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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

**Heppner**

**GAZETTE-TIMES**

U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Published weekly by Sykes Publishing and entered as periodical matter at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon under the Act of March 3, 1879. Periodical postage paid at Heppner, Oregon. Office at 188 W. Willow Street. Telephone (541) 676-9228. Fax (541) 676-9211. E-mail: editor@rapidsolve.net or david@rapidsolve.net. Web site: www.heppner.net. Postmaster send address changes to the Heppner Gazette-Times, P.O. Box 337, Heppner, Oregon 97836. Subscriptions: \$31 in Morrow County; \$25 senior rate (in Morrow County only; 65 years or older); \$37 elsewhere; \$31 student subscriptions.

Chris Sykes ..... Publisher  
Andrea Di Salvo ..... Editor  
Cindi Doherty ..... Advertising

All News and Advertising Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.  
For Advertising: advertising deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Cost for a display ad is \$5.25 per column inch. Cost for classified ad is 50¢ per word. Cost for Card of Thanks is \$10 up to 100 words. Cost for a classified display ad is \$6.05 per column inch.  
For Public/Legal Notices: deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be requested at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).  
For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.  
For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

**Doherty hired at G-T**

*-Continued from PAGE ONE*  
"You didn't have any of the computers. You had to lay it all out on the boards, and it took all night long," she remembers. "It was fun, but computers make it a lot easier."

After about a year at the Gazette, she worked for Hutch's Printing, staying there for another couple of years. Over the years, she also worked as a 911 dispatcher at the sheriff's office for eight years, with the soil and water conservation district for about a year, in the Morrow County tax office for eight years and for the City of Ione about for about a year and half. She also worked as a temp at the forest service from 1990-1993. She returned there in 2002 as a permanent employee, working at the front desk at the Heppner Ranger District from then until her retirement last month.

Much of Doherty's life had been spent working with the public, and that was the case at the forest service. She was the front line of public contact for the ranger district office, dealing with paperwork, wood permits and quarters, among other things. "I was the public person," says Doherty.

She says it wasn't boring, though. In fact, her time there gave her some opportunities she would not have had otherwise, including travel. "I got to travel some places," she says, "and I really like that. I got to do a lot of things." Some of those things included time spent working at the Pendleton and Ukiah offices and traveling for wildfires—not as a firefighter, but in a supporting role. For local fires, she would collect food orders from the community businesses and make food runs for those fighting the fire.

**Celebration of Life planned**

Richard "Rick" Sandford III

The family of Richard "Rick" Sandford III invites the community to a celebration of his life on Feb. 25 at 11 a.m. at the Ione Legion Hall. Rick was born Nov. 11, 1969, and passed away Dec. 6, 2022. After the celebration of life, guests are invited to bring a side dish and stay for a potluck, his favorite music and a video/photo show by his daughters. The Legion hall is located at 325 W. 2nd St. in Ione. In place of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Ione American Legion Hall or a charity of choice. His family hopes all will join them in celebrating this special man's life.

At 65, though, Doherty decided it was time for a change. "I loved the job. The forest service people are great, nice people. I do miss the people," she adds. "It was just time to do something else."

That something else turned out to be a little way down Main Street and full circle in terms of career. "I wasn't sure I wanted to stay home five days a week," says Doherty. "I saw the ad in the paper. I

decided to talk to Chris and see what he thought." "And now I'm back at the Gazette."

Doherty fits right in at the Gazette; not only does she have experience in the work, but it's a little bit like family. Gazette owner Chris Sykes has been a friend of her son Adam since they were boys.

"I like it," Doherty says of the Gazette. "I know everybody. I hope I'm progressing some."

Her job at the Gazette is part time, and Doherty still plans to enjoy her "retirement" when she's not working for the newspaper. She wants to spend time with her parents, and traveling is high on her list.

"I do want to do a little bit of traveling," she says. "I like to go to the beach. I take my mom and dad a lot." She also looks forward to annual trips to Mexico with friend Gayle Gutierrez. She wants to spend more time with her grandkids—Lillian is seven, Bridget is 18 and Malcolm is two. "They grow up too fast," she says.

Doherty is at the Gazette-Times Mondays, Tuesdays all day and Wednesday mornings. Anyone wanting to place an ad or wish her a happy retirement can stop by the office on Main Street in Heppner, call 541-676-9228 or email [graphics@rapidsolve.net](mailto:graphics@rapidsolve.net).

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**County can increase tourism dollars with planning, consultant says**

By Andrea Di Salvo

Tourism consultant Karie Walchli says tourism is on the upswing in Morrow County, and the county is in a good spot to take advantage of some of Oregon's most popular tourism niches.

Walchli is a private consultant contracted to serve as Tourism Coordinator for Morrow County. Her job is to find ways to help grow Morrow County's tourism economy in a "sustainable" way. She recently appeared before the board of commissioners to give an update on her work.

According to Walchli, the state and regional pillars of tourism are agritourism, the outdoors, and culture and heritage.

