

Broken Spoke

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took a chance and said yes. Carol spent the next four years managing the Honky Tonk in Salem.

"It gave me a perspective and experience for this side of the business," she says. "It was definitely a good fit for my personality and what I like to do. I like working with people. I like working in service."

They had visited the Lexington area throughout the years, so they were familiar with it. In fact, Sean's cousin, Sam Martin, lives in the area, so Sean has a long history here. Sean is even the artist who painted the lettering and rabbit on the Lexington water tower.



Broken Spoke's Missing Man table, a tribute to fallen soldiers.

When Sam told them about the restaurant for sale, they decided to give it a try. They purchased the building last April.

The couple had a few different ideas for the name, but narrowed them down to the Elk Horn and the Broken Spoke. The proximity to the Oregon Trail, the western theme, and a love



A section of ceiling formed by "sporadic" cuts of cedar.

of motorcycles (especially Harleys) swung the vote to the Broken Spoke.

From April to September of last year, the couple came down every other weekend to work on the renovation. In September, they moved here permanently.

Sean says he purchased it mainly for Carol, but it has also become a labor of love for him as he puts his artistry to use in bringing life back into the old building.

"I built this whole thing. Every bit of it," he says of the interior of the small restaurant. "I'm an artist, and I can't do something just plain."

The coffee bar was the first thing replaced. The top of the bar is made from the pallet the new flooring came on. One section of the ceiling is covered by an intricate design of cedar.

"I started putting sporadic cuts in, and this is what I got," says Sean.

The building, which has sat empty for some time, also wasn't in the best of shape. Sean says they removed the shelves from the walk-in cooler, and all the walls in the cooler caved in. He says that was a low moment for them. He called Sam Martin when it happened.

"He walked in and said, 'Man, you guys just look defeated,'" he recalls.

"My cousin Sam was a Godsend," Sean adds. "He came over and helped with everything he could."

He also says they removed four tons of sawdust from those cooler walls.

"Some of the tables were in bad shape. To save

them, I did this," he says, gesturing to the intricate patterns on several of the tabletops. "I built everything here for my wife. I can't do anything less than the best I've got for her."

Other personal touches can be seen throughout the restaurant's interior. The glass doors on the reach-in cooler came out of Jake's Bar and Grill in Portland 40 years ago. On one wall hangs a wagon wheel with a broken spoke. The bar and restaurant also features a "missing man table" to honor veterans and fallen soldiers.

"I had no plan. It's been a labor of love," says Sean.

The building itself wasn't the only hurdle. Starting and operating a restaurant in a rural area came with a few trials of its own.

"It's definitely had its challenges," says Carol. For instance, she says a lot of vendors weren't used to coming out to such a rural area, and they had to work hard to get vendors for everything from groceries to appliances. "They've never serviced out here before."

Good service is important if you want to serve good food, though, and that's exactly what the Dougherty's plan. Everything is made in-house daily, including the pasta, pasta sauce and salad dressings.

"Fresh and homemade as it can be," says Sean.

They're even looking



to source local beef, and have been talking with several local producers who are USDA certified.

It's not the easy way to do things—"Not even a little bit," says Carol. In fact, she adds that they could cut their costs in half by using frozen foods. However, that's not the vision they have for the Broken Spoke.

"More of homestyle cooking rather than fast food," says Carol.

Executive chef Shawn Lifferth, who was trained in New York, is busy creating special items for the new menu. One of Lifferth's creations is fried ice cream topped with whisky caramel sauce.

"We can't keep them in the doors," says Carol.

They say kitchen manager Katie Imes also helps keep things running smoothly. Some might assume home cooking means long waits, but among them, they say they get everything prepped before opening so wait times don't get too long.

The Broken Spoke, located on Main Street in Lexington, is currently in its "soft opening" phase, with a grand opening planned for March 11. For now, they have a limited menu, but plan to expand their offerings after their grand opening.

Their soft opening hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. After their grand opening, they intend to start opening for breakfast on the weekends. Their goal is to be open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Tuesday through Sunday.

Boardman Fire seeks repeal of ambulance ordinance

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commissioners Jim Doherty and Melissa Lindsay had resisted putting a license request on the agenda, saying the fire district needed to first provide evidence of need for the ambulances before the county would consider moving forward with a license.

Also at last week's meeting was MCHD CEO Emily Roberts, who was present to lay out the case for the health district's continued operation of Boardman ambulance services.

"We all know where this is," Morrow County Board of Commissioners Chair David Sykes said, warning the parties to stay on topic on the issue, which has sparked heated discussions and hard feelings several times. "It's a big discussion that's been going on for quite some time."

Hughes did not directly address the issue of licensing for the Boardman Fire ambulances, but instead requested that the board of commissioners repeal county ordinance MC-C-4-98. The ordinance lays out the regulation of ambulance service providers in the county. Hughes said the current ordinance was more than 24 years old and that he did not believe the county was currently in compliance with Oregon Health Authority rules regarding Ambulance Service Agreements (ASAs).

"As far as I can tell, it appears that in 1993 that ASA was crafted for Morrow County and approved by Oregon Health Authority as required by the ordinance rules," said Hughes.

He also said it was "clear" that every five years OHA must receive an updated ASA plan to make sure the county is still in compliance with updated laws. Hughes stated that the plan was not submitted for OHA approval in 1998—or any time since. He said that in February of 2021 Morrow County received an email from OHA requesting an ASA be sent because they hadn't received one since 1993.

"Therefore, the process has been missed through the laws for over 24 years," said Hughes. Since the 1998 ordinance didn't follow the process, Hughes said, "it could easily be argued that it is invalid."

In addition to asking the commissioners to repeal the ordinance, Hughes also asked that the board temporarily assign an administrator such as the public health dept. or emergency manager.

"Let them research and come back to the board with a permanent solution," he said.

Hughes also stated that out of 108 ASAs in the state, most use a public health department, emergency manager or CPA.

"I only know of two personally where the ambulance provider is the administrator," said Hughes. One problem with that model, he added, was that the provider was policing itself.

Hughes also referenced previous mediation attempts with Elizabeth Heckathorn. He asked that the county ask her to write a new ASA and "follow the process required by law." He suggested writing three response models for the

Boardman area.

The first model would be that nothing changes, and the health district would continue to provide ambulance services in the Boardman area.

The second would be a combination in which MCHD continues to be the primary responding agency and Boardman fire becomes the secondary.

The third would be for Boardman Fire to have the primary responsibility for their response area.

"Now, this is all dependent upon licensure," added Hughes. "As a commission, I think one of your biggest concerns if you repeal this ordinance is, what happens to ambulance service."

"The answer is nothing," he added. "Nothing changes. Morrow County Health District is the only licensed operator in this county."

"I understand this is an emotional topic," said Hughes, but I'm still a little confused as to why more ambulances wouldn't be better."

Morrow County Health District CEO Emily Roberts responded by saying that she agreed the ASA needed to be approved every five years but that she did not agree that the county has not been in compliance.

Roberts provided the commission with a letter the OHA had sent to the county, which she said was given to her by former county administrator Darrell Green. She said the letter stated that the county is in compliance and the current ASA plan is approved.

"Every five years, the county has submitted a new one," said Roberts, adding that they would not necessarily see a new ASA for every five years. "Because there's a dialog between the county and OHA every time you resubmit that ASA," she said. "We know that there can be a lag in their response to that. This time there was a lag of about six months."

"If you contact Oregon Health Authority, which I encourage you to do, they will confirm that you are and have been in compliance," Roberts said.

She added that Heckathorn also confirmed that in the mediation process. Roberts also said that not every county had an ASA as an ordinance, and it was up to the commission to determine whether it should be.

"There's nothing I'm aware of that would require it to be an ordinance," she added. "You would have to adopt it. Ours specifically states that it is an ordinance."

She also said that having the health district as the administrator of the ASA plan was not an uncommon model, and the decision was most likely made to cast the liability from the county onto an entity that had more EMS experience.

"As they like to say at OHA, if you've seen one ASA plan, you've seen one ASA plan," Roberts said. "They are all very different, and the intention was that they would serve well the community that they were intended to serve."

Morrow County's ASA plan specifically sets up an EMS advisory committee of ten people with represen-

tation including fire, EMS and dispatch. Those 10 individuals are tasked with overseeing the ASA plan. They have public meetings at least quarterly and make recommendations back to the health district board.

"In terms of need in the service area," said Roberts, "to open the ASA again, you need to prove that there is need or that services are not being met as they should in the ASA plan."

Roberts said MCHD has two Boardman ambulances, while Boardman has a population of 3,921, which means there is one MCHD ambulance in service per 1,961 people. They had 318 transports in 2022.

"We may be called out more, but in terms of people who actually need to go to a hospital, there's 318," she said. She compared that to Hermiston, which has four ambulances with a population of 19,455, for a ratio of one ambulance for every 4,864 people.

"So you can see Boardman's coverage, by those numbers, is twice as good."

In Morrow County as a whole, she said, there are seven ambulances for a population of 12,303, or one ambulance per 1,758 people. Roberts pointed to those numbers as a reason the ASA did not need to be changed.

Morrow County Commissioner Jeff Wenholz asked about the ASA that Roberts said was adopted by OHA in 2022 and whether the board of commissioners had approved that. She answered that they had; Green had submitted an ASA to the OHA, which was returned with requests for changes. The changes were made and resubmitted to the OHA. The OHA then approved it and issued an approval letter.

"The BOC did not then readopt it, but it is not legally required that they do that," said Roberts. "The OHA themselves said it is unusual for a county to go back and readopt it after those changes from the Oregon Health Authority because the Oregon Health Authority mandates that you make those changes."

"How I would view it is, the county submitted a draft to OHA. OHA redlined it, it came back, and then the board never had a chance to review it and formally adopt it," said Wenholz. "Granted, I understand what you're saying, but the board never got to review and give their blessing to what the OHA had given."

"Because Oregon Health Authority has adopted your plan," Roberts replied, "they legally consider that to be your plan, so you would actually need to go back to them and reopen

it if you chose to."

She added that in the absence of that plan being effective, the law states that it refers to the previous plan. "Which is largely the same, except that it doesn't have the definitions updated as the OHA wanted to see," she said.

Sykes asked Morrow County Counsel Justin Nelson for his input. Nelson said he did not feel prepared to give one as he was not as well versed in the ordinance. The issue of repealing the ordinance was new to the ambulance debate, which had previously centered around dispatch services, letters of support and licensing.

"The review of the ordinance and the effects of it being repealed have not been determined, so that's why I say I don't have a position here," said Nelson. "The question has come up saying, 'Whats going to happen if its repealed?' It's all going to stay the same? I can't guarantee that."

"I would be asking for time to look that over," he added. "To come back with that analysis."

Hughes again addressed the board, saying Boardman Fire in 2021 had requested in writing to be part of the process in the writing of the 2022 ASA.

"We were then supposed to be given a part in the writing of that ASA. We were not," said Hughes.

He said Boardman Fire requested participation in another additional writing as well.

"That is my conflict that, again, process was not followed and, therefore, we were not allowed to participate in that process," Hughes said.

Roberts responded that Boardman Fire had requested to be part of the process but that work groups had been held to try to make them part of the process, and it was her understanding that they did not then have a viable financial plan or a way that they could take over the ASA.

"They had essentially copied our plan," said Roberts. "Our plan doesn't apply to anybody else, because we get cost-based reimbursement from the federal government. We are the only entity in the entire region that can get that type of reimbursement."

Nelson said it would take several weeks to review the ordinance and the ramifications of repealing it.

"It's just more of an involved conversation," he said.

The board of commissioners voted to allow Nelson time to research the possible effects of repealing the ordinance and revisit the issue on March 15.

Winter market hosted at Blown Away Ranch

Blown Away Ranch will be hosting its first-ever indoor winter market on Sunday, March 12, from 1-3 p.m. There will be a number of vendors with products ranging from candles, glassware and wood signs to Tastefully Simple, Arbonne, feed bag totes, farm-fresh produce, Park Lane Jewelry and more.

The event includes free beverages and pastries for shoppers. The public is invited to come and support local vendors and artisans.

Directions and more information can be found at www.blownawayranch.com, or by emailing blownawayranch@gmail.com or following the farm on Facebook.