

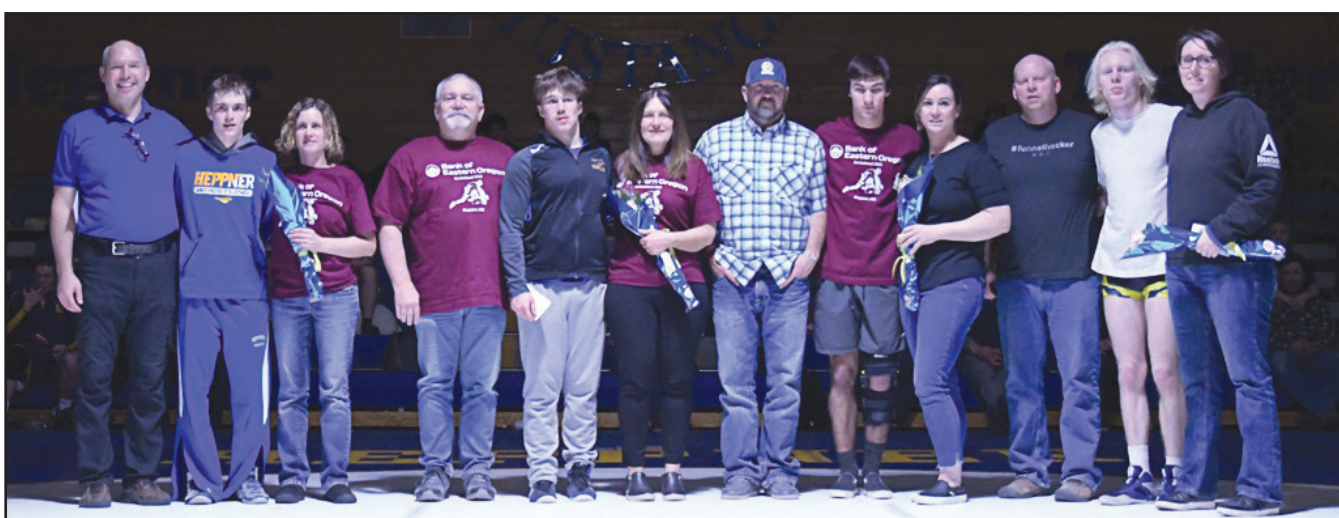


the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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VOL. 141 NO. 6 8 Pages Wednesday, February 9, 2022 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Mustang wrestlers take home medals at BEO Invitational



Seniors and their parents at BEO Invitational. Pictured (L-R): Dieter Waite, Roen Waite, Bridget Waite, Damon Brosnan, Conor Brosnan, Carie Brosnan, Scott Coe, Jace Coe, Nikki Coe, Russell Ellsworth, Edward Ellsworth and Kristin Ellsworth. -Photos by Kirsti Cason.

The Heppner Mustangs wrestling team competed in their only home event on Saturday, sponsored by the Bank of Eastern Oregon. The Bank of Eastern Oregon Invitational was heavily loaded with sixteen teams from eastern and central Oregon ranging from 1A to 4A. In its twelve years, the tournament has

become one of the toughest small school events in Oregon with nearly every weight class featuring highly ranked wrestlers bearing previous state and district credentials.

Baker/Powder Valley won the team title and the Mustangs finished fourth with just seven scoring wrestlers in the fourteen

weight brackets. Culver was second and Pine Eagle, third. The other Morrow County teams, Riverside and Irrigon, finished fifth and ninth respectively in the team standings.

Every Heppner wrestler won matches in their weight class and seven of the eight total Mustangs stood on the podium to receive a medal.

Coy Butner of Pine Eagle was voted by the coaches and received the plaque for Outstanding Wrestler after defeating two-time state champion Garret Burns of Imbler by a 7-3 decision in the 132 lbs. finals.

Roen Waite (120 lbs.), Edward Ellsworth (152 lbs.), Conor Brosnan (182 lbs.) and Cade Cunningham

McNamee to run for county commissioner

Mike McNamee, Irrigon, has filed as a candidate for Morrow County Commissioner, Position 3. McNamee, a self-employed farmer, is running for the position currently held by Melissa Lindsay. McNamee is the second candidate to file for one of the available positions for county commissioner. Positions two and three will both be on the ballot for a term set to begin in January 2023.



Mike McNamee

McNamee listed his occupation as farming/custom haying since 1990. He graduated from Madras High School and has a bachelor's degree in machining and processing from Oregon Institute of Technology. His previous governmental experience is listed as the Soil and Water Conservation District in Morrow County.

According to Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers, McNamee joins Jeff Wenzholz as candidates

for commissioner. Neither Lindsay nor Don Russell, current commissioners, have filed for reelection. The deadline for filing is March 8, 2022.

The primary election will be held May 17, 2022, and the general election November 8, 2022. If elected, McNamee will take over the position January 2, 2023.

