



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢

VOL. 139 NO. 49 8 Pages Wednesday, December 2, 2020 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

This year's Morrow County Fair online 4-H stock auction gets good reviews

'Folks were stressed. We had never done an online auction'



Instead of showing and auctioning off animals live at the fairgrounds' arena this year, because of COVID the 4-H stock auction was held completely online.

By David Sykes

As everyone knows, because of the COVID pandemic, the Morrow County Fair wasn't held this year. But that didn't stop the 4-H group from holding their annual stock auction, they just moved it online. And according to leadership, although the new auction process was stressful, overall, it was a success.

"Folks were stressed," 4-H leader Erin Heideman told the Morrow County Commissioners at a recent meeting where she gave a report. "We had never done an online auction. What happened if an animal got lost or a kid didn't get bid on? But it turned out beautiful," Heideman said.

Statistics for the auction showed an overall decrease in total animals sold, and total sales figures were also down, but there was an increase in average price bid per animal. For instance, in 2019 the auction at the fairgrounds brought in a total of \$266,308 on sales of 108 animals. This year online the auction grossed a \$239,476, including add on money (normally from relatives) on 87 animals sold. There was \$61,976 in add-ons in this year's auction. "Normally the livestock growers do not allow add-ons," Heideman said, but she explained that because of the online platform this year it was allowed. "The livestock

growers were excited about the opportunity to provide the add-on option this year. \$62,000 in add-ons was significant. \$400 here and \$50 there adds up," she told the commissioners.

Heideman said several of the larger buyers actually liked the online format. "They liked being able to do it from home in their office rather than drive all the way to Heppner and sit for four hours in a dusty barn," she said. She added that some of the significant buyers also liked being able to see what kids were doing, who was bidding and then how much money they had gotten in add-ons. "A lot of these companies bought a couple of animals and then shuffled some of the money around, so all of those kids were about equal," she said.

As far as how the judges got to see the animals this year, Heideman said there was no showmanship. It was all confirmation so the kids had to upload a video of their animal to an online platform where the judges could see them. Fortunately, she said, some of the judges they got this year had done a few online presentations before.

The mechanics of managing all the animals was different this year also. She said all the animals came to the fairgrounds on Friday and then were distributed. They were taken care of until processing day and

she praised all the volunteer workers who helped feed and care for the animals until processing day. Heideman said all the pigs stayed on the site the whole time for three days. She and her youngest son brought air mattresses and stayed at the fairgrounds acting as security for the animals. "Because we couldn't have anybody in or out of the barns and couldn't move any of the animals." She thanked Green Feed Store in Heppner for all their help giving discounts on food and delivering supplies down to the fairgrounds. "It was a big group effort by everyone, and we are very appreciative," she said.

A last-minute glitch did come up with their slaughtering process. Their regular processor in The Dalles told them, "Sorry we are not taking any animals." Heideman said that caused a panic but it also got straightened out in time. "Thank goodness we had a really good relationship with our processors in Hermiston." She said Mike's Mobile Slaughter, Follett's Meat Company and Eastern Oregon Mobile Slaughter came through for them. "They all decided they would take those turned animals and split them among themselves. This was just on the heels of the Umatilla County Fair and including the custom kills they already had,"

Heideman pointed out.

On what the future of the stock auction is at the fair, Heideman said she will be sitting down with the decision makers soon and deciding what to do next year. "Maybe we will do a hybrid, online and in person," she said. "Nothing is set in stone. We will be meeting in December and will make some decisions then," she told the county commissioners.

Nancy Snider retires from Wheatland



Nancy Snider

After 37 years of commitment and service to not only Wheatland but to south Morrow County and beyond, Nancy Snider retired November 30. Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, they are unable to have an open house to celebrate Nancy and thank her for everything she has accomplished.

With Nancy retiring, there are some new and old faces around town. Stacie Ekstrom has been with Wheatland for nearly 24 years in the Ione office. "While she started her career in personal lines, her focus for the past 20 years has been commercial, farm and crop insurance." Stacie has co-managed the office with Nancy this past year and will continue to manage the office after Nancy's retirement.

A hometown girl is back in Heppner. While not new to insurance, Amy Wolters is new to the Heppner office. Amy and her family moved back to Morrow County seven years ago. Many of the local kids

know her as Ms. Wolters as she worked for the Morrow County School District prior to Wheatland Insurance. Amy has been part of the Wheatland team for the past four-and-a-half years. She started in Ione and transferred to Heppner a couple months ago. She is the assistant manager and handles commercial and farm accounts.

A new addition to the Wheatland family is Sean Wood. Sean has some insurance background but spent most of his time, pre-COVID, flying our friendly skies. Sean will be an account manager for the commercial accounts.

Alicia Doherty still continues to service the personal insurance needs. She has been a member of the Wheatland team for four years. Along with her dedication to Wheatland, she can be found helping out at numerous community events.

Amanda Fenn has been with Wheatland for just over a year. She is the first voice you hear when you call the office.

"Since we all live in an ever-changing world, changes are inevitable. What does not change is Wheatland's commitment to the local communities and their clients. Wheatland looks forward to continuing to service your insurance needs and supporting the local communities," Stacie Ekstrom told the Gazette.

Looking a lot like Christmas



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas around Heppner. The city crew has done quite a bit of light decorating at the Heritage Park. Janelle Ellis caught these photos for us on a recent morning run. See additional photos on page eight.

Morrow County implements online tools for jurors, courts

The Umatilla and Morrow County circuit courts are among the first in Oregon to implement an improved system for jurors to respond to a summons and communicate with the court. In addition to an enhanced online response form and email communication, jurors can now opt-in to receive status updates and service reminders via text message. Jurors who receive these notifications

can skip the traditional periodic call-ins to learn whether they will be needed for service on a specific day. The service launched in Umatilla and Morrow counties in mid-November.

"The system can send automated emails including service reminders, status updates, deferral requests and exemption or disqualification notifications," said Roy Blaine, the trial court administrator for the Umatilla and Morrow County circuit courts. "It also adds the new text message option for status updates and service reminders. That will be a lot more convenient for many people called for jury service. It should also reduce the number of people who don't show up for jury duty, simply because they forgot."

-See ONLINE TOOLS/PAGE SEVEN

Pastors invited to submit Christmas messages

The Heppner Gazette-Times will publish Christmas messages from area pastors on Wednesday,

December 23. The deadline to submit messages will be Monday, December 21, at 5 p.m.

Those planning to submit Christmas messages may email them to editor@rapidsolve.net, send via mail to Heppner Gazette-Times, PO Box 337, Heppner, OR 97836 or drop them by the office at 188 West Willow, Heppner, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Pastors are also invited to submit separate news articles for Christmas church services or activities.

~ 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, upload to Heppner.net or text to 541-980-6674.



Taylor Palmateer, 12, of Mt. Vernon, took her very first bull in the Columbia Basin unit.

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.

POLARIS

WINTER STARTS NOW
UPGRADE YOUR RIDE

REBATES UP TO \$2000 ON SELECT MODELS

GOING ON NOW!

Morrow County Grain Growers Inc.

MORROW COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS
350 MAIN STREET LEXINGTON OR 97839
CONTACT JUSTIN BAILEY 541-256-0229, 541-989-8221 EXT. 204

POLARIS.COM/SNOWMOBILES