



the HEPPNER
GAZETTE
TIMES

50¢



VOL. 143 NO. 40 8 Pages Wednesday, October 4, 2023 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Friends make trip across the United States in 79’ Datsun



Dave and Pattie Allstott on their wedding day with their new Datsun in 1979 - Photo by Patti Allstott

Heppner friends, Dave Allstott and Gary Watkins, have been on many trips together over the years, but their latest adventure had people talking from Heppner to Arkansas as they drove Allstott’s 1979 Datsun King Cab pickup to deliver it to his son, Aaron, in Hot Springs, AR.

The Datsun had been the first new vehicle Allstott had owned when he was 19. He liked it, but a few years later he traded it in for a full-sized pickup at the Heppner dealership, Ron McDonald Chevrolet. There the Datsun was purchased by local woman Joann Wood, who drove it for years. Mrs. Wood left the Datsun to her daughter, Peggy Lauritsen of Heppner, and after seeing that it hadn’t moved for several years, Allstott approached Lauritsen and told her he was interested in buying it and why. The deal was done and Allstott had his Datsun back.

The pickup hadn’t been driven for several years, but with a turn of the key, the

engine fired. Then the work began. The Datsun went to Les Schwab for new tires and wheels and made many trips to Marty Brannon’s auto repair shop. Allstott had the original seats rebuilt and tinkered on it as time permitted.

Then the pandemic began. As it started ramping up in March of 2020, Allstott’s son Aaron and his wife Sarah moved from Beaverton to Hot Springs after a trip there to visit her family. After learning that Sarah’s father, Tim, collected and restored vintage Chevrolet Luv pickups, Allstott decided he would give the Datsun to Aaron so he and Tim could work on it together. One night when Allstott and his wife, Patti, were at dinner with Watkins and his wife, Barb, Dave told Gary about his plan and said that he and “Pat” were going to drive the Datsun to Arkansas. Patti said, “We’re not driving it to Arkansas.” Gary looked at Barb and explained to her that he would have to go with him, “Because



Gary Watkins standing next to the 1979 Datsun on the trip to Arkansas - Photo by Dave Allstott

Dave’s a carpenter and he’ll need a mechanic.” Patti and Barb said they would fly and meet them there. The plan was set, but the pandemic lingered on and the Datsun needed more repairs. Finally, this last spring, it was deemed to be road-worthy and dates were set for the trip.

Allstott and Watkins set off early on the Saturday of Labor Day weekend. Watkins brought along his big road atlas and bought a highlighter to track the route. The first day of the trip they made it to their target destination, Idaho Falls, with no issues. The next day they traveled through Yellowstone National Park and then to Cody, Wyoming, and stopped at Casper, Wyoming, for the night. During a stop in Guernsey, Wyoming, while fueling up, they met a man who had lived in Hermiston many years ago and they discovered he and Allstott had a mutual friend. The next stop was Hastings, Nebraska. At every stop, the two got a lot of ques-

tions and comments about driving that “all the way from Oregon”, and about the road atlas. The next day they drove through Kansas and stopped for the night in Joplin, Missouri. Since the pickup was running well and they were two days ahead of schedule, they made a short trip to Branson, Missouri, and spent the day. Just out of Branson, a man approached Allstott and asked if he could buy the Datsun. He said he had had one when he was young, and told him, “You just can’t find them anymore.”

A total of 2,500 miles after setting out, the Datsun rolled into Hot Springs on Thursday of that week. Allstott sent a text to Marty Brannon to let him know they had made it to Hot Springs. “Thank God!” Brannon replied. The pickup did need a new starter so one was ordered and the next day they installed it at Aaron’s home, where he had a new tool chest ready. The rest of the trip was

-Continued to PAGE TEN

Health district drops lawsuit against county

Dispute with Boardman Fire continues

By Andrea Di Salvo

In a special meeting Monday in Heppner, the Morrow County Health District Board voted unanimously to drop its lawsuit against Morrow County. The lawsuit had come in the wake of ongoing disputes over ambulance services in Boardman and the county’s decision to reassess its Ambulance Service Area (ASA) Plan.

The health district’s decision came after a 37-minute executive session in which the board was closeted with attorney Troy Bundy to discuss the litigation.

While the health district is no longer pursuing legal claims against the county, the board did vote unanimously to continue with its lawsuit against Boardman Fire Rescue District.

Commissioners vote to support solar, data center plans in Morrow County

By Andrea Di Salvo

The Morrow County Board of Commissioners may have moved the proposed Sunstone Solar Project one step closer to approval when it signed off on a comment letter to the Energy Facility Siting Analyst at its meeting Sept. 20 at the Morrow County OHV Park.

