



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢

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## Familiar face retiring from 'teller row'

By David Sykes

A familiar and friendly face at the Bank of Eastern Oregon in Heppner will soon be retiring from her 20-year career at the Main Street institution. Bev Benson says her bank job has been one of enjoyment and a very satisfying career, and one she has looked forward to working at every day. "I enjoy the people most," she says with her familiar smile that has greeted customers on "teller row" in the lobby for many years. "I like working with them and helping them," she says of a career that began in January of 2001.

Now in management, Bev no longer works a teller window, but her fondest memories not only include interacting with customers there, but also back to when she was young. "My mother actually worked here six or seven years," she says, recalling how she would stop off on her way home from school to see her mom, Marlys, working as a teller. "I was raised in Heppner and many of the customers are people I have known my whole life," she relates.

In addition to working with the public, Bev says she likes being the one fixing problems that come up on the job. "I have enjoyed the problem solving when there is a mistake or an error. I like to be the one to try and find it. I got to be good at and I enjoy helping find errors," she relates. Bev has also taught many tellers to do their jobs correctly and



Long-time bank employee Bev Benson at a teller window ready to help customers. -Photo by David Sykes

try to avoid those errors. "I can't tell you how many tellers I have trained over the years," she says with a laugh, but does say some of the young people who have worked under her as student tellers in high school, and then during college, have come back to work at this bank and others permanently.

Bev has seen many changes in the banking business over the years, including the amount of automation. All the work that used to be done by hand is now automated she says, which helps serve the customers better. She recalls how the bank used to have to close out by 4 p.m. to make everything balance out and get reported into

the banking system by 5 p.m. closing. She says they used to keep one teller open for 4 p.m. deposits. "We would make sure one teller was always still open until 4 p.m., and then our business customers, who would not want to be overdrawn would know that. We would ask customers 'Does that have to be in today?'" she says. Now the transactions are scanned at the teller window and immediately entered into the system.

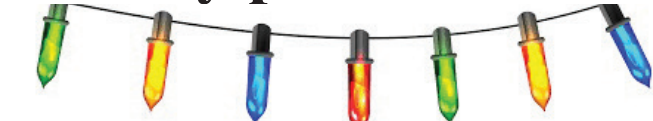
A couple of stories she does relate about now humorous problems. Once a young teller could not make her window balance. Bev and the teller went over and over the transactions and couldn't find the problem. "Finally, I looked in the

trash can below her window and there was some change that had fallen down," she says with a smile. Bev's mom also told a story of a \$100 shortage that no one could ever find, no matter how hard they looked. Later when the bank remodeled teller row, guess what they found that had slipped down between the counter spaces? A hundred-dollar bill.

So, what's up now for Bev? "Don't have any huge plans. I have four grandkids, seventh grade or younger, in school in Ione, so I will be attending lots of ball games." Bev lives near the Ione school, and she says the kids come over to her house after school, which she enjoys. She also has friends in Walla Walla, Stanfield and other places that she plans on spending more time visiting. Also, her husband Marion wants to go to Alaska, and the couple have some unused airlines tickets from the COVID lockdown that still can be used.

To honor Bev for her many years on the job, the bank is having an open house next Wednesday, Dec. 22 from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in bank lobby of the Main Street branch, and the public is invited to stop by and wish Bev good luck. "I have liked working here, the bank has been good to me, and I have really enjoyed the customers and people I have worked with," she says.

## G-T to publish holiday photos



Residents are asked to submit photos of their homes that are lit up and decorated for the holidays. Please include the city where the home is located and the street it is on if you choose. The Heppner Gazette-Times will be publishing the photos in the

December 22 issue. Photos may be emailed to editor@rapidsolve.net, uploaded to Heppner.net or texted to 541-980-6674 and must be received by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 20 to be included. For additional information, contact the G-T at 541-676-9228.

## Santa visits the Gazette



Santa stopped by the Heppner Gazette-Times on Tuesday to find out who had been naughty or nice. -Photo by Giselle Moses.

## Thursday starts busy week for Christmas events

This Thursday begins a busy week for Heppner Christmas celebrations. The Celebrate Heppner Christmas will be held December 16 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the fairgrounds. Included will be judging for the all ages coloring contest, rewards card raffles, the Parent Teacher Club bake sale and then visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus from 6-7 p.m.

On Friday at 7 p.m., the Polar Express is coming to the Sage Landing event center, sponsored by Sage Clothing, Breaking Grounds and Wheatland Insurance. Participants are asked to wear their pajamas and bring blankets. Hot cocoa and cookies will be

served.

Saturday, December 18 is the big day for activities, beginning with the dedication ceremony for Thomson Square at 5:30 p.m., which will also include Mexican hot cocoa provided by Tacos Hometown. Following the dedication will be the Christmas Light Parade on Main Street at 6 p.m. Pictures with friends will take place at Sage Landing from 6:45 to 7:30 p.m., followed by the Snowball Drop at Thomson Square at 7:30. This ping pong ball drop will include prizes.

For additional information, contact the Heppner Chamber at 541-676-5536 or heppnerchamber@gmail.com.

## Lex begins planning May Day event

By Bobbi Gordon

A committee met in Lexington on Monday night to begin planning the second annual May Day celebration to be held May 7 at the Lexington town hall. Several residents attended and tossed around ideas to make it bigger and better this year. Although the event will not be held on the actual May Day as it was last year, the group decided to hold the event each year on the first Saturday in May.

The committee is planning to hold many of the same events as last year, including the car show, food trucks, a parade, raffles and pie sale, but intends to add more events for kids

and adults to enjoy for the full day. A few ideas for additional fun included a 5K walk/run, silent auction, pancake breakfast, kids' games, a bouncy house, face painting, corn hole tournaments and a beer garden. The possibility of opening up space for crafters and vendors was also discussed.

The next meeting will be held at the Lexington town hall on January 10 at 6 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend and volunteer for committees. For additional information contact the town hall at 541-989-8515 or email Lexington.oregon@gmail.com

## Progress continues on new Dollar General store in Heppner



Construction on the new Dollar General on Main Street continues to progress. Company officials have said that the construction is scheduled to be finished at the beginning of the year. So far, the concrete floor has been poured, and the roof and walls have been put up. -Photos by Hannah Finch.



## Pastors invited to submit Christmas messages

The Heppner Gazette-Times will publish Christmas messages from area pastors on Wednesday, December 22. The deadline to submit messages will be Monday, December 20, at 5 p.m.

Those planning to submit Christmas messages may email them to editor@rapidsolve.net, upload to Heppner.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.

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& ANNOUNCEMENTS  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR  
SEND US PHOTOS  
START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION

## Heppner DMV to be closed tomorrow

The Heppner DMV office will be closed on Thursday, December 16 due to staffing issues. Those wishing to use the DMV

services should check for future closures online at DMV2U.oregon.gov. Many services can be handled online as well.

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