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of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES
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Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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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.
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Obituaries

Judith M. Durkee-Norris

Judith M Durkee-Norris, 79, of Heppner passed away on May 16, 2023, in Northport, ME. A Celebration of Life will be held at Islesboro, ME on May 25 at 2 p.m. with Reverend Patricia Goodspeed of Second Baptist Church officiating. Private Burial will be at Greenwood Cemetery.

Judy was born in Jacksonville, FL to Robert and Thelma (Emery) Hammond on Sept. 27, 1943. Judy lived in several places as a child, primarily Ohio and Islesboro.

She worked as a house cleaner in her early years, which developed into a love for flower arranging, and went on to attend floral design school. She became a CNA, enjoying her work in the nursing home in Heppner.

She became an EMT for a brief time and finally realized her calling as a licensed massage therapist. She enjoyed gardening, nature, music and dancing. She loved meeting with old and new friends and often said, "A stranger is but a friend I haven't met yet!" Judy was involved in hospice as a volunteer, using her gift of massage.

She is preceded in death by her parents and her grandson, Casey Durkee.

Judy is survived by her husband, George Norris of Heppner; sister, Donna Miller of Liberty; children, Kenneth of Islesboro, and Therese and Michael of Northport; seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Arrangements are under the care of Riposta Funeral Home. Memories and condolences may be shared with the family at www.ripostafh.com.

Death Notice

Larry Sperlich—Larry Sperlich, 74, previously of Heppner, passed away May 16, 2023, in Pasco,

WA. A graveside service at the Heppner Cemetery will be held in at a later date.

BMCC to offer free fiber optic fusion splicing certificate course

Blue Mountain Community College will host a free fiber optic fusion splicing certificate course in collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Sumitomo Electric Lightwave. The two-day course will take place June 21-22 at the BMCC Hermiston Center.

The AWS fiber optic fusion splicing certificate course is a two-day training on fiber optic installation and repair. The course is intended for anyone who wants to enter the fiber optic industry and learn fusion splicing skills.

Fiber optic cables are the backbone of the modern world, carrying internet, TV and telephone data. They are made up of tiny glass tubes, which makes repairing and testing them specialized work. These skills are increasingly needed to build out the world's data and communication networks like 5G, as well as data centers. Given this need, and as part of Amazon's commitment to train

29 million people for free on cloud computing and technical skills by 2025, AWS has teamed up with Sumitomo Electric Lightwave to host free fusion splicing certificate courses at colleges across the U.S., including Blue Mountain Community College.

Students accepted into this no-cost program will learn through a combination of lectures and hands-on training and can also take part in a career networking session, allowing participants to meet local employers. Breakfast and lunch will be provided. At the end of day two, there will be a certificate ceremony and employer networking event that will conclude at 6:30 p.m.

Interested participants must register at <https://fiber-aws.pearson.com/fusion-splicing-registration>. For more information, contact Kaley Cope, Director of Marketing and Communications at kcope@bmcc.edu or 541-278-5774.

County officially forms broadband action team

By Andrea Di Salvo

Morrow County took a historic step toward county-wide broadband last week with the creation of the Morrow County Broadband Action Team (Morrow County BAT), a broadband public improvement consortium created through an intergovernmental agreement between Morrow County and the Port of Morrow.

Aaron Moss, who has been leading the project for nearly two years, called the agreement "the culmination of 21 months of work and stakeholder engagement putting together high-level designs for potential broadband grant services."

"This has been a whole-county effort, and I really appreciate all the work everybody has done, and it's been awesome," added Moss.

Moss came to Morrow County in July of 2021. He said he started by having needs conversations with county stakeholders and eventually built those stakeholders into a team.

"And built it into, I think, a force to be reck-



Project leader Aaron Moss

oned with statewide," he said.

The stated purpose of the consortium is to allow the county and Port to pool resources to more effectively and efficiently further broadband projects in Morrow County.

Moss said that what the Morrow County Board of Commissioners was looking at was a 100 percent completed ordinance and 98 percent completed by-laws, and that the bylaws will need to be changed before the consortium's first meeting.

The most notable

change will be to require at least one vote from each founding party to have a measure pass, rather than a simple majority, "to make sure that there's consensus as much as possible on board decisions," added Moss. Founding parties are Morrow County and the Port of Morrow.

The Board of Commissioners adopted an ordinance approving the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) at its May 17 meeting in Irrigon. The ordinance and agreement went into effect immediately.

The board will be made up of two members each from Morrow County and the Port of Morrow, either commissioners or other appointed representatives, as well as two at-large members, one appointed by each of the governing bodies. The at-large members can't be elected officials, officers or employees of either the county or the Port.

The Port of Morrow also approved the ordinance at its last meeting after one reading. Morrow County Counsel Justin Nelson said the county also could have

approved the ordinance in one meeting but chose to extend the process with a first reading on May 3 to allow time for public comment or questions.

