



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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## Fairgrounds, mill site both on the table as BOC discusses circuit court sites

**By Andrea Di Salvo**  
After widening the field of possible site for the new Morrow County Circuit Court building, the options appear to have narrowed back down to three, two in the Heppner area and one in Boardman.

The Morrow County Board of Commissioners held a lengthy executive session at its April 17 meeting in Irrigon to discuss several site options for the circuit court building.

The BOC has not released details on all of the sites they were considering but had previously said it was considering four in South Morrow and one in the Boardman area.

Those options appear to have been narrowed back down to three, according to action taken in open session after the executive session.

The board of commissioners directed staff and the design team to develop more precise development costs for the proposed site by the Morrow County Fairgrounds, the Kinzua Mill site and the Boardman site.

No other details were forthcoming at the meeting. **Greater Idaho**

Also on the agenda at the April 17 meeting was a discussion on moving the Oregon/Idaho state borders, commonly known as Greater Idaho.

In November 2022, Morrow County voters passed by a wide margin a measure requiring the board of commissioners to discuss the issue three times per year. This is the first discussion for 2024. The BOC held three such discussions during meetings last year.

Morrow County is one

of 12 that have passed such a measure. Crook County has also picked up the measure and will be voting in May.

Mike McCarter, president of Move Oregon's Border and Citizens for Greater Idaho, was on hand via Zoom to give an update on the movement. He said the goal is to get a discussion going about the issues that are coming down from the Oregon legislature and negatively impacting Eastern Oregon.

McCarter also said the Crook County measure was not a Greater Idaho measure per se.

"The people in Crook County, en masse, went to the county commissioners and asked them to put a question on the ballot whether or not they should be supporting, looking into,

the possibility of Crook County becoming a county of Idaho," said McCarter.

"This is from the people up," he added. "They wanted the opportunity to voice their opinion because of the various issues that seem to be coming legislatively out of Salem session after session."

McCarter said Oregon State government in Salem is focused on issues that address or control problems in Western Oregon, but which often have negative impacts on the eastern part of the state. Examples he mentioned were minimum wage, water rights and the recent move against small farms.

"These issues need to be brought up and discussed," he said. "Whether

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## Inaugural Littlest Cowpoke calf show in Heppner



Participants of the first Littlest Cowpokes show, sponsored by Morrow County Livestock Growers, was held at the Morrow County Fairgrounds on April 6. Pictured L-R are Cora Schoenfelder, Grace Schoenfelder, Makenzi and Karter Evans, Winnie and Quincy Worden, Kendal Cavaletto and Paige Miller. -Photo contributed

Heppner, OR - April 6, 2024 - The Morrow County Livestock Growers (MCLG) recently held its inaugural Littlest Cowpoke Calf Show at Morrow County Fairgrounds in Heppner. This is the start of what is hoped to become a tradition celebrating young talent in the ranching community. This event brought together aspiring young cattlemen and women to showcase their skills and passion

for agriculture. Under the guidance of judge Nick Nelson, along with the diligent organizing efforts of Makenzi Evans and Erin Heideman, the Littlest Cowpoke Calf Show proved to be a resounding success. Participants from various corners of Morrow and Umatilla counties, including Paige Miller, Grace Schoenfelder,

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## BOC certifies new ASA plan, repeals 1998 ordinance

**By Andrea Di Salvo**

The Morrow County Board of Commissioners adopted and certified the county's new ambulance service area (ASA) plan at its last meeting Wednesday, April 17. The board held a public hearing and conducted the second reading of ordinance ORD-2024-3 by title during its regular meeting in Irrigon.

Morrow County Commissioner Jeff Wenholz noted that it had been a long process, and BOC board chair David Sykes agreed.

"I'd like to give a shout-out to our staff for their work on this," said Sykes.

The ORS governing ASA plans states that it had to be adopted as a

non-emergency ordinance, which means it cannot take effect in less than 90 days. That makes the effective date of the new ordinance Tuesday, July 16, 2024.

As part of the process, the BOC's action also repealed the previous 1998 ordinance and ASA.

"The gist of this one is to reaffirm that the county is responsible for determining the ASA advisory committee and is the manager for ambulance service providers," Morrow County Administrator Matthew Jensen said during his update on the plan.

Jensen added that other updates to the plan include updating language to refer to ORS numbers and administrative rules so the

plan doesn't need wording revision as often.

It also updates the makeup of the EMS advisory committee to include representatives from each of the county's five fire districts. Lexington was not originally included, but at the hearing on April 3, the plan was amended to include the Lexington fire department.

The county is still in the process of forming an ad hoc committee to administer the plan. Of nine proposed members, five will be representatives of each of the five towns in the county, one will be an EMS specialist from an adjoining county, and the other three will be Jensen, advising attorney Bob Blackmore and

a member of the county's own legal counsel.

