



the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

50¢



VOL. 143 NO. 47 8 Pages Wednesday, November 22, 2023 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Heppner teen takes on racing world



Hayden getting ready to race down the track in her Jr. Dragster. - Contributed Photo

By Chris Sykes

Meet Hayden Rossi, a 15-year-old racing prodigy from Heppner, Oregon, who has been tearing up the tracks and leaving her competitors in the dust. Fondly known as the “Giant Killer”, because she could beat all the big kids.

Hayden’s passion for racing started at a young age when she saw her cousin compete on the tracks. Fueled by her competitive spirit and a desire to follow in her cousin’s footsteps, she pleaded with her dad, Joseph, to let her race. Initially hesitant, Joseph finally gave in and after one pass he knew that his daughter had what it takes to be a racer, even if she had recently wrecked her bike.

Now, Hayden is in a new car, aptly named “Little Monster”. Her car, a \$25,000, 16-foot, top fuel 2006, half-scale, Jr. Dragster, is equipped with a

powerful 66-horse Briggs and Stratton engine. Her father Joseph closely monitors the car using computers, tracking every bit of data, even the weather conditions. When Hayden is in the cockpit, she relies on her instincts, listening to the sound of the motor, and can quickly diagnose issues, then relay the information to her father so he can make the necessary repairs or tweaks to the car.

Despite her young age, Hayden has already made a name for herself in the racing community. Over the past four years, she has consistently dominated her division, making it to the finals each year. However, there was one year when she selflessly allowed another kid to take her spot, showcasing her admirable sportsmanship. This spirit of camaraderie is what Hayden loves most about racing. One of the things she enjoys about racing



Hayden in her garage posing with her prized car and many trophies she has won. - Photo by Chris Sykes

is the sense of family that comes from gathering at the races and seeing other racing families. “Racing is like one big family, and there’s no drama. If you break your car, everyone helps,” Hayden explained.

The racing season is an intense one for the Stills family. From April until October, they travel to various tracks like Walla Walla, WA, Renegade Raceway in Yakima, Pacific Raceway near Seattle, Bremerton Raceway, and even a once-a-year race in



Hayden posing with her trophy and winnings. - Contributed Photo

Redding California, which qualifies them for the big show in Las Vegas.

In their family, racing is all about fun and sportsmanship. They love supporting everyone on the tracks and understand the importance of good sportsmanship. Joseph emphasizes that racing is about enjoying the experience and having fun because if you do it for the money, you will go broke. While the local races are more relaxed, things change when they reach Las Vegas, where the stakes are higher. They’ve witnessed families arriving in extravagant two-million-dollar trailers, and some kids have their own team of mechanics and multiple cars at their disposal. In Las Vegas, Hayden has competed against around 200 racers and achieved an impressive fourth-place finish. She also won the

-Continued to PAGE SEVEN

Heppner garbage rates to increase slightly in January

By Andrea Di Salvo

Among other city business at its November meeting, the Heppner City Council passed a resolution approving a slight Miller and Son garbage rate increase for 2024.

Miller and Sons owner Ryan Miller asked for the rate increase due to the continuous rise of equipment and fuel costs, including the need to replace a truck wrecked in June and the purchase of new cans to replace broken and worn-out equipment.

The three- to four-percent increase will take effect January 1, 2024. In-town residential cans will increase from \$23 to \$24, rural residential cans will go from \$26 to \$27, and 300-gallon Dumpsters will increase to \$85. A roll-off truck will increase from \$105 to \$110 per hour, the new dump rate will be \$26, and the daily box rent will remain at \$6.

At the beginning of the Nov. 13 meeting, Ian Murray was sworn in as a new Heppner City Councilor. Murray takes the seat vacated by John Doherty, who resigned from the council when he was hired as Heppner City Manager.

The council also discussed the need to seek applicants for another upcoming council vacancy.

Heppner Councilor JoAnna Lamb will be stepping down at the end of the year, citing lack of time to devote to council business.

The council agreed to advertise for applicants and select Lamb’s replacement at the December meeting, with the new councilor to be installed at the January council meeting.

