



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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Health Department employee files labor complaint against county

Debra Green claims retaliation following whistleblower complaint

By David Sykes

Morrow County Health Department Office Assistant Debra Green has filed a Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) complaint against the county alleging she has been retaliated against after she became a whistleblower by reporting COVID-19 vaccine documents allegedly being falsified by her department head.

In the complaint, filed March 4, 2022, Green said in April of 2021 she “found out that the Morrow County Health Department was not following the Data Submission Guide required by the Oregon Health Authority in regard to the COVID-19 vaccines.” Green said Health Department Director Nazario Rivera, who has since resigned, “falsified medical documents” in April 2021, which she then reported to her supervisor, who was also Rivera, and to Local Public Health Ad-

ministration (LPHA) Director Darrell Green. Darrell is not only the LPHA Director but also Debra’s husband and the county administrator.

Debra Green alleges that on April 26, 2021, the county Human Resource Director Lindsay Grogan issued a disciplinary action against her “claiming that I should not have sent the email to the LPHA because the director is my husband. Prior to my whistleblowing activities, respondent (Morrow County) had no problems with my communication with the LPHA and never informed me that I should not contact them,” Green says in her BOLI complaint. Green went on to say she was told to contact Rivera, and then county counsel Justin Nelson. She was then told not to contact the LPHGA “because of my family relationship.” Green said she never received a response after reporting the

alleged falsifying incidents to the county.

Following filing the whistleblower complaint alleging falsification of vaccine documents, Green says the county retaliated against her. “After my reports, my workload has increased, and I am doing duties that are not within my classification.” She went on to say she asked Morrow County to pay her a higher classification for working “out of class,” but the request was denied. She then added that the retaliatory actions continue. “Respondent (Morrow County) subjects me to different terms, conditions or privileges of employment and retaliates against me, because I engaged in whistleblowing activities and for my family relationship.” Debra Green has been employed in the Health Department since December of 2019 as a front office assistant.

The Heppner Ga-

zette-Times contacted all three county commissioners for their response to the BOLI complaint. Our inquiry was forwarded to county counsel Justin Nelson who replied: “Morrow County has received a copy of the Bureau of Labor & Industries Complaint filed by a county employee. Morrow County takes these complaints seriously and the county is working with human resource legal counsel to respond to any allegations made in the complaint. Based upon the ongoing review and investigation of this matter, the county has no other comment at this time regarding the personnel matter,” Nelson told the Gazette.

The BOLI complaint was obtained by the Gazette-Times through an inquiry to the state agency. All complaints are public record and, along with a copy of the complaint, BOLI Public Records Manager Kelsey Dietrick told the Gazette, “I am attaching a civil rights complaint that was filed with our agency on 3/4/2022. This complaint is currently under investigation and the investigatory information is exempt from public disclosure until the case is resolved,” she said.

HJSHS hires new principal



Ryan Gerry

Heppner Jr/Sr High School has announced the hiring of Mr. Ryan Gerry as the new principal for the 2022/2023 school year. Gerry will take the place of Matt Combe who has been hired as the superintendent for Morrow County schools.

Gerry has 23 years of educational experience and

ten years of administrative experience in Prairie City and Grant school districts. The committee was impressed with his secondary background, having served the last seven years as the principal at Grant Union High School in John Day. Having worked in both Prairie City and Grant school districts, Ryan is familiar with rural communities and is committed to the continued growth and success of the students, staff and programs at HJSHS.

Matt Combe told the Gazette, “Additionally, we are excited to have him join the MCSD administrative team. He brings not only a wealth of educational knowledge and secondary experience but also experience as an athletic director.”

Taylor Rollins selected by EOU

By Doris Brosnan

Taylor Rollins has been awarded a partial athletic scholarship as well as the University Scholar Award from Eastern Oregon University. This senior at Ione will be reporting in La Grande next fall for football and for furthering his education.

Taylor’s mother, Tricia Rollins, reports that “his love for football started when he was very young. He played flag football in Hermiston until he was old enough to play Colt football in Heppner in the fifth grade.”

Taylor, a three-sport athlete yearly, was a four-year varsity starter in football and basketball for Ione, and he played baseball as a freshman for Heppner.

Taylor has been selected for the eight-man All-Star game in June and is



Taylor Rollins

one of the few 1A alternates selected for the East-West Shrine game in August.

An outstanding record of honors received, extra-curricular activities, and community service, as well as Taylor’s achievements in the sporting arenas, explains the value EOU places on this young man. Today at school he will make his EOU intentions official at a 5 p.m. signing.

April “Snowmageddon” hits



Heppner and the surrounding areas of south Morrow County were hit by unusual April snowfall early last week.

-Contributed photos.

Easter egg hunt must go on



Pictured: Harley Anderson, K.C. Anderson, the Easter Bunny, Olson and Erin Anderson

Many brave families showed up for the annual Heppner Easter Egg Hunt last Saturday, despite the weather. Snow and frigid temperatures weren’t going to stop the hunt for the children of Heppner. The annual event is sponsored by the Heppner Elks Lodge #358 and put on by Past Exalted Ruler Colin Anderson, his wife Erin and their children Harley, K.C. and Olson.

Heppner Elks secretary Teresa Hughes was the Easter Bunny wrangler, and everyone appreciated the Easter Bunny himself. This year over 2000 eggs were stuffed and hidden at the Morrow County fairgrounds.



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