Boardman Fire District seeks county license to operate ambulance

Health District wants service contract prior to license

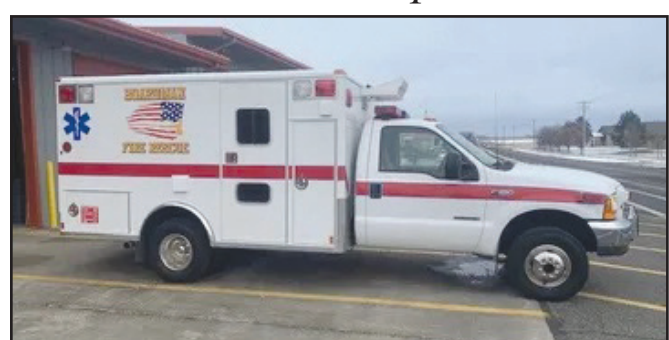
By David Sykes

The Boardman Fire District is seeking license to provide ambulance service in north Morrow County; however, the request drew concern from the Morrow County Health District which already provides service in the area.

Fire Chief Michael Hughes told county commissioners last week he doesn't want to go into competition with the health district, but only wants the license so he can provide supplemental

coverage in the Boardman and Irrigon area and also do patient transports from Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston. "I am under no illusion that the health district does not have primary responsibility for ambulance service in the Boardman area," he told commissioners. "I have no desire to be in direct competition with the health district. I don't have staff equipment or budget to do that. My request for a license is only to enhance the current system."

The health district, which currently provides ambulance service county-wide, was concerned the



Boardman Fire's ambulance it obtained when PGE coal plant closed down.

additional ambulance may cut into its revenue and hurt its ability to provide the best service to county residents. "Possible negative impact on our cost-based reimbursement from Medicare due to another ambulance service operating in close proximity to ours, which may prevent us from receiving cost-based payments in whole (the entire county) or in part (Boardman area) for our ambulance services," Health District Chief Executive Officer Emily Roberts said in a letter to the commissioners.

Hughes said his intention wasn't to cut into the health district business or revenue, but only "enhance the current system." He gave an example of an event several weeks ago where an Irrigon ambulance was transporting a patient to the hospital when they got two simultaneous calls for ambulance service. A health district ambulance was subsequently dispatched from Boardman to handle one of the calls but were "scrambling to get a third ambulance to take care of the other call." Hughes said a third ambulance was dispatched with only one personnel who was not able to do transport. "Fortunately, in this case the patient refused transportation, so

we were able to mitigate the issue," Hughes said. He said if Boardman Fire would have had a licensed ambulance available, they could have helped out. He also said if ever there were a "mass casualty" event, the county would have more ambulances available to respond.

"I think our taxpayers deserve the opportunity to provide them another ambulance when the health district ambulance is busy," Hughes said. "That is the primary reason we are seeking a transport license." He said the other reason was Boardman Fire has a partnership with Umatilla Fire and Rescue who has the contract for inter-facility patient transport outside of Good Shepherd to other receiving facilities. Hughes said occasionally Umatilla is not able to handle all those transports and they ask if Boardman would be willing to "help them out with those inter-facility transports, which we would like to do."

The health district said it wasn't opposed to Boardman Fire's ambulance being licensed, they only wanted the question of Medicare payments settled and that the two entities would have a written contract between them covering ambulance

services prior to licensing. "The District is and remains committed to providing the highest level of service to all of Morrow County and to engaging in positive and productive relationships with our community partners," Roberts said in her letter. "If Boardman Fire wishes to license their ambulance, the district is in support of this, provided that Boardman Fire enters into a mutually agreeable contract with the District concerning the operation of this ambulance to ensure that the services currently provided by the District to the entire county are not jeopardized," she wrote.

Hughes said Boardman Fire doesn't need a contract with the district to become licensed and operate its own ambulance, it only needs a license from the county, and that was why he was in front of commissioners seeking approval.

Commissioner Melissa Lindsay said she was not necessarily opposed to granting the license, but wasn't pleased with the timing of the request, and also wanted more time to study the proposal. "I think

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Heppner and Ione get high speed fiber



Joseph Franell President gorge.net

By David Sykes

High speed fiber is now available to residents and businesses in Heppner and Ione, and it is a service that can greatly enhance your internet experience, says gorge.net Company President Joseph Franell.

"With high-speed fiber you can do online learning, stream movies and games, video conference and do everything you like on the internet, only faster," Franell recently told the Gazette-Times when discussing the company's on-going installations in the area.

The big difference between current available internet and what his company, gorge.net offers is fast upload speeds, Franell says. He says in the past everyone wanted fast download speeds but now with fiber

optic connections directly to your home or business while you will get the extremely fast download speeds, you will also get the same superfast upload speed. When uploading large files like movies to YouTube, or graphics for your school assignment it won't slow your connection down. You can also connect many devices like phones, tablets and televisions and still get fast internet service. Many people are switching to internet to watch television now, and fiber provides the ideal solution for your television viewing.

This fast upload opens the door to lots of experiences not available in many rural areas. You can do medical work, online college classes, run a business and do any type of work from home now in rural towns, he says. Franell says since the pandemic started many people are now working from home, and when fast fiber is available to rural areas it allows people to work for big-city companies, but live in small towns, something he noticed many people are now doing. He says it used to be young people would leave

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