



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢

VOL. 141 NO. 23 8 Pages Wednesday, June 8, 2022 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Heppner, Ione seniors graduate



The 2022 Heppner High School senior class graduated on June 4. -Contributed photo.



The 2022 Ione High School senior class graduated on June 3. -Contributed photo.

## Early surveys show limited Mormon cricket infestation so far in county

### County agent 'cautiously optimistic'

Searches for Mormon cricket infestations have shown little sign of the pests this spring, Gilliam County Extension Agent Jordan Maley, a cricket expert helping coordinate the battle against spread of the bug here, told commissioners recently.

Surveyors from the Oregon Department of Agriculture have twice looked in the north county area around the junction of highway 74 and I-84 without any significant finds, Maley said. "The wet spring affected our ability to get surveyors out on the ground, but it started happening about two weeks ago," Maley told the commissioners at their May 18 meeting. "They made an initial pass from I-84 junction down Hwy 74 and the numbers reflected very low counts," he said some as low as zero per square yard. "Gilliam County has counts in excess of 200 per square yard, so this is good news for Morrow County," Maley emphasized.

He said because of the wet, cool spring so far, he requested another pass, or survey, on May 11 where people went out in high value crop circles close to the Morrow County line

just to see what was going on out there, and "make sure we did not have any activity going on. Generally speaking, this is really good news," Maley said.

Maley said in Gilliam County they are preparing to spray 12,000 acres based on the survey results showing crickets in that area. The crickets are currently advancing toward Morrow County from the west out of Gilliam, where they have been a problem for agriculture and citizens for many years. Back in February commissioners allocated \$100,000, if needed, for control the insects if they began moving into this county.

Extension Agent Larry Lutchter had requested the funds to be prepared, saying the money would be spent on chemical spraying and maybe some bait if needed. To be ready, he asked that he and Maley be able to buy the chemicals and then "pull the trigger" when spraying is needed. "Funds will be used for the cost of chemical and application and maybe some bait as well. Everything needs to be ready to go," Lutchter said.

At the May 18 meeting Maley said the chemical to spray in Morrow County has been purchased and is stored at the airport, ready to be applied if needed. Gilliam County purchased the product for this season and last fall stored it in a warehouse, then moved it to the Lexington airport ready for crop duster John Boyer to apply it when needed. The crickets must be sprayed in the spring after hatch



Gilliam County Extension Agent Jordan Maley

when they are young for the spray to be effective. When the crickets age then Dimilin spray is no longer effective, and they must switch to the less effective Sevin ground applied bait.

Morrow County has a multi-million-dollar agricultural industry to protect from the potential destruction from the insects, which will feed on range land vegetation as well as cultivated crops. The crickets could be especially damaging if they migrate into the high-value irrigated and organic croplands of northern Morrow County but can be a threat anywhere.

Maley said even though the low numbers of crickets found now look good for the county he is still asking the public to report the location of any infestations they find so the area can be identified and possibly treated later. He said members of the county road department could be especially helpful as they are out and around the county and could spot cricket infestations when they pop up. "If they observe them let us know. File a report then we will be prepared and know where they are next year," Maley said.

### County switches from longtime IT provider

In other business at their May 18 meeting commissioners agreed to switch from their longtime information technology (IT) provider Intermountain

Education Service District (IMESD), to contracting with the city of Hermiston. Hermiston does not currently have an IT department but is setting one up and welcomed Morrow County to partner with them for services.

The county has used IMESD for IT services for "decades" according to Rob Naughton, director of Business Development, who attended the meeting and was puzzled why the county was switching to the new untried IT department at the city of Hermiston. "Thank you for your business the last couple of decades," Naughton told the commissioners. "The door will always be open for you to return, but I am puzzled how a county would make a decision to go to a provider that isn't currently a provider and has no track record. That is a big question mark for me. Maybe there is something we don't know. But it is apparent you are

-See CRICKETS/PAGE SEVEN

## MCSO hires new administrators

The Morrow County School District has hired several new administrators for the 22-23 school year.