After a lengthy discussion, the council also approved a limited agreement with CenturyLink for a new fiber project within the city. John Doherty told the council that CenturyLink had approached the city in October requesting a permit for a fiber pull up to the Morrow County Sheriff’s Office. The fiber pull is part of a statewide 911 system update by the Oregon Emergency Management Association (OEMA).

“This is something they need. It’s not like it’s a convenience or marketing for CenturyLink,” said Doherty. “It’s the OEMA funding the upgrade of the system at the sheriff’s office.”

“So it’s kind of a timely thing,” he added.

However, Doherty said he had been putting off issuing a permit for nearly a month in order to bring the issue before the council.

The concern is that CenturyLink’s previous

franchise agreement expired in 2016. That document had first been created in 2006. Doherty said he and Heppner City Attorney Bill Kuhn could draft a new franchise agreement but estimated it could take around five months to create a new, updated document.

He said CenturyLink had been making franchise payments regardless, but this project is of particular concern because of the trenching and boring required.

“My only worry is, there’s just no franchise agreement in place,” he said. “If it didn’t involve the trenching, it wouldn’t even have come to this meeting.”

Doherty wanted to know if the council would be willing to save time by having the city issue a permit if CenturyLink agreed to abide by the terms of the original agreement should any issues arise.

Heppner City Councilor Cody High asked why the council couldn’t change the date and other relevant details on the existing agreement and have CenturyLink sign a new franchise agreement.

Doherty said he thought even that would be a longer process than asking the company to simply sign a one-page

The Gazette Times Thanksgiving hours

We will be closed Thursday the 23rd and Friday the 24th, we will resume with the regular hours starting Monday the 27th.

Dougherty wins California 2023 Rookie Ag Pilot of the Year



Coby Dougherty (right) receiving his award for Rookie Ag Pilot of the Year - Photo by Dawna Dougherty

Coby Dougherty, son of Cliff and Dawna Dougherty, has been recognized for his achievements in the agriculture aviation industry. He received the “2023 Rookie Ag Pilot of the Year” award for the State of California, showcasing his exceptional skills in aerial agriculture operations. Coby graduated from BMCC in 2020 with

a degree in Ag Production and obtained his private pilot’s license in 2021. He then attended flight school in South Dakota, earning multiple ratings and endorsements, including commercial, high horsepower, instrument, multi-engine, and tailwheel. Currently, Coby is employed as an ag pilot for Farm Air Flying Service in Sacramento.

Morrow County fair theme contest due Dec. 12th

The Morrow County Fair wants YOU to help choose the perfect theme! Calling all students from grades K-6 and homeschoolers, it’s time to get creative! Come up with a catchy and short phrase that captures the spirit of the fair.

To enter the contest, submit your theme from mid-November to December. You can email it to mcfair@co.morrow.or.us or mail it to Sue Gibbs, Fair Manager, P.O. Box 464, Heppner, OR, 97836. Don’t forget to include the teacher’s name, school, grade, and your fantastic theme! Due on December 12th

The Morrow County Fair Board will be the judges of this exciting contest. The winning class will receive a class set of frisbees for each student - perfect for some fun outdoor play!

But that’s not all! Once the theme is selected, it will be given to the talented 7th-12th graders in January for a drawing contest. The challenge will be to create

a black-and-white drawing (or drawings) that perfectly matches the chosen theme.

On February 14th, the winning drawings will be chosen. The talented artists behind those creations will be rewarded with an art set, allowing them to further explore their artistic abilities.

The theme and the winning drawing(s) will then come together to create a marvelous coloring page (or pages). These coloring sheets will be shared with the public, allowing everyone to join in on the fair excitement.

To make sure your class or homeschool group gets well-deserved recognition, the winning theme and artwork will be featured in an article and advertisement in the newspaper, as well as showcased at the fair itself.

So, students of Morrow County, let your imagination run wild and submit your theme ideas today. Who knows, yours could be the one that sets the stage for a fantastic fair experience!

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 GrowersSM

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 18 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 800-945-0764 for additional information. Check local laws before riding on trails. ©2022 Polaris Inc.

POLARIS | OFF ROAD