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In Your Community: EMTs are on call to save lives



L-R: Paul Martin, Tina Davidson and Frank Iovino work to insert a breathing tube in a medical dummy during a recent refresher course at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

By Andrea Di Salvo

If emergency dispatchers are the voice of help and safety in an emergency, first responders like EMTs and paramedics might be considered the hands and feet. For most, it's not simply a job—it's a calling and a way of life.

"People who get into this career do so not only because they want to help, but because they want to be the kind of people who can help," says Paul Martin.

Martin, 37, is a paramedic and training officer for Morrow County Health District. He has been with MCHD just over a year but has been in emergency medical services (EMS) for more than two decades. He started at age 16, before the law required emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to be 18.

"I've been doing this my entire adult life," he

says. EMS falls into different categories. The most basic is Emergency Medical Responder (EMR). It doesn't require a college education but is more of a hands-on training to master certain skills.

The next level up is an Emergency Medical Technician, or EMT. In Oregon, all EMT and higher certifications must be completed through a college. An EMT must have two quarters of college, an Advanced EMT must have three, and EMT Intermediate must have four.

A paramedic like Martin is required to have two additional years of college beyond that.

Martin says you don't have to go step-by-step through the levels, but any a person must be an EMT for at least a year before going on to become a paramedic.

"This is a field that very much values experience and exposure, because the real world doesn't always follow textbooks," he explains.

There is also continuing education to remain certified—24 hours every two years for an EMT, 36 hours for advanced and intermediate EMTs and 48 hours every two years for paramedics.

Martin says that level of training is necessary because EMS personnel have to stay proficient in the necessary skills. If an EMT or paramedic has used their skills in the real world, they don't need to test. If they haven't, they have to go through testing and refresher courses to prove themselves before being recertified.

"If you don't use them, you lose them," he says.

Frank Iovino also

works for MCHD. He has been working the front lines of EMS since 1996, often as a fire department-based EMT. He adds that the ability to take control also comes with a need to be able to relax and decompress when not on duty.

"It's a balance," he says. "We work with each other for long hours. Most emergency medical services or fire departments, you spend a third of your life on duty."

That's no exaggeration. In EMS, someone always has to be on duty and ready to answer that call.

Morrow County Health District has more than 60 EMTs and paramedics, more than 20 of those full time, and that doesn't count fire department volunteers.

"A lot of us are trained to assist in any capacity we need to," says Martin, who is a volunteer with the Irrigon Fire Department where he lives.

He adds that, in a rural community like Morrow County, trained EMTs are also the people who are usually found volunteering for the fire department and other emergency response teams.

"They don't always get paid. They're always ready to help."

"It takes a very special kind of person to get out of bed at two in the morning to answer the call for someone you don't know, just because someone needed help," said Martin. "No matter what system you're in, we're all out there to help."

-Continued to PAGE SEVEN

Submit stories, ads for fair insert



The special fair insert to be included in the August 9th issue of the Heppner Gazette-Times is seeking your stories related to 4-H, fair, rodeo, etc. Businesses are also invited to submit their ads for this special publication.

The deadline for articles and ads is Tuesday, August 1 at 5 p.m. Ads may be submitted via email to graphics@rapidsolve.net and stories to editor@rapidsolve.net. For additional information contact the G-T at 541-676-9228.

Boardman to get \$1.5 million for business incubator Council finalizes new city manager appointment

The City of Boardman will be getting \$1.5 billion in federal funding for a new business incubator on Front Street, U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley announced last Friday.

The funding will allow the city to construct a new facility to support new and emerging businesses with the space they need to operate. The incubator building will especially focus on enhancing opportunities for minority business enterprises and low-income populations in Morrow County.

"The City of Boardman and its partners are excited to hear that this bill is mov-

ing forward. This funding will allow us to build our business incubator building, which will provide space for businesses to start up, open and/or relocate to our community. We thank our federal leadership in helping business continue to grow and succeed," said Rick Stokoe, City of Boardman City Manager Pro Tem.

Merkley, as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, helped secure economic development and community safety improvement investments for the state in the fiscal year 2024 Senate

-Continued to PAGE NINE

Ione council discusses safety, traffic concerns

Citizen safety was a chief topic of discussion at the regular meeting of the Ione City Council last week. Among the concerns at the July 11 meeting were a suspicious vehicle, a possible car thief and speeding drivers in residential areas.

Morrow County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Criminal Sgt. Scott Carter opened the meeting by reporting that the sheriff's office spent 39 hours on patrol in Ione and responded to 33 incidents for June. Of those 33, only nine of them area checks. He said that's the opposite of the usual numbers in the normally quiet town.

"Which means we had other stuff going on," he said, adding that there were a few people who had been generating most of the activity. "Some we may not be able to help because it's

just outside of our control." The council also discussed a suspicious maroon van that had been spotted in the area, driving slowly and apparently taking videos. Carter said he had checked on it and been unable to find a local address for the owner but that it had also been spotted in Irrigon.

"I've also had calls because the citizens are saying there's a lot of strangers driving up and down there a lot," added Ione City Administrator Elizabeth Peterson, referring to the area around the Emert Addition. "Some are driving fast, some are driving slow, but they're seeing increased traffic of vehicles they don't recognize."

The council discussed purchasing an additional camera to give more coverage at the Emert Addition. Peterson said she thought

-Continued to PAGE EIGHT

CDA celebrates land transfer with ribbon cutting



Members of the Columbia Development Authority invited community members to attend a ribbon cutting to celebrate the land transfer of the former Army Depot July 12. Pictured in the forefront with the ribbon are CDA Executive Director Greg Smith, Former CDA Board Chairman Bill Tovey (CTUIR), Hermiston Mayor Dave Drotzman, Morrow County Commissioner David Sykes, Port of Morrow Executive Director Lisa Mittelsdorf, Port of Umatilla Executive Director Kim Puzey, Oregon Military Department Deputy Director of Installations Jim Arnold, CTUIR Executive Director Donald Sampson, Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer, Base Realignment and Closure representative Michele Lanigan and CDA Administrative Assistant Debbie Pedro. -Contributed photo

The Columbia Development Authority (CDA) invited community members to a ribbon cutting July 12 to celebrate the transfer of more than 9,000 acres of from the U.S. Army to the CDA. The new industrial site in Umatilla and Morrow counties has been nearly 30 years in the making, with the land transfer finalized on March 3 of this year, with an official signing at the Pentagon March 20.

"The ribbon cutting was a historical day of celebration and a recognition

of community collaboration," said CDA Executive Director Greg Smith. "Now the hard work begins."

The ribbon cutting was held at the Raymond F. Rees Training Center, formerly the Umatilla Army Depot. The CDA is made up of five partners through an intergovernmental agreement, including Morrow County, Umatilla County, the Port of Morrow, Port of Umatilla and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR).

The program began



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