"These are the pillars within the state of Oregon that they really have a lot of the focus on, and they fit beautifully into what Morrow County has to offer," says Walchli.

Tourism dollars in Morrow County had been on the rise. In 2019, she reports that total direct travel spending in the county was \$17,100,000, directly supporting 250 tourism-related jobs. Walchli says it takes 63,333 in visitor spending to support one job, so every \$100 a visitor spends con-

tributes \$33 to employee earnings and \$4.03 to local and state tax revenue.

After 2019, things changed.

"In 2020, as we all know, things kind of crashed," she says. "The nice thing now is, we are coming up. We are on the way back up for the tourism footprint."

Tourism spending in the county dropped from \$17.1 million in 2019 down to \$9.2 million in 2020. In 2021, the most current year available, that number was back up to \$13.9 million.

In the past year, Walchli worked with communities and individuals in Morrow County to identify opportunities and challenges. That work included five community studio input sessions with approximately 128 attendees, an online survey, and various outreach calls to community leaders.

"Our goal here is to find at least three action items that can work throughout the county, and we would seek funding for those," Walchli says. "It was really fun to meet with these communities. There is a lot of desire for tourism development within Morrow County."

Some of the county-wide assets recognized

in Walchli's work were the Columbia River, county parks like Anson Wright Park, Cutsforth Park and the OHV Park, Umatilla national Forest, the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway, rich local history and the Heritage Trail.

One of the things that Walchli says surprised her a little was the enthusiasm for a county-wide walking trail system.

"That was a really neat thing to find out because trails are a hot item in Oregon, and there's lots of opportunities," says Walchli.

Also at the top of the list was the desire to preserve and share local history.

"One of the key things that people mentioned, these small communities have such rich history, they don't want people to forget," she says. "They also want to make these communities places where the next generations come back to."

While Morrow County is poised to take advantage of those trends, she says, it also has to happen in way that preserves and celebrates the local culture and landscape.

"Which is integral to parts of Morrow County and Umatilla County," she says. "We're natural

resource-based assets, and we want to make sure we're preserving our lands."

Most people involved in the process responded favorably to the idea of increasing tourism in Morrow County, but not everyone was enthusiastic. Walchli says some residents thought the county needed to address priorities other than tourism, and others worried about maintaining small-town character. Some were flat out opposed.

"I do not want them (assets) developed. I do not feel Morrow County needs to rely on tourism," said one survey respondent.

Walchli says that is part of the process.

"We just wanted to be cognizant of the concerns, because this is a continual education process, that people understand the economic footprint," she says.

Walchli says the next steps for the county if it wants to pursue more tourism will include establishing a destination marketing organization and creating a tourism committee. The county will then need to use the information she has given them come up with a strategic plan and marketing plan to move the county forward.

**Basketball, band seniors honored at last league games**



Basketball and band seniors and their families were honored at the games on Friday. Pictured (L-R/B-F): Peter Wenberg, Sheena Shank, Hailey Wenberg (Senior), Jeremy Cimmiyotti, Tylynn Cimmiyotti, Tucker Ashbeck (Senior), Michele Ashbeck, David Cribbs (Senior), Andy Ashbeck, Jesse Rodriguez, Trevor Nichols (Senior), Russ Nichols, Toni Nichols, Lily Nichols, Hailey Cimmiyotti, Fabian Guerra, Adan Guerra (Senior), Claudia Guerra, Khamila Guerra, Julia Finch, Jacob Finch (Senior), Tripp Finch, Daemon Worden (Senior), Nikki Bergstrom, Eva Worden, Oakley Bergstrom, Kelsie Worden, Rick Worden, Ryder Worden, Ashley Lindsay, Dan Lindsay, Arianna Worden, Lucas Worden, Madison Palmer (Senior), Ryan Lindsay (Senior), Jennifer Palmer, Jason Palmer, Brook Wilson (Senior), Aymee Wilson. Not Pictured: Coach Rob Wilson. -Photo by Tylynn Cimmiyotti



Heppner High School band

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*the loop*  
MORROW COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT

**What is Cursillo?**

Make a friend, be a friend and bring a friend to Christ. Come and join us Sunday, February 19th for an evening of fellowship with your brothers & Sisters in Christ. A Spaghetti dinner will be provided. Our evening will begin at 5:00pm as we gather for dinner at Hopeful Saints Church. If you know of someone that is interested or curious about The Cursillo Movement invite them to join us. We will be sharing information about Cursillo & this year's upcoming weekend. We will also have applications available to work on the team. If you are reading this and you are curious about Cursillo please do come and share a meal with us, there will be plenty for everyone. We do hope you will join us: February 19th @ Hopeful Saints Church, (140 Church Street Heppner, OR) beginning at 5:00PM. Dinner is provided by the Heppner area 4th Day Group. For further information please contact: Diana Sharp 509-781-1028 or George Nairns 541-571-6519 Eastern Oregon Cursillo Community Mission Statement: Cursillo is an ecumenical community of faith, love and hope that supports individuals in our search for discovery and renewal in Christ.

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