



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢

VOL. 139 NO. 45 8 Pages Wednesday, November 4, 2020 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Dale and Sheryll Bates looking forward to retirement

By Bobbi Gordon

Dale and Sheryll Bates have decided it is time to retire while they are still “semi-young.” Sheryll told the Gazette that she is retiring because it is time, and she can. Dale reiterated her statement, saying their local financial planner said they could. They plan to spend their time relaxing on the river, traveling together and visiting with friends, family, and grandchildren. Dale officially retired in June and Sheryll in October 2020.

Sheryll began her job as executive director for the Heppner Chamber in January of 2008, spending more than 12 years coordinating events, programs, assignments, and community meetings. She organized fundraisers and worked with the local businesses as well as being a project manager for Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) during that time. For WCVEDG, she coordinated the programs developed by the board, worked with the recipients of grants and was responsible for distribution of the funds. She served on multiple boards that complemented the Chamber and WCVEDG.

Dale began his career in 1997 when he was hired by Pacific Telephone, Inc. to repair and maintain the central office, maintain and troubleshoot anything electronic within the Heppner, Lexington and Ione area and do anything related to the operation of land lines and internet. The company was bought out and changed names multiple times, finally becoming CenturyLink, during his time working there and his duties expanded as well. His areas increased to include the maintenance in Mitchell, Spray and Fossil and eventually Maupin, Tygh Valley, Pine Grove and Government Camp were added. After handling all of it for a year, they thankfully took away the Spray and Mitchell areas,

## New MCHD CEO rescinds application

Kym Clift, the candidate the Morrow County Health District had selected to replace Bob Houser as MCHD CEO, told the MCHD board that she rescinded her application.

MCHD Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney told the Gazette-Times last week that Clift said because of a family situation, she needed to stay in the Corvallis area. She had been slated to start with MCHD in mid-December. She is currently employed with Good Samaritan as vice president of operations at their Corvallis campus. This news puts the district back to square one in



Sheryll Bates

leaving the rest for him to handle.

Dale was born in Heppner and raised in Condon, attending Condon schools. He also spent three years at United Electronics Institute. He is the fifth child of a family of five and has two children of his own, David and Kelli.

Sheryll was born in Portland but her family moved to Ashland when she was three to be close to other family. She is the second of five children. She moved back to Portland to attend college, getting married and having two daughters, Tiffany and Tamara. In 2006 she married to Dale Bates and they decided she should move to Heppner rather than him moving to Portland. Sheryll told the Gazette, “It seemed like every time I came to visit, Dale was involved in doing sound for an event, wedding or funeral and at the end, I couldn’t take him away from what he loved doing for others.”

She attended high school in Ashland and Grants Pass and college in Portland at Warner Pacific College, earning her AA in Secretarial Science. She worked as an executive administrative assistant for most of her career before moving to Heppner and taking the job at the chamber.

When asked how it feels to leave, Sheryll said, “I am excited for the opportunity and what the ‘retirement’ future holds. I feel that I have helped to build the Heppner Chamber to be a stronger advocate, partner and support for



Dale Bates

Heppner and surrounding communities and that I have left it better than I found it. I was taught to always give more than what was expected, and I worked hard to meet my expectations (and hopefully the community will agree with me). I loved what I did, and it helped me to get to know the community members and businesses better. I appreciate how hard everyone works to keep us thriving as a community.” She continued, “I took on many tasks and responsibilities during my 12+ years in the position. Whatever needed to be done, I did my best to step up and get it done.”

Dale told the Gazette leaving his job feels relaxed, but pretty different. After always needing to be at work at 8 a.m. for the past 43 years, it feels strange.

## Decision expected Jan 5 on co-op’s request for power line property condemnation

By David Sykes

The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) says it will decide by January 5 whether to let Umatilla Electric Co-op (UEC) move forward with condemnation procedures against two county property owners whose land is needed for construction of a new power line in the Boardman area. The co-op had earlier filed with the PUC to allow the condemnation and has since been awaiting commission decision before moving forward with the legal action. The condemnation is necessary for the co-op to build a new power line between a Hwy

“After retiring, there were a few times when I woke up in a small panic thinking I’m going to be late for work,” he said. Then he thought, “Oh ... guess we will just go to coffee and watch the CenturyLink trucks drive by.”

He says he plans on working on the house, getting the AWANA program up and running again and now that he has the time, plans to get busy setting up and providing sound systems for events once again.

