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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

**Heppner**  
**GAZETTE-TIMES**  
U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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All News and Advertising Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.  
For Advertising: advertising deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Cost for a display ad is \$5.25 per column inch. Cost for classified ad is 50¢ per word. Cost for Card of Thanks is \$10 up to 100 words. Cost for a classified display ad is \$6.05 per column inch.  
For Public/Legal Notices: public/legal notices deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be requested at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).  
For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.  
For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

# Morrow County Health District welcomes new CEO

Ryan Fowler begins interim stint



Ryan Fowler

By Suzanne Hurt

Ryan Fowler took over the helm of Morrow County Health District on Thursday, Jan. 28.

The Idaho native signed a one-year contract to serve as the rural health district's interim chief executive officer as the current CEO,

Bob Houser, prepared to retire, also effective Thursday. Houser worked as the district's administrator for about five and a half years after being coaxed out of retirement.

Fowler, who grew up in Inkom, ID, a high desert town near Pocatello, said he was drawn to the opportunity to lead the Morrow County health organization after learning about the opening from the Oregon Office of Rural Health.

"I started looking into the area, and it looked really intriguing," said Fowler, 42. "I'm committed to rural health care – that's where I've spent the majority of my career," he said. "After some conversations at home, I thought this would



Bob Houser

be a really good fit for me and my family."

He and wife Kim are the parents of five boys, aged eight to 20. Fowler and his family love the outdoors and recreation such as hiking, camping and fishing. Fowler said he's especially looking forward to exploring northeastern Oregon's Blue Mountains.

## WCPD to hold meeting

The Board of Directors for the Willow Creek Park District will hold a regular, public board meeting at 5 p.m. at the District Office at 278 N Main Street in Heppner on February 9. Due to COVID restrictions, those interested in attending the meeting should use the Zoom link on willowcreek-pd.com. A copy of minutes and agenda can also be found online.

The mission of the Willow Creek Park District is to provide enriching recreational activities and facilities to enhance the quality

of life of the communities it serves. The Willow Creek Park District is a special Oregon district charged with providing and administering selected parks and recreation programs for our local and neighboring communities. The district is currently responsible for the management of the Willow Creek RV Park and Campground and the Willow Creek Water Park.

For additional information, contact Katie Murray, kmurray@weparkdistrict.org, or at 541-371-1456.

Before coming to the nonprofit Oregon special district, Fowler served as CEO for Lower Umpqua Hospital District in the Oregon coastal town of Reedsport.

He began his career in healthcare quality and administration after putting himself through college at Pocatello's Idaho State University by working as a housekeeper and intensive care unit monitor technician at Intermountain Healthcare in Pocatello.

After earning a bachelor's in American studies and master's in public administration with an emphasis on state, local and

nonprofit management, he joined the healthcare quality and risk department at Intermountain, which had been renamed the Portneuf Medical Center.

He chose his career path while a graduate student following an internship at a local hospital, where he got an inside look at what it takes to run a hospital.

Fowler landed his first management job as a senior manager of quality and risk management at Banner Health Ogallala Community Hospital in Ogallala, NE. "It was an area where I could see myself being successful," he said. "I thought my experience as a front-line worker would be an asset for working on the administrative side of healthcare."

This week, Houser has been wrapping things up on a tenure that included doubling the size and capacity of the district's Irrigon Medical Clinic; expanding the district's presence in Boardman by purchasing a building and transforming that into a home health and hospice office with room for a physical therapy department and Murray's drugstore; and more clearly defining what is needed to modernize and improve the Heppner campus.

The number of district employees has grown during Houser's administration from about 80 to 136 full- and part-time staff. The district has added the capacity to offer DEXA scans for bone density studies, MRIs, mobile mammographies, echocardiograms and ultrasounds.

"I can't say enough about the staff," Houser said.

On Thursday, district staff held a retirement party for Houser, who admitted his retirement after more than 37 years in healthcare would be "an adjustment." "It's kind of a bittersweet moment," he said.

Yet he said he has high hopes for the district as he hands the reins over to Fowler. "I'm very pleased with the selection the board made. I think Ryan is going to be a fine fit," Houser said. "He's personable, he's knowledgeable, he's got rural healthcare experience. And I think he'll keep the district moving forward."

Fowler said his family hopes to join him in Heppner once the school year is over. "For us, it's a little bit closer to home in many ways," Fowler said. (It's) "A little closer to family. And the geology of the area is closer to where I grew up."

## BEO announces new loan office

Bank of Eastern Oregon announces it has opened a new loan production office in Caldwell, ID. The office is located at 422 S. 9th Avenue in Caldwell. The Caldwell office is staffed by a group of veteran bankers with many years of experience in the local market. Alan Bullard is regional vice president and team lead. He is joined by Gaye Doanato, Becky Temple and Logan Schleicher. President and CEO Jeff Bailey said, "We are excited to have this team of bank-

ers join Bank of Eastern Oregon. They have a long history of helping customers with their banking needs across the region. Their knowledge of the local area, the customers and their needs gives us a natural entry into the Caldwell market. I am confident that current and prospective customers will enjoy Bank of Eastern Oregon's brand of banking."

The phone number for the Caldwell office is 208-402-4887.

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A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

**Early Birds Apply By February 15 for a chance to win a \$1,000 OSAC scholarship!**

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- Academic**  
Fourteen \$3,000 scholarships are available for members of UEC and/or their dependent children who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program at a two- or four-year college.
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A \$5,000 scholarship is administered to a college student who has completed their freshman year and is interested in pursuing a degree in Electrical Engineering-Power Systems.
- Lineman Trade**  
A \$3,000 scholarship is available to members and/or applicants whose parent or guardian is an active member, and are interested in the Line Construction trade and will be attending an accredited Line College. **Go to: [www.UmatillaElectric.com](http://www.UmatillaElectric.com) to download the application.**

**Let's Build Your Future Together**

This scholarship program is designed to recognize and encourage the achievements of the members and their dependent children. We hope you apply.

To apply online for the Academic or Engineering scholarships, you must complete the state's Office of Student Access & Completion (OSAC) scholarship application at <https://app.oregonstudentaid.gov>.

- OSAC's designation for the UEC Academic Scholarship is "244 - Umatilla Electric Cooperative."
- OSAC's designation for the UEC Engineering Scholarship is "552 - Umatilla Electric Cooperative."

Applications for the Lineman Trade Scholarship are only available on the UEC website. One \$3,000 scholarship will be awarded.

Up to \$50,000 will be awarded each year to deserving students. The scholarships must be used for educational costs.

## Marriage Licenses

The Morrow County Clerk's office has released the following report of marriage licenses:

**January 7, 2021:** - Shaun Jeffrey Leach, 38, Irrigon, and Martha Elizabeth Hinds, 42, Irrigon.

**January 11, 2021:** - Francis Adolph Link, 63, Boardman, and Erik Jason Friedly, 47, Boardman.

**January 26, 2021:** - Austin Perry Morter, 21, Ione, and Katie May Gilbert, 21, Ione.

**January 28, 2021:** - Dixie Lee Earle, 71, Irrigon, and Philip Randal Morford, Jr., 71, Irrigon.

**DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5PM**