



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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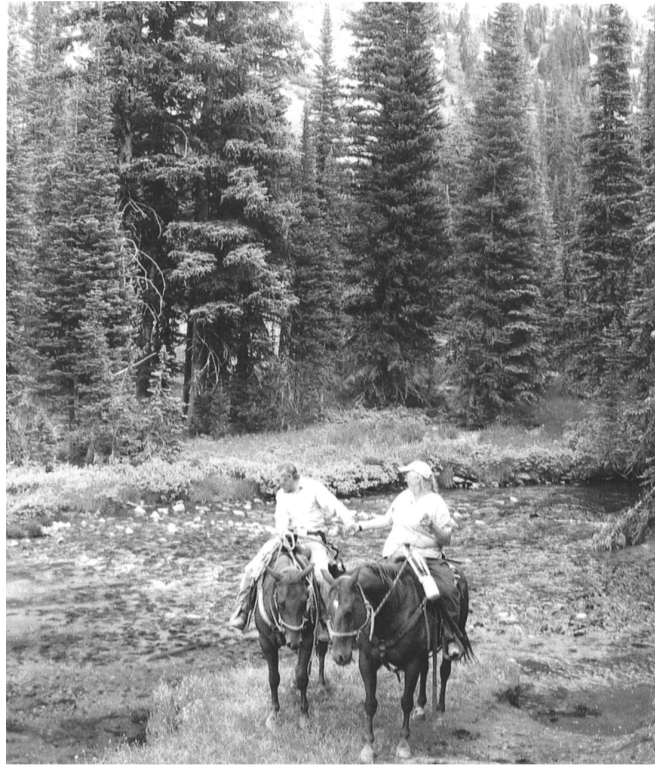


VOL. 144 NO. 17 10 Pages Wednesday, May 1, 2024 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Temples honored as May Day Grand Marshals



Karen and Dick Temple. - Photos from the Temples.



Karen and Dick Temple out for a ride. - Photos from the Temples.

The Temples, Dick, and Karen have been chosen as the Grand Marshalls for the Lexington May Day Celebration. Dick grew up in Wallowa County, while Karen is originally from Union County. They have