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Crystal Apple award winners announced



JoAnna Lamb (left) and Mary Rosenberg, Ione community School, received Crystal Apple Awards from Superintendent Rollie Marshall. (right) -Contributed photo.

A total of 44 Crystal Apples were presented to eastern Oregon education staff last week at the 2021 Crystal Apple "Excellence in Education" Awards, with three apples being presented to local education staff members. Mary Rosenberg, third-grade teacher, and JoAnna Lamb, instructional aide at Ione Community School, and Teresa Parret, assistant custodian at Heppner Jr/Sr High School

were the winners at the ceremony held in Echo on Monday, May 10.

Each year, the IMESD partners with its school districts to recognize outstanding administrators, teachers, educational assistants and office and building staff for their dedication and commitment to students and for their willingness to go above and beyond their regular duties. Nominations are submitted over

a two-month period by administrators, coworkers, parents, students and community members. Winners are selected from these nominations by school district administration.

"In the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has been one of the greatest challenges to K-12 education, but many educators have stepped up and worked even harder to serve eastern Oregon's students.



Heppner winner, Teresa Parret, was not present at the ceremony.

Due to these challenges, celebrating this year's Crystal Apple Award winners has been even more important and more special," said Michele Madril, IMESD director of communication.

Additional Morrow County School District employees receiving crystal apples were Charlene Baker, special education teacher, Riverside Jr/Sr High School; Amber Benetti, 6th grade teacher, Irrigon Elementary School and Darlene Jacobsen, 1st grade teacher, Sam Boardman Elementary School.

County considers action against advancing Mormon Crickets

By David Sykes

Morrow County has a pest knocking at its door, and county officials last week discussed what should be done to keep the unwanted guest out.

Oregon State University Extension Agent Larry Lutcher gave county commissioners a report about the Mormon Cricket infestation in Gilliam County which he thinks is probably heading here. Lutcher says the crickets, which destroy range land vegetation and crops, have been a problem in Gilliam County for several years and are now right at the Morrow County line. "It is a serious situation," said Lutcher, who told the commissioners he has been studying up on the insects in preparation. "I hope they aren't in Morrow County, but we don't know for sure."

He said Gilliam County has been spraying the crickets the past three or four years to the tune of \$100,000 for each 10,000 acres. "You can drive out to the intersection of four mile and eight mile (at the county line) and see the crickets," said Lutcher who told the commissioners the insects do not fly so are coming to Morrow County by "walking or hopping." He said they are big, 1.5 to 2-inches long, and can move a mile to 1.5 miles per day. "Are they going to keep advancing (toward Morrow County)? I think they will but at what rate? I don't want to get caught flat footed," he told the commissioners.

Lutcher says in order to kill the insects, juveniles need to be sprayed with a product called Dimilin, which doesn't kill the adults who can only be killed by baiting with Sevin. He said the cost to spray a field is about nine dollars per acre. "My biggest concern is do we spray, and if so do we wait for it to get into the county, or do we help the Gilliam folks out and spray just to the west of us and prevent them from coming here?" he asked. He said the Gilliam county landowners have either started spraying now or will shortly.

Lutcher says the cricket populations peak and decline, but when they get going will "eat everything in their path." He says they will come into the range land and then start destroying around the edges of the wheat ground. He says where used, the spray program has been "very effective." They will eat anything irrigated, range and wheat ground.

There has been reports

that with the COVID-19 slowdown in the supply chain there are reports the spray chemical is hard to obtain, but

Lutcher says he talked to the Morrow County Grain Growers and it seems to be readily available at this time. "I think we can get significant product here now, but if we delay the decision for a year we might not be able to," Lutcher said. "The question is: is it better to be proactive and squash this thing now, before it becomes a terrible issue and a long-term on-going problem we have to deal with?" he asked.

In the spring of 2018 Arlington had a bad infestation of the cricket, which did considerable damage, not only to crops, but gardens and vegetation in town. Commissioner Melissa Lindsay recalls being in Arlington when the insects were there. "I saw these in Arlington, and you can't get rid of them. They decimated their yards, trees and bushes," she related. "You couldn't even walk across the sidewalk. It was disgusting. It was a pretty big deal and if we can help stop them we need to talk about it," she said.

Despite their name and characteristic male chirping, Mormon crickets are not true crickets, but rather shield-backed katyids. They got their name by endangering the livelihood of Mormon pioneers in the mid-1800s. The crickets usually have one generation per year with adults mating in the early summer, after which the females lay eggs in the ground. Each female can lay over 100 eggs. Eggs hatch the following spring (March-May) when soil temperatures reach 40 F. Nymphs pass through seven instars (60-90 days) before reaching maturity and 10-14 days later mating occurs. Nymphs resemble adults in appearance but are smaller and lack wings. Adults feed throughout the growing season.