According to Erin Stocker, Executive Director of Human Resources, "It has been another busy spring as we have worked to fill our vacant administrative positions. The retirement of Superintendent Dirksen and a resignation led to movement within the district. The school district is in a good position with our ability to hire strong internal candidates, as well as an experienced administrator to round out our administrative team for 22-23."

The incoming superintendent, Matt Combe, as well as these new administrators will begin their contracts on July 1, 2022.

### New Vice Principal at Irrigon Jr/Sr High School

The newest member of the Morrow County School District administrative team is Jason Dunten. He will be transitioning into the Irrigon Jr/Sr High School Vice Principal for the 2022-23 school year.

Not a stranger in MCSO, Dunten has been an educator for 13 years, all of which have been in Morrow County. Jason received his bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Oregon University and a Master's in Education Administration from Grand Canyon University. Well known in the community of Irrigon, Dunten has made many connections through his coaching and community involvement. "When I began teaching in Irrigon, I was extremely excited for the opportunity to help mentor our students. By moving into the role of vice principal, I am excited to continue to not only mentor our students but also impact the culture of the Irrigon community and the Morrow County School District." Stocker said the district is excited that Irrigon Jr/Sr High School will continue to have leaders that are vested in the programs, schools and community.

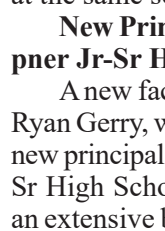
### New Principal at Irrigon Jr-Sr High School

Rose Palmer will be the next principal of Irrigon Jr/Sr High School. Rose received her bachelor's degree from Washington State University and has two masters, one in physical

education and the other in education leadership. With 15 years in education as a teacher and administrator, Palmer is currently completing her seventh year in MCSO as the assistant principal at IJSHS. She has the background knowledge and experience to aid in a smooth transition for students, families and staff. Palmer said, "I am looking forward to the opportunity to continue to serve as an administrator at IJSHS and excited that I will get to continue to provide opportunities for students to feel connected and important while in our building." Stocker said the district is pleased to have a veteran administrator continue as a member of the MCSO team in a new role at the same school.

**New Principal at Heppner Jr-Sr High School**

A new face to MCSO is Ryan Gerry, who will be the new principal at Heppner Jr/Sr High School. Gerry has an extensive background in secondary education with 23 years of experience, of which ten years has been in administration. Previously, he worked in Prairie City and Grant school districts. He received his bachelor's degree from Eastern Oregon University, his master's degree from Oregon State University and his administration licensure program through University of Oregon. Gerry is familiar with rural communities and is committed to the continued growth and success of students, staff and programs. Gerry said, "I am very honored and excited to be joining Heppner Jr/Sr High School and being part of the Morrow County School District. The school and the Heppner community have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to student success and community connection, which I am dedicated to continuing. I'm looking forward to being a Mustang and part of the community." Stocker said the MCSO administrative team is eager to have Gerry join them and learn more about the district and the community.



Rose Palmer



Jason Dunten



Ryan Gerry

**DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?**  
OUR NEWLY UPDATED WEBSITE MAKES IT EASY TO:

- Submit news
- Submit birth, engagement and wedding announcements
- Send us photos
- Submit letters to the editor
- Place ads
- Start a new subscription

**WWW.HEPPNER.NET**

Weekly deadline for all news and advertising is Monday at 5pm.  
188 W Willow, Heppner • 541-676-9228

**POLARIS**  
UPGRADE YOUR RIDE

ELEVATE YOUR ADVENTURE

**NEW FOR 2022**

CHECK OUT THE ALL-NEW 2022 POLARIS LINEUP. WE'LL HELP YOU LOOK IN WHAT YOU WANT.

**Morrow County Grain Growers, Inc.**

**CALL 541-989-8221 ext 204 for more information**

**POLARIS | OFF ROAD**