Jensen said they have four of the five names of the city representatives but were waiting for final word on who Irrigon selected. They are also still finalizing the EMS specialist.

In response to a question from Morrow County Health District (MCHD) CFO/COO Nicole Mahoney, Jensen said he had no specific date as yet on when the request for proposals (RFP) for ambulance service would be released. He said he had first wanted to be sure the ordinance passed.

"We didn't want to publish a schedule on that until

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## Heppner TSA attends OTSASL Conference



Front; Elizabeth Finch, Rylee Palmer, Lily Nichols, Izzi Killebrew. Back; Lane Critchlow, Chris Humphreys, Karver Wilkins, Kaden King, Aden Lathrop, Delilah Saucedo, Loren Trujillo, Braden Desclos-Curtis, Brody McDaniel, Mason Seitz, Ashli Paullus and McKenzie Maben. - Photo contributed

The Heppner TSA Chapter attended the Oregon Technology Student Association State Leadership Conference. Students competed in several events and attended leadership workshops. Heppner TSA won First and Third places in VEX Robotics. They earned Third place in Dragster

Design and Technology Problem Solving. State Officers Rylee Palmer, Lily Nichols, Delilah Saucedo and Elizabeth Finch each received an award for the work they have been doing since April of 2023. The state officers will be attending the National TSA Conference in June.

## The Sweeneys celebrate 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the Eclipse in San Antonio, TX.

**By Annalynn Black**

The Mayor of Heppner, Corey Sweeney, and his wife, Brandi Marshall Sweeney, embarked on a remarkable journey to Texas to witness the solar eclipse, marking their 25th anniversary. After two years of planning, the couple finally made their reservation last year. Unfortunately, Brandi could not join the rest of the family during the 2017 eclipse due to work commitments. In a heartfelt promise, Corey assured her that they would make it to the next solar Eclipse in the United States. And so, it was.

Initially considering destinations like Mississippi or other southeastern states, Brandi's dream of experiencing Texas led them to San Antonio. The Sweeneys spent two eventful days in San Antonio and one day in Austin, exploring its rich culture and indulging in its unique offerings. Determined to catch the eclipse in its full glory, they traveled an hour outside of San Antonio to witness the celestial phenomenon.

Although the Sweeneys embarked on their journey alone, they were quick to make acquaintances with



Coery Sweeneys and Brandi Sweeney in Texas for the Eclipse. -Photo by Corey Sweeney

fellow eclipse enthusiasts. Engaging conversations ensued with people from New Zealand, as well as individuals from Oregon, California, and Arizona. The prevailing atmosphere was one of friendliness and curiosity, with everyone eager to embrace the eclipse experience.

With an initial bout of nerves caused by cloud cover, the Sweeneys held their breath in anticipation. But as the eclipse embraced totality, those anxieties melted away, leaving behind a profound sense of awe. When asked about his emotions while witnessing this natural spectacle with his wife, Corey struggled to put it into words. He described it as an exhilarating



The Eclipse from Texas. -Photo by Corey Sweeney

and surreal experience, expressing profound gratitude for the opportunity to witness it once again saying "It was nice to just be able to be there witnessing it again, [we] felt very fortunate."

Although the eclipse did not align precisely with their anniversary date, the Sweeneys seized the occasion to celebrate their enduring love. Exploring the wonders of San Antonio, they ventured along the enchanting River Walk, a recommendation from the locals in Heppner. Visits to historical landmarks such as the Alamo and the stunning Natural Bridge Caverns filled their days with wonder and fascination. They also visited Rita's on the Riverwalk;

a renowned restaurant acclaimed for its margaritas. Already planning ahead, the Sweeneys have set their sights on Iceland or Spain for the next eclipse, slated to occur in 2026. Undeterred by the challenge of embarking on yet another astronomical adventure, Corey and Brandi eagerly await their next opportunity to witness nature's majestic display. For this dynamic couple, the fascination with celestial events goes beyond the ordinary, serving as a testament to their enduring love and shared sense of adventure.

## EOU 2024 Winter Fall term Dean's list

LA GRANDE, Ore. (April 19, 2024) – Eastern Oregon University named 610 students to the dean's list for the 2023 fall term. Qualifying students achieve and maintain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale while completing a minimum of 12 hours of graded coursework for the term.

From Boardman, Dominic Epkey, STM and Health Science, Psychology and Ariel Lissman, Education, Early Childhood Education. From

Heppner Kellen Grant, Business, Agriculture Entrepreneurship and Trevor Nichols, STM and Health Science, Biology. From Irrigon Katelynn Evans, Education, Elementary Education, Victoria Palmquist, Business, Business Administration, and Bethany Stewart, Education, Elementary Education. From Lexington Paul Lindsay, STM and Health Science, General Studies-Exploratory.



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