Morrow County BAT hopes to have its first board meeting June 15 at 3 p.m.

"As we continue to move forward, the goal of this governmental agreement and this consortium is really to put together options for this new entity to pursue infrastructure funding in whatever model it deems fit, whether that's public-private, whether that's private-led," said Moss. "As we continue to move forward, this is to continue to give our community the best options as this historic moment of broadband funding continues to grow nearer."

"This has been the most remarkable experience of my life," added Moss, who is leaving Morrow County now that the project is completed. "I'm very grateful for everybody and excited to hopefully keep Morrow County positioned to be that leader even when I'm gone."

Boardman man arrested attempting to elude during burglary

A Boardman man is in custody after attempting to elude law enforcement last week. Marco Antonio Garcia, 37, of Boardman is lodged at Umatilla County Jail with bail set at \$185,000.

About 11 p.m. on Sunday, May 14, Morrow County Sheriff's Office Communications Center received a call reporting a pickup truck with a trailer that had pulled up to the Easterday Dairy milking parlor area and parked out of sight.

K-9 Deputy Colleen Neubert arrived on the scene and located a pickup pulling a horse trailer. She identified herself and ordered the driver to stop, but the driver of the truck immediately drove away.

During the driver's 3.5-mile attempt to elude the deputy, a tire came off the

horse trailer and the truck and trailer became stuck in a potato field. The driver then fled on foot. Both the truck and horse trailer were full of items.

K-9 Telly was deployed but was unsuccessful at locating the suspect. Boardman PD also responded to assist and advised that Boardman Fire had a drone that might be available. Boardman PD secured the truck and trailer and the pursuit scene.

The K-9 team headed back to the milking parlor, where they had been advised there might be a second suspect. Deputy Neubert, K-9 Telly and an Oregon State Police (OSP) Trooper cleared the building but did not locate a second suspect.

The K-9 team then returned to the field. The drone was in the air and

located the suspect in the field. He was burrowing in the dirt in an attempt to hide. The K-9 team and OSP trooper were instructed on where to find the suspect. When they arrived at the suspect's location, only his face was showing; the rest was covered with dirt.

He was advised to cooperate and that a K-9 was present. He initially did not cooperate, but then the K-9 stepped forward and began barking. The suspect was then taken into custody without further incident.

The items in the truck and trailer were identified as property of Easterday Dairy. The total value was almost \$63,000. The horse trailer was also confirmed stolen out of Hermiston.

The suspect was identified as Marco Antonio Garcia, 37, of Boardman. He was currently on probation

with Morrow County Parole & Probation. He also had an active Morrow County warrant, and his driver's license was suspended. He was charged with Burglary II, Aggravated Theft I, Felony Elude-Vehicle, Misdemeanor Elude-Foot, Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle, Driving While Suspended-Misdemeanor and a Morrow County Circuit Court warrant for Failure to Appear on Criminal Driving While Suspended.

MCSO appreciates the assistance of Boardman PD, Boardman Fire for use of the drone and operator, and Oregon State Police for their assistance. If anyone has any more information on this case, they are asked to contact Morrow County Sheriff's Office at 541-676-5317.

Ione City Council approves nuisance ordinance

City water testing shows clean bill of health

The Ione City Council is working on cleaning up the community—literally—beginning with a new nuisance ordinance to address multiple issues.

"The ordinance is to address the debris for anticipation of the sewer project, the smell of marijuana growing during the spring, and loud noises, so there was a need to address a variety of issues," Ione City Administrator told the Gazette-Times. "In general, we would like to clean up our town."

The council passed the ordinance at its May 9 meeting. The ordinance addresses offensive odors, noise, uncontrolled weeds and grass, debris and rodent control.

The city will be mailing all residents a copy of the nuisance ordinance, along with copies of the existing dog, chicken and abandoned vehicle ordinances already in place.

The city also released its 2022 annual drinking water report. Water testing for last year showed a

complete absence of most contaminants, while those that were present were well within federal and state requirements for safe drinking water.

Notably, the city water showed no traces of E. coli or other harmful bacteria, and no nitrates. Lead was present at 0.0010 parts per million (ppm)—above the goal of zero, but well below the action level of 15 ppm. Small traces of copper and barium were also detected.

The entire report can be found on the City of Ione's website, <https://cityofione-oregon.gov/>. Anyone with questions about the ordinances or drinking water report can contact city hall at 541-422-7414.

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HUNTER EDUCATION CLASSES OFFERED

Classes start Tuesday, June 13th, & Thursday June 15th, 6-9 pm Field Day the 17th 8am to noon. Classes Tuesday the 20th and 22nd 6-9 pm. at the Lexington Gun Club. To sign up go to myodfw.com **Must sign up on line.** <https://myodfw.com/articles/hunter-education-classes-field-days>.
Contact Instructor, Jim Marquardt at 541 969-4845. if questions.

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