



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢
VOL. 141 NO. 25 8 Pages Wednesday, June 22, 2022 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Heppner Lions hold annual BBQ, elect officers



Outgoing Heppner Lions Club President Al Scott (left) is presented with a certificate of appreciation for his work this past year by incoming President Dan Van Liew.

The Heppner Lions Club held their annual meeting and steak barbeque last week at the city park. The club went over its activities this past year and talked about upcoming fundrais-

ers. The club holds various money makers throughout the year such as fireworks sales, selling rodeo programs and a rifle raffle, with the money used to support the Lions Club Sight and



The 2022-23 Heppner Lions Club officers are (L-R) Secretary Steve Rhea, Sight and Hearing Chair Molly Rhea, President Dan Van Liew, Vice President Dick Paris, Lion Tamer Jimmy Fichter and Tail Twister Andrew Johnson.

Hearing programs. The club will pay for examinations, glasses and hearing aids for those in need who cannot afford them. The club also gives an annual scholarship to local seniors.

Club officers elected for this year were Secretary Steve Rhea, Sight and Hearing Chair Molly Rhea, President Dan Van Liew, Vice President Dick Paris, Lion Tamer Jimmy

Fichter and Tail Twister Andrew Johnson. Outgoing president Al Scott also was presented with a certificate of appreciation for his work the past year by incoming President Dan Van Liew.

Anyone who is interested in joining the Heppner Lions Club and contributing to the community's public service, is urged to contact any of the club's officers for an application.

DEQ increases Port of Morrow fine to \$2.1 million for additional nitrate violations

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality last week issued a revised penalty to the Port of Morrow for additional violations involving over-application of wastewater containing nitrogen to agricultural fields in the Lower Umatilla Basin, an area with longstanding groundwater contamination. DEQ issued the original penalty in January. The additional violations increase the fine by \$800,000, from \$1.3 million to \$2.1 million.

The Port of Morrow is one of many sources contributing to nitrate contamination in northern Morrow and Umatilla counties—an area known as the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area. The primary source of contamination in the area (about 70 percent) is from fertilizer use on irrigated farmland, according to the LUBGWMA Action Plan. Additional contributors are dairy and cattle farms (about 20 percent), food processing facilities like the Port of Morrow that reuse wastewater to irrigate

fields (about 5 percent), and residential septic systems and other sources (about 5 percent).

The Port of Morrow collects wastewater from food processors, storage facilities and data centers in its industrial park outside Boardman. The port has a DEQ water quality permit that allows it to use the nitrogen-rich wastewater for irrigation on nearby farms, but the permit includes limits on how much nitrogen can be applied to the farmland and how much nitrate and moisture can be present in soil prior to applications.

The amended notice cites the port for additional occurrences of applying wastewater containing nitrogen to fields that already had too much existing nitrate or moisture in the soil. Having too much nitrate or moisture in the soil when applying wastewater increases the likelihood of nitrates flowing down into the groundwater rather than remaining in the soil for crops to use.

The port documented additional violations to DEQ in its annual report and in email and phone reports of non-compliance. The additional violations occurred between November 2020 to February 2021 and November 2021 to February 2022.

WWW.HEPPNER.NET
SUBMIT NEWS, ADVERTISING & ANNOUNCEMENTS
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
SEND US PHOTOS
START A NEW SUBSCRIPTION

Local businesses jump in to help residents impacted by water emergency

A group of local businesses immediately responded to a request for assistance to help neighbors, families and workers throughout the community impacted by the water emergency recently declared in Morrow County.

The companies, working under the guidance and in close cooperation with Morrow County Health Department officials, include Amazon Web Services, Boardman Foods, Lamb Weston, Calbee North America, Threemile Canyon Farms and Tillamook County Creamery Association.

Debbie Radie, vice president of operations for Boardman Foods, one of the organizers of the coalition of business community partners, shared some of the immediate action steps which include, among other support:

- helping the county health department to distribute safe drinking water,
- assisting well-owners and residents in the process of ordering and paying for testing kits/ filtration systems, and
- providing information on wells from the Oregon Health Authority.

The 1200 well-owners, and all community residents, are encouraged to use community information resources, including the county's website at www.co.morrow.or.us and the Morrow County Health Department's Facebook page to get the most up-to-date information about available help during the current emergency. The City of Boardman

wants to remind residents the tap water is safe to drink and confirms that there is no threat to public health from the city's drinking water supply.