Both agreed that Heppner has a lot to offer. Dale ended by saying, “Moving to Heppner has been the most positive thing I have done in my career because of the people and the job.” Sheryll added, “I will get to participate as a community member rather than the coordinator of events and activities and will have the opportunity to get involved in some local clubs.” She continued, “I am not leaving ... just transitioning to the ‘senior life’ and hope to spend many more happy years in Heppner. This has been a great experience and I am glad that I moved to Heppner instead of remaining in Portland. Thank you, Heppner for welcoming me into the community.”

## County, Port lay plans for new Enterprise Zone

New rules to govern decisions on potential millions in spending

By David Sykes

Morrow County and the Port of Morrow have begun negotiations on rules governing how decisions on millions of dollars in tax money, likely to be generated from a new enterprise zone, will be made and spent in the coming years. The port and county, earlier this year went through a contentious negotiation process just on agreeing to form a new enterprise zone, and now they are back at the table hammering out the rules for how that zone will function.

The previous zone, Columbia River Enterprise Zone II (CREZII), expired in June after a 10-year run. During that time, it generated millions of dollars in revenue in lieu of taxes, and it will continue to generate millions into the future. Enterprise zones are an especially important recruitment tool used by the Port of Morrow to offer tax breaks and attract new businesses into the area. The tax breaks have also been used by existing businesses for expansion at the port.

How the CREZII millions have, and will continue to be spent around the county, is decided by a six-member board made up of two representatives each from the port, county and city of Boardman. The members have a wide latitude on how to spend the funds, and in the past have used four broad categories of education, housing, community enhancement and public safety on where to allocate the money.

There are few restrictions on how the money is spent and not only is the enterprise board unelected per se (it does, however, have elected officials serving on it) it also has no budgeting

rules such as budget committees, public hearings or publication requirements common to all other public entities such as counties, ports and cities. The board’s actions and conduct are instead governed by an intergovernmental agreement (IGA), agreed to by the port and county, which the two are presently hammering out for the new CREZIII at this time. The new CREZ, however, will operate only until 2025 when the whole state-wide enterprise zone program is set to expire, unless it is renewed by the state legislature.

Right off the top, the difference between CREZ two and three is Boardman is no longer a permanent member of the board, and therefore not part of the new IGA negotiations. That is not to say Boardman will no longer be involved with decision making on both business negotiations and spending the millions of dollars expected to be generated by the new CREZ. It will, but only if a new business locates within a designated “influence zone” around the city. All other cities in the county also have their influence zones, and they too will have representation on the board if a business locates inside their zone.

If included on the board, individual cities will not only be involved with negotiations with prospective businesses for the terms of their tax breaks, but also how the money will be spent. If a new business wants to locate in an area of the county not within any of the cities’ influence zones, then the CREZIII board will be made up of only members from the county and the port.

County, which had earlier asked to become a party in the case, had downloaded from the PUC website “highly confidential” materials including the co-op’s long range plans, that the county was not supposed to have. The documents were apparently incorrectly uploaded by UEC into an unsecured area, giving the county access to the documents. A PUC hearing

information and that these materials remain confidential. We find, based on the facts and circumstances surrounding the disclosure of UEC’s confidential and highly confidential material to Morrow County, that the disclosure was inadvertent. Finally, we recommend that counsel for Morrow County work with UEC to attempt to resolve this issue informally,” the PUC said.

**ATTENTION HUNTERS!!**

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season.

Stop by to have your picture taken, drop off photos at 188 W Willow in Heppner, email them to [editor@rapidsolve.net](mailto:editor@rapidsolve.net) upload them at [heppner.net](http://heppner.net) or text cell phone photos to 541-980-6674.



### ~ G-T Trophy Corner ~

The Heppner Gazette Times would like to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Please send a photo along with your name, age, town you live in, location of the hunt and a description of the animal to [editor@rapidsolve.net](mailto:editor@rapidsolve.net), upload to [heppner.net](http://heppner.net) or text to 541-980-6674.



Natalie (Rauch) Luna got this nice 4-point the second weekend of buck season in the Butter Creek area.



Eli Bates, 10, the granddaughter of Dale and Sheryll Bates and Tim and Kathy Rankin, killed her first buck while hunting with her dad this season.

**POLARIS**



**WINTER STARTS NOW**

REBATES UP TO \$2000 ON SELECT MODELS

UPGRADE YOUR RIDE

**GOING ON NOW!**

**Morrow County Grain Growers**

**MORROW COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS**

350 MAIN STREET LEXINGTON OR 97339  
CONTACT JUSTIN BAILEY 541-256-0229, 541-989-8221 EXT. 204

POLARIS.COM/SNOWMOBILES

**DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5PM**