The letter from the county endorsed Sunstone’s plans to build a solar energy project northeast of Bombing Range Road, saying the project will “continue to grow and enhance energy production in Morrow County,” which would “bring value to farming families and jobs in eastern Oregon.”

Morrow County GIS Planning Tech Stephen

Wrecsics told the board that the letter is part of the process for Sunstone’s application for a site certificate. He said the company is in the preliminary application process right now, and this is the first of two opportunities the county would have to comment as an agency during the process as a whole.

The company’s application includes an exception to Statewide Planning Goal 3, which deals with farmland protection. The proposed land includes 10,000 acres currently in dryland wheat production.

Sunstone Solar has proposed to provide mitigation funds and investment to offset the impact on local agriculture. Wrecsics said that,

-Continued to PAGE NINE

Dorothy Green celebrates 100th birthday



Dorothy and her younger brother Jerry pose for a picture at her 100th birthday party at Willow Creek Terrace - Photo by Chris Sykes

By Chris Sykes

Dorothy Green, a former resident of Eight Mile, a town that no longer exists, recently reached a remarkable milestone as she turned 100 years old. Born in 1923, she was the third child of Homer and Pearl Green, who were constantly on the move from farm to farm, renting land from the Federal Land Bank to sustain their farming endeavors.

As she progressed to high school, Dorothy found herself living too far from Lorde Bell Salings to walk. Dorothy rode her horse to

school, even in bad weather. She had a special bond with her horse, as she would simply tell it to go home, and it always obeyed. Dorothy attended a one-room schoolhouse in Eight Mile, which lacked electricity, telephone and modern amenities. The students took turns each morning starting the fire in the winter, raising the flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Dorothy grew up in a large family, with three sisters and four brothers. She fondly recalls the birth of her youngest brother, Jerry, who was 14

years younger than Dorothy, and proudly shared the news with all her friends at school.

After completing high school, she began working for Alena Anderson and found joy in her work as a house cleaner and babysitter, assisting with childcare and household chores. This experience marked the beginning of her career in house cleaning and cooking for older and busy individuals. Over the years, she served numerous long-term employers, including Elaine Anderson, Wilma

Anderson, Elaine George, Sadie Sigsbee, and many others.

In her free time, Dorothy enjoyed piecing together quilt blocks and assisting her mother in quilting. In 1956, she purchased a house in Lexington for \$3,000, where she lived until her recent move to Willow Creek Terrace. Her hobbies include watching movies from the 1940s and 1950s, which her brother Jerry recorded on VCR tapes, as well as solving crossword puzzles.

Apart from her hobbies, Dorothy also participated in county fairs, entering various food items and winning numerous first-place prizes for her crunchy no-bake

-Continued to PAGE TWO

Lexington water rates won’t increase for now Some residents may see changes to their bills in the wake of billing corrections

By Andrea Di Salvo

The Lexington Town Council revisited the idea of increasing its water tier billing at its September meeting but ended up rejecting the idea.

Council members had discussed an increase at the August meeting, but Lexington Town Recorder Veronica Ferguson said that after investigating and correcting the billing system, she didn’t think it should be increased for the time being. Ferguson said she had found some disparities in how water was being billed and had corrected them to match the correct rates.

“Now that I’ve cor-

rected the tier, it is going to change our billing system,” said Ferguson. “It’s end of summer, so it’s not going to be too drastic,” she added.

Ferguson added that the town had lost \$13,000 in income in 2023 from improper billing, \$4,000 of that in the last two months. She also said that UBmax has the capability to try to collect unbilled payments. UBmax is the website the town uses for billing and collecting online water payments.

Ferguson asked for direction from the council but said she didn’t think

-Continued from PAGE NINE

POLARIS
UPGRADE YOUR RIDE

ELEVATE YOUR ADVENTURE

NEW
2023
MODELS

CHECK OUT THE NEW
2023 POLARIS LINEUP.
CONTACT US TO RESERVE
YOUR RIDE TODAY.

Morrow County Grain Growers Inc.

CALL
541-989-8221
ext 204
for more
information

WARNING: Polaris® off-road vehicles can be hazardous to operate and are not intended for on-road use. Driver must be at least 16 years old with a valid driver's license to operate. Passengers, if permitted, must be at least 12 years old. All riders should always wear helmets, eye protection, and protective clothing. Always use seat belts and cab nets or doors (as equipped). Never engage in stunt driving, and avoid excessive speeds and sharp turns. Riding and alcohol/drugs don't mix. All riders should take a safety training course. Call 800-542-0764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2022 Polaris Inc.

POLARIS | OFF ROAD