Starting June 20, 2022, Boardman Foods will have a person onsite (71320 E Columbia Blvd, Boardman OR 97818) to assist in both English and Spanish and to provide testing bottles and a collection site for well water testing, information from Oregon Health Authority on wells, as well as support and information on certified reverse osmosis filters. Water must be collected on the same day it is brought in for testing. Testing is available Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Those interested in the onsite services provided at Boardman Foods can reach out to contact@boardmanfoods.com.

Beginning June 23, the Boardman Chamber of Commerce (101 Olson Rd, Boardman OR 97818) will also support the community

New town recorder for Lexington



Veronica Hess, Lexington Town Recorder

The Town of Lexington has a new recorder, and her name is Veronica Hess. She and her husband Keith recently moved to Lexington. The couple have two children Bradley, 5, and Camille, 3. Hess has an Associate of Science degree in Business Administration and is a licensed and bonded Notary Public for State of Oregon.

"I am very thankful to be working at Lexington's Town Hall and for the opportunity to make a positive impact and help the community, while furthering my career in business administration," Hess told the Heppner Gazette-Times. She said her goal is to be readily available for the town people and the community when and where needed. "I want to focus on improvements around town and future grant projects so that Lexington gets the consideration and attention that it deserves. My hopes for my role as Town of Lexington Recorder is to keep people informed on current events, to get involved in the local communities and helping in any way I can. I want to keep Lexington an enjoyable and desirable place to live or start a business," she added.

Hess says in her spare time she enjoys cooking, gardening and spending time outdoors. "My favorite thing to do on the weekends is spend time with my family, have picnics, visit local parks and go to the movie theater and arcade," she adds. Hess's first town meeting was June 14.

In other business at last offering the same services as available onsite at Boardman Foods. For information regarding services located at the Chamber, please contact info@boardmanchamber.org.

"This is an issue that affects all of our neighbors; local businesses are ready to serve and help," said Radie.

For more information about the water emergency, contact the Morrow County Health Department in Heppner at 541-676-5421 during business hours, call 541-256-0110 for after hours, weekends or holidays.

week's meeting the council heard a report from mayor Juli Kennedy who said community members are planning several activities including a bingo night. The first bingo night will be June 30 at the town fire-hall at 6 p.m. Kennedy also reported that a community block party is being planned for the later in the summer. C Street, the street between the Rebekah Hall and the restaurant will be blocked off and there will be food and music. "We want to get some fun things going in Lexington," Kennedy said.

It was also announced that the town hall would have new expanded office hours now from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8 a.m. to 12 noon on Friday.

The council also heard from councilmember Katie Imes who gave an update on grant applications for the town. A \$10,000 grant was recently received from the Willow Creek Economic Development Group and that money will be matched with \$10,000 from the town and used to improve property behind town hall by leveling, sod and a sprinkler system. Fencing will also be added if there is enough funds, Imes said. Imes said she would also find out soon if the town received a \$17,000 grant applied for through Amazon Web Services, which operates the large data centers in north county. That money would be used to upgrade technology at town hall and make the meetings, for instance, remote. Imes says she personally prefers in-person meetings, but the new technology would be good when conferring with the town's engineering firm, Anderson and Perry out of LaGrande where they could attend meetings virtually.

Imes also spoke of a possible Transportation Growth Management Grant that would provide cities with money for downtown improvements. She said the grants cover such things as sidewalks, trees and other amenities which will help promote business in a town. When asked if the town was at a disadvantage because the main street is a state highway, Imes said, to the contrary that sometimes helps because the state likes to see their rights-of-way kept up and improved. The town has a Transportation System Plan that Imes has been reviewing, which guides how the streets will be developed and also allow the town to submit for grants to put together a downtown improvement plan. "It's worthwhile looking at this," she said.

In other business the council heard a report from Karie Walchli who is contracted with the county to provide tourism enhancement services. She gave a presentation on her efforts to educate the public about tourism.

POLARIS
UPGRADE YOUR RIDE

ELEVATE YOUR ADVENTURE

NEW FOR 2022

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

Morrow County Grain Growers, Inc.

CALL
541-989-8221
ext 204
for more information

WARNING: Polaris® off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if permitted, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing. Always use seat belts and call nets or doors (as equipped). Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-342-9761 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2021 Polaris Inc.

POLARIS | OFF ROAD