



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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Fans braved the weather for an evening of bullriding

The Challenge of Champions Tour made its third stop of 2022 in Heppner



Dalton Davis's winning ride with 89.5 on Cure ALS of Crozier Bucking Bulls



Staff and bullfighters worked hard to ensure a safe and entertaining event



Junior bullriders, Tanner Griffith on JimBob of SB Ranch & Rodeo and Wyatt Davis on Checkers of SB Ranch & Rodeo, tied for first with 80 points. -Photos by Rodney Evans of ZYYE Images



1947 Ford Coupe takes best of show at St. Paddy's Cruz-In

Fifty-three cars attended the 20th St. Paddy's Cruz-In held on March 12, 2022, in Heppner. Vehicles and their owners hailed from Heppner, Hermiston, Umatilla, Summerville, The Dalles, Prineville, Stanfield, Ione, Pendleton, Athena, Lexington, Irrigon, LaGrande, Boardman, Echo, Kennewick, Richland, West Richland, Pasco and Walla Walla.

Award winners of the 20th St. Paddy's Cruz-In are the following:

- Best Of Show: William Stark of Hermiston in his 1947 Ford Coupe
- Mustang's Choice: Patricia Swisher of Umatilla with a 1966 Mustang Coupe
- Leprechaun's Choice: Steve Oliver of Summerville in a 1966 Dodge Charger
- Best Convertible: Will Felt from The Dalles in a 2013 Corvette
- Participant's Choice: Chris Roberts of The Dalles in his 1955 Chevrolet



- Best 1910's & 1920's Car or Pickup: Damon & Roberta Hult from the Dalles in their 1924 one-ton Model T Flatbed Truck
- Best 1930's & 1940's Car or Pickup: Jack Herrick from Kennewick in a 1939 Chevy Master Deluxe
- Best 1950's & 1960's Pickup: Ted Hoffman from The Dalles driving a 1959 Ford F-100
- Best 1970's & Newer Pickup: Jack Bell from Stanfield with his 1972 Chev Pickup
- Best 1950's & 1960's Car: Dick Allen from Ione in his 1967 Chevelle
- Best 1970's & 1980's Car: Rick Carr of The Dalles with his Pontiac Firebird Trans Am
- Best 2005's & Newer Car: Aaron & Tina Mad-

- den of Kennewick with their 2019 Dodge Challenger Hellcat Redeye
- Best Resto mod Car: Phil Lemley of Richland bringing his 1973 V28 Camaro
- Best Foreign Car or Pickup: Melody Hudson from The Dalles with her 1973 Datsun 240Z
- Best Paint: Chris Roberts of The Dalles and his 1955 Chev
- Best Engine: Kenneth Nelson of Ione in a 1929 Ford Model A Hot Rod
- Best Fat Fender: Larry Stephenson of W. Richland in a 1937 Buick special
- Best Muscle Car: Gary Carr of The Dalles in a 1967 Dodge Camaro
- Best Street Rod: Tad Johnson of Prineville with a 1936 Ford Roadster.

Imes appointed MC Public Works Director

Eric Imes has been appointed Morrow County Public Works Director. He had been working since January 5 as Interim Road Master following the resignation of Matthew Scrivner. Imes was promoted to the top job February 3.



Eric Imes

Matt Combe selected Morrow County School District superintendent

"After an exhaustive search, the Morrow County School District Board of Directors is pleased to announce that Mr. Mathew Combe will become the district's next superintendent," said a news release from the MCSD Board of Directors.

According to the release, Combe, Heppner, was one of 13 applicants for the position. He then became one of three finalists who spent time in the district meeting with staff, community members and high school students from each of the three high schools. Board members conducted extensive reference checks and final interviews before offering Combe the position, said the release.

MCSD Board Chair Becky Kindle reported that the board is currently in contract negotiations with Combe and intends to take final action approving the contract at the April 11 board meeting.

"Combe is currently the principal of Heppner Junior-Senior High School and serving the school district as the director of maintenance and facilities. Combe has been employed by the district since January 2005. Other roles in the district include elementary principal and director of alternative education," said the release. Combe has a master's degree from



Matt Combe

Eastern Oregon University at LaGrande.

"Mr. Combe has been actively involved in the entire bond process and looks forward to utilizing his knowledge as the district moves forward with hopes of passing their bond," continued the news release.

Based on board approval, Combe would officially begin his position as school district superintendent on July 1 2022, concluded the release.

The two other final candidates for the position were Jose Silva, principal at the Kermit R. Booker Sr. Innovative Elementary School in Las Vegas, Nevada, with master's and doctorate degrees in education, and Chester Bradshaw, superintendent of the Sugar Salem School District in Sugar City, Idaho, with an education specialist degree from Idaho State University.

Amazon drops \$11.5 million surprise on county

Company volunteers to pay off corrected tax bill

By David Sykes

Morrow County got a big surprise recently when Amazon with its many server facilities here, paid off a past tax bill of over \$11.5 million, and by law didn't even have to. County officials were caught off guard by the large, unexpected check, which resulted from an error by the Oregon Department of Revenue.

How the windfall came about dates back to 2020-21 when Amazon filed their state taxes. County Assessor Mike Gorman said new replacement equipment the company installed in one of its facilities was incorrectly exempted from taxation, resulting in the \$11.5 million underpayment. After the error was discovered, according to state tax law Amazon was not obligated to pay it. But Gorman said: "Amazon said they wanted to go ahead and pay it, so they paid \$11 million

which would have been part of their tax bill," he explained.

After getting the money, which came with no restrictions on how the county could spend it, commissioners were at odds on what to do with the windfall. At the March 9 meeting Commissioner Don Russell brought in a spread sheet detailing a plan to give the funds to the 18 county taxing districts he said would have gotten the monies if the payment had been made correctly. That idea did not get traction with the other two commissioners however, as Jim Doherty and Melissa Lindsay said the money should be distributed on a wider basis across the county, even with those who would not have received any of the property tax money. "This money should have been on the tax rolls," Russell said. "Amazon intended it be on the tax rolls. I think

the money should go out to the taxing districts that would have gotten it had it been on the tax rolls." A motion to distribute the funds to the 18 districts proposed by Russell died for lack of a second.

Receiving the large amount of Amazon money prompted a wider discussion among commissioners about how money received in tax abatement programs, such as through both the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) and the Strategic Investment Program, is being spent.

A common practice for both programs when giving money intended for education, is to funnel the money through an education foundation, or through other entities such as the Ione Community Agri-Business Organization (ICABO). If the money is given straight to the school districts then the state of Oregon will re-

-See AMAZON/PAGE SIX

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