

Town and Country celebrates locals

-Continued from PAGE ONE

of supplies, helped with endoscopy and colonoscopy procedures and was a dedicated EMT, among other jobs.

"This woman takes care of everything and everyone," wrote Stephanie Rill. "She does it out of the goodness of her heart, that's just who she is."

"I have seen her respond to emergencies calmly, confidently and with so much compassion," wrote Lori Seitz. "She has always been a leader in our group, without being elected for this but by her knowledge and natural guidance."

Man of the Year for 2023 Jeff Bailey is visible in the community in his role as CEO of the Bank of Eastern Oregon. Less visible is his role as a highly-regarded leader throughout the Oregon, and even national, banking community.

"He lends an authentic, real-world voice to banking issues being debated by Congress and regulators," wrote Oregon Bankers Association President Linda Navarro. "When Jeff talks, people listen."

Becky Kindle spoke to Bailey's involvement in community organizations such as Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group and on the board

of Willow Creek Terrace assisted living. "Jeff's involvement in our community is vast and his willingness and commitment to some of these groups is commendable," she said.

"He is as close to a superhero as I will see in my lifetime," said his daughter, Caitlynn, when presenting the award. "I can't thank him enough for the example he sets and the way he lives his life."

Brook Baker, the 2023 Citizen-Educator of the Year, joined Heppner schools last year after teaching in Ione for several years. Heppner Elementary Principal Dieter Waite shares that she has revamped the Heppner music programs at both the elementary and high school level, creating a sense of pride and passion for music and musical performances."

Sue Gibbs said she has worked in Morrow County schools for 25 years and rarely has children tell her music is their favorite subject. "However, this year I would say half of my class has replied they love music," she said. "Something that Brook does has shifted how kids look at music."

"She brings a passion and excitement level to her music program that is infectious," wrote Heppner



Attendees at the 2023 Town and Country Awards share a moment of laughter during the event last Thursday in Heppner. -Photos by Danial and Debbie Ficek, D2 Photography

High School Principal Ryan Gerry.

Student of the Year recipient for 2023 Madison Palmer is a senior at Heppner High School. She has been in HHS drama for six years, is in the school pep band and choir, and has played the piano since she was five. She works at Murray's Drug, is Technology Student Association State President, and still manages to maintain a 4.0 GPA.

After graduating, she plans to attend Eastern Oregon University, majoring in mathematics. Madison



plans to pursue a master's degree and be a math teacher in rural Eastern Oregon. "This girl is 'one of a kind,'" wrote Anny Murray in her nomination letter. "I don't think I have ever seen anyone so gifted with both technical and artistic capabilities."

Ione schools adopt new math curriculum

-Continued from PAGE SEVEN

applied for a recruitment and retention grant last year, and the \$30,000-plus grant enabled the district to give the bonus. Dining said it was an effort to move "from an evaluation process to a growth model of, essentially, professional growth."

He also said that scholarships will be presented the night before graduation on awards night. Dining said the school wants to transition away from presenting scholarships during graduation.

"Maybe allow people to take a little more time if they want to speak more toward what that award is for," he said. "And we want to be a little more efficient during our actual graduation ceremony."

Dining reported that there was no real budget update from the state, and it still looked like education was going to come in around \$10 billion.

"I feel like we're still in a pretty good position financially, as much as we've

been through the past few years," he said.

Johnson reported that instructional aide Ann Clabaugh and special education teacher Suzie Skirvin will both be receiving Crystal Apple Awards at the upcoming banquet in Pendleton.

"It's a well-deserved honor for Ann. She does a lot for our school," said Johnson.

She also said kindergarten graduation and elementary school end-of-year awards will be June 5.

In other business, the board learned that Baccalaureate is scheduled for Wednesday, May 31, at 6 p.m. at the Ione Community Church. June 1 will be the high school awards ceremony, also at 6 p.m. Graduation is June 2 at 7 p.m.

The next board meeting will be May 23. A work session will begin at 4 p.m. with the regular board meeting at 4:30. A budget committee meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. that evening.

HHS drama gets 'Enchanted'



The Heppner High School Drama Club will present "Enchanted" next week. The laugh-out-loud comedy is a tale of a fairy-tale princess who gets trapped in the modern world, only to find true love with a jaded Manhattan lawyer. Performances are Tuesday and Wednesday, May 16 and 17, at 7 p.m. Cost for admission is \$5. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

Governor visits Boardman on One Oregon tour

-Continued from PAGE TWO

Rural Action led a tour of the area, including a recent leak at the Port of Morrow and a visit to the home of a family with a well with documented high nitrate levels. Following the tour, there was a listening session with impacted residents at the Boardman Senior Center.

Community members described the daily frustration and long-term health impacts of the nitrate groundwater contamination. They shared concerns over public awareness, the scope of well-testing, and access to filters and adequate amounts of drinking water. They underscored the urgency of the situation and also expressed a willingness to partner with the state to resolve the issue. Since January, the governor's office has been meeting with relevant federal and state agencies as well as engaging community leaders to build a plan and team that will accelerate the state's response.

Residents of the affected region can access testing by visiting the OHA Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area Test-

ing and Treatment webpage or contacting their county public health department.

On Thursday, the governor started her day with breakfast at the Wildhorse Resort & Casino with leaders of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. They then traveled into Pendleton for a housing roundtable at the Wildflower Apartments, a new 80-unit complex of affordable units built in response to the devastating 2020 flood that displaced many local residents. In addition to talking about the need for more housing at all levels of affordability and developing the workforce to build that housing, the group discussed the need to build out homelessness services in rural communities, specifically wrap-around and behavioral health services.

"I am committed to being a partner to strengthen services, build collaboration and work to ensure that the people of Morrow and Umatilla counties have the resources they need to thrive, including access to affordable housing, quality childcare and clean drinking water," said Kotek.

Over the Tee Cup

It was cool and rainy on Tuesday, May 9, but that didn't stop five hardy women from showing up on the green at Willow Creek Country Club.

Low gross of the field went to Virginia Grant. Tiffany Clement had low net, and Sharon Harrison had least putts of the field.

Low gross for Flight B went to Pat Edmondson,

while Kris Lindner had low gross for Flight C.

Pat Edmondson had a chip-in on hole #9.

In other events for the day, the longest drive on hole #1 went to Virginia Grant, Flight A; Sharon Harrison, Flight B; and Kris Lindner, Flight C.

Tee time for ladies' golf is 9 a.m. on Tuesdays.

Free spray days next week



Morrow SWCD will offer free spray days throughout the county next week.

The Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District will host free spray days in Morrow County next week.

They are planning stops at the NAPA parking lot in Boardman on Monday, May 15, Irrigon City Park on Wednesday, May 17, and Heppner City Park on Friday May 19.

Each event runs from 9 a.m. to noon.

The herbicide is mixed by a licensed chemical applicator and comes in a labeled one-gallon container ready for use. A Safety Data Sheet is included. Participants must fill out a cooperative agreement.

The chemical was donated by Morrow County Grain Growers.

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