. "A

thousand dollars doesn't go very far in business." Commissioner Melissa Lindsay also pointed out that with the Federal Disaster loans people got their assets tied up as collateral which was making it difficult for small businesses to keep their credit lines open.

Commissioners decided to set up a subcommittee of County Finance Director Kate Knop, Green, Commissioner Jim Doherty, and County Economic Development officer Gregg Zody to come up with guidelines and rules on how the new fund would operate and the money disbursed. Input would also be sought from local Chamber of Commercies. Russell said he would like to see the money go out as fifty-fifty, half grant and half loan.

County declared a drought

In other business the commissioners reviewed a letter signed July 21 by Governor Kate Brown declaring Morrow and Wheeler counties a drought emergency. The declaration was made after a request from the county because of lack of rainfall. The governor's declaration says conditions are not expected to improve, and drought is likely to have "significant economic impacts on the farm, forest, recreation, tourism, drinking water, and natural resources." It also says that the drought conditions have affected local growers, and increased the potential for fire, a loss of economic stability and a shortened growing season." Declaring the drought opens the door to the county receiving state and federal drought assistance.

County, Port to hold joint CREZIII planning meeting

Morrow County Commission and the Port of Morrow will hold a joint meeting Thursday August 6, to discuss formation of the new Columbia River Enterprise Zone Three. The meeting will be held at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Center starting at 6 p.m. and will be available on Zoom for the public to attend.

All the taxing districts that are located within the proposed CREZIII boundary have been invited to participate. "The purpose of the meeting is to answer questions and hear concerns that the taxing districts may have. The Port and the County are preparing an application for the CREZ III. The boundaries are the same as CREZ II. The County and the Port will be the Sponsors for CREZ III," according to information released by CREZII general manager Greg Sweek. Sweek is also preparing the application for the new enterprise zone to be presented later to the state for approval.

Following is the information needed to join the Zoom meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86373993202?pwd=OHhoNFdUZWZkSkp0TlVlUENPZGpPd309> Meeting ID: 863 7399 3202 Password: 090107

Mayor, three council spots up for Nov. 3 election

The city of Heppner will have the mayor position and three council slots up for election in the November 3, 2020 general election. Anyone wishing to file for the positions can obtain the forms either at city hall, or online at cityofheppner.com.

Candidates must be at least 18 years of age and have resided in the city limits of Heppner for 12 months preceding the election. The deadline for filing is August 25, 2020. The completed signed forms can either be mailed to Morrow County Elections, PO Box 338, Heppner, OR 97836, or brought to Heppner City Hall at 111 N. Main St (PO Box 756) Heppner, OR 97836.

Ida Farra celebrates 103 years



Friends gather to wish Ida Farra a Happy 103rd Birthday

Ida Farra of Heppner celebrated her 103rd birthday with a party at the Pioneer Memorial Hospital front lawn Tuesday, August 4. Helping her celebrate were (left to right): Frank Osmin, Cara Osmin, Peggy Fishburn, Carley Drake, Doug Drake, Mary Ann Elguezabal and Father Joseph Thankachan. Also in attendance Molly Rhea.



Ida Farra celebrates her 103rd Birthday

New year to begin with distance learning

Following a press release from Governor Brown and updated guidance from the Oregon Department of Education on Tuesday, July 28, Morrow County School District is finalizing plans for a comprehensive distance learning (CDL) instructional model for reopening school in fall 2020. With the CDL model, all students are engaged in learning that occurs remotely from online platforms such as Google classroom, Canvas and Seesaw.

Districts were given updated guidance that included metrics for cases that schools need to follow in order to hold in-person instruction. These metrics include case rate per 100,000 and test positivity rate. These metrics are calculated over a consecutive three-week period of time.

"With increased restrictions and metrics related to the COVID-19 virus, Morrow County School District will begin the school

year with a comprehensive distance learning model, with plans of transitioning to a hybrid model once it is safe for students to return to the classrooms," said Superintendent Dirk Dirksen. "While we are disappointed that we won't be able to invite our students back into buildings this fall, we are optimistic that we will be providing face-to-face instruction, as soon as possible."

"Morrow County School District is committed to providing a thorough distance learning experience for all students," said the release. The Morrow County School District Board of Directors will hold a special board meeting on Tuesday, August 4, at 7 p.m. At this meeting they will discuss a potential change to the 2020-2021 school calendar that would allow time to plan for the comprehensive distance learning model and for necessary professional development for staff to ensure successful implementation.

Second COVID-19 death reported in County

Morrow County Health Department is saddened to report that an individual previously reported to have COVID-19 has died. Morrow County's

second COVID-19 death is an 88-year-old male from North Morrow county. He died on August 2nd at Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston. This individual had underlying health conditions.

"This is an incredibly sad announcement and we encourage everyone to be respectful as a family in our community grieves. If you are in need of support during this difficult time, please contact Community Counseling Solutions at 541-676-9161," A Morrow County Emergency Management spokesperson said in a prepared news release.

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to have your picture taken, drop off photos, mail them to PO Box 337 in Heppner, email them to editor@rapidsolve.net or text cell phone photos to 541-980-6674.



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