The county commissioners took no action on the cricket problem but will discuss it further at their May 26 meeting where Lutcher will be joined by Gilliam County Extension agent Jordan Maley to talk more.



OSU Extension Agent Larry Lutcher gives report on infestation.



The Mormon Cricket has been a problem in Gilliam County for some time.

Click It or Ticket Campaign reminds drivers to buckle up

The Morrow County Sheriff's Office is reminding drivers about the life-saving benefits of wearing a seat belt this spring, during the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) national Click It or Ticket high-visibility enforcement effort. The national seat belt campaign, which coincides with the Memorial Day holiday, runs from May 24 to June 6, 2021.

"We want the act of buckling up to become automatic to all drivers and passengers," said Undersheriff John A. Bowles. "It's not just a safe thing to do - it's the law. During the Click It or Ticket campaign, we'll be working with our fellow law enforcement officers across local and state lines to ensure the message gets out to drivers and passengers. Buckling up is the simplest thing you can do to limit injury or save your life during a crash. We see the results of not wearing a seat belt all the time. We see the loss of life. So often, it could have been prevented."

According to NHTSA, in 2019, there were 9,466 unbuckled passenger vehicle occupants killed in crashes in the United States. In that same year, 55 percent of passenger vehicle occupants killed at night (6 p.m.-5:59 a.m.) were not wearing their seat belts. That's why one focus of the Click It or Ticket campaign is nighttime enforcement. Participating law enforcement agencies will be taking a no-excuses approach

to seat belt law enforcement, writing citations day and night. In Oregon, the maximum penalty for a seat belt violation is \$115.00.

"You may think you're safe in a certain vehicle, or on a certain road, but the truth is, you're safest when you buckle up, no matter what," said Bowles. Almost twice as many males were killed in crashes as compared to females, with lower belt use rates, too. Of the males killed in crashes in 2019, more than half (51 percent) were unrestrained. For females killed in crashes, 40 percent were not buckled up.

"If the enforcement effort wakes people up to the dangers of unrestrained driving, we'll consider our mission to be a success," continued Bowles. "If you know a friend or a family member who does not buckle up when they drive, please ask them to consider changing their habits. Help us spread this lifesaving message before one more friend or family member is killed as a result of this senseless inaction. Seat belts save lives, and everyone - front seat and back, child and adult - needs to remember to buckle up."

Safe Routes to School Plan being identified in Ione

In March 2021, Ione was awarded Safe Routes to School planning assistance from the Oregon Department of Transportation. Through this program, Ione School District, Ione city staff, and ODOT Region 5 are working together to create a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan that identifies street improvements near Ione Charter School to support students and families in getting to school safely. The SRTS Plan will also recommend opportunities for education and engagement to promote walking and rolling to school. Planners from Alta Planning + Design, an active transportation consulting firm, are guiding the planning process.

During spring 2021, the project team has been collaborating remotely to get feedback from the community using virtual methods and to identify and prioritize safety needs within a mile of the schools. On May 20, the team will also host an in-person walk audit to observe student arrival and meet with school community members. The team and community members will document the walking and biking conditions around

the school area to inform planning recommendations. These observations will happen in a physically-distanced manner, group sizes will be limited, and masks will be required per state health guidance. Anyone interested in participating in the walk audit, should RSVP at <https://bit.ly/SRTS-Ione>

During the summer, the team will continue to identify SRTS construction, education, and engagement recommendations and complete the final SRTS Plan.

The city of Ione and Ione Charter School ask families to share feedback and experiences getting to school using this interactive online map: <http://odots-rtsprojectid.com>. Those sharing feedback will be entered to win a walking or rolling safety pack (\$50 value).

For additional information, please contact Elizabeth Peterson, Ione City Clerk at 541-422-7414 or email to cityofioneor@gmail.com. More information is available at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Programs/Pages/SRTS.aspx.

WCVEDG plans annual luncheon

Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) will host its annual luncheon on Wednesday, May 26 from noon to 1 p.m. at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building. This is a hosted event with RSVPs required no later than Monday, May 24.

An update on WCVEDG programs will be

presented as well as a barbecue lunch of homemade ribs, baked beans, potato salad and dessert, catered by Alvin Liu, Gateway Café.

RSVPs may be made by contacting the Heppner Chamber at 541-676-5536 or via email to heppnerchamber@gmail.com.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

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MONDAYS
AT 5PM