



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢ VOL. 141 NO. 31 8 Pages Wednesday, August 3, 2022 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Hisler to play in East-West Shrine game



Brock Hisler had 12 touchdowns last season playing for the Mustangs.

Heppner's Brock Hisler was selected to play for the East team in the East-West Shrine game to be held August 6 in Baker City. The pre-game will start at 6 p.m. with the kickoff at 7 at Baker High School.

Erik Davis, Pendleton High School and Kenzie Hansell, Weston-McEwen, were selected as coaches for the East team.

Hisler left Sunday and is spending this week in La Grande practicing for the game. His selection for the team came after he was named 2A Defensive Back of the Year, which includes linebackers and secondary players. He also received first team 2A All-State honors as running back and linebacker. Selected from Heppner as alternates were Jace Coe, Conor Brosnan and Kason Cimmiyotti along with Taylor Rollins, Ione.

Brock ran for 1,153 on 158 carries and 12 touchdowns for the Mustangs who finished the season 11-1, losing 6-8 to Coquille, the eventual state champion, in the semifinal game. On defense Brock has a team high of 97 tackles and three fumble recoveries.

In the spring he signed a letter of intent to play college football at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande. Hisler will also be reporting to EOU coaches

this week for his commitments to EOU.

"We are excited as a program that any of our players are selected for the Shrine game. We feel that Brock will do a great job representing himself, his family, his school and his community. The Shrine game has always been one for our eastern Oregon kids to look forward to one more game. Fortunately for Brock, he intends to continue to play at EOU in the fall. I am sure he will do a great job for the East and will be a valuable member of the Mountaineer program," Coach Greg Grant told the Gazette.

The East-West Shrine game is back to normal this year, the first time since 2019. The game was cancelled in 2020 and in 2021 the Covid restrictions kept the players from visiting Baker City prior to the game. This annual Shrine game is a fundraiser for the Shriners Children's Hospital in Portland. Since its inception, the game has raised more than \$2.9 million up to 2021. It moved to Baker City in the mid-1970s.

## It did get hot



Temperatures registered up to 107 degrees on the bank thermometer in Heppner last week. However, we are getting a break as temperatures have come down and are expected to hover in the 80s this week.



Brock Hisler, with Coach Greg Grant, signs his letter of intent for EOU.

## Mislabeled water tests spur questions from Irrigon homeowner

Was incorrectly announced he had 'highest nitrate levels in the county'



Irrigon homeowner Roy Drago, shown here when he was a Morrow County Sheriff for many years, is not happy with way water test results were handled on his property.

When Irrigon homeowner Roy Drago got word last month that nitrate test results on his well had come back extremely high, and that those results were being openly discussed among politicians and family members, he was not pleased. Later when he discovered those results were all a mistake when another sample with extremely high nitrate content had been mislabeled as his, he decided to ask some questions.

"We've always had very low nitrogen in our water here," Drago, who lives near the Irrigon Fish Hatchery, told the Heppner Gazette-Times last week. Providing the Gazette with lab test results dating back to 2012 and showing a ni-

Laboratory No.: WA100001-43423		Date Reported: 8/18/2014			
Party To Pay for Testing: Roy Drago		Send Results To: Roy Drago			
81727 W Eighth Rd.		81727 W Eighth Rd.			
Irrigon	OR 97844	Irrigon	OR 97844		
Contaminant - Method	Code	MCL (mg/L)	Analyst	Analysis mg/L	
Nitrate (NO3-N) SM 4500-NO3 F	20116205	10	Kuo Testing Labs	0.65	
Nitrite (NO2-N) SM 4500-NO3 F	20116205	1.0			
Nitrite + Nitrate SM 4500-NO3 F	20116205	10			
Analysis	Result	Flag	Units	MCL	Analyzed
2206713-01: BFI 1105 (Potable)					
Nitrate as Nitrogen (NO3-N)	68.0		mg/L	10.0	6/28/2022
Analysis	Result	Flag	Units	MCL	Analyzed
2207428-01: BFI 1164 (Potable)					
Nitrate as Nitrogen (NO3-N)	0.607		mg/L	10.0	7/19/2022

The history of nitrate test results on the property. Top from 2014 .65 ppm, middle the mislabeled sample from June 22, 2022, 68 ppm, and the follow up test taken July 2022 .60 ppm

trate level of .75 ppm, and then in 2014 at .65, Drago said he was shocked when County Commissioner Jim Doherty called his son and told him water tests done by the county on June 28, 2022, had come back showing his well with 68 parts per million of nitrate, an extremely high level and very dangerous to human health.

"I immediately called the county emergency manager and asked for a re-test since this was so out of place," Drago said of the high results. He was told that the county would not pay for another test of his well even though he had years of test results showing negligible amounts of nitrate in his water supply. "They just said they wouldn't do it and I would have to pay for it myself if I wanted it redone," Drago said. However, several hours after that conversation a representative from Boardman Foods, who is also doing water testing in the area, called and said they would pay for a re-

test. And this time the result came back at .62 parts per million, a negligible amount more in line with the history of his property.

Although the lower level was of course good news for Roy and his wife, Gail, how the whole story unfolded was of concern to them both. Drago said he would like to know several things about the extensive water testing program now underway in the county. He has questions like: how many people see the test results once they are completed? Who are these people and why are politicians such as county commissioners having access to what he feels should be private information about his property? And he wants to know why did Doherty contact his son, who is not the property owner, and divulged private water test results to him?

Ever since it was announced earlier this year that the Department of Environmental Quality had fined the Port of Morrow for excessive nitrate dumping

on land in the north Morrow County area, Doherty has been leading the charge not only to provide bottled water to residents with private wells, but also having the county and others do extensive testing and placing of filters on the wells. Drinking high nitrate water is very dangerous to people's health, especially

-See MISLABELED TESTS/PAGE THREE

## Uncooperative suspect tased

Eric Edward Opheim, 48, of McMinnville, was tased and arrested on July 23, 2022, after a pursuit from near the old mill district to Lexington.

Morrow County Sheriff's Deputy Collin Brill made a traffic stop near the old mill in Heppner on a vehicle whose driver was exhibiting signs of being impaired at 1:12 a.m. The driver initially stopped but when contacted by the deputy was uncooperative and irate, then left the scene. He narrowly missed hitting the deputy and proceeded into the oncoming lane of travel toward Lexington at a high

rate of speed. Deputy Brill pursued the suspect and then conducted a high risk stop in Lexington where the driver was held at gunpoint until another deputy arrived. The two deputies attempted to take the suspect into custody, but he resisted and was uncooperative. After being warned, a Taser was deployed.

Opheim was arrested by MCSO for reckless endangering another, attempted to elude, DUI, reckless driving and resisting arrest. He was lodged at Umatilla County Jail with no bail.

## Gazette moves to new location

The Heppner Gazette-Times and Sykes Real Estate recently moved from their previous location at 188 W Willow to 177 N Main in Heppner. The new office was formerly the

Peterson Jewelers building. Email addresses and phone numbers remain the same.

David, April, Chris, Bobbi and Giselle invite everyone to stop by and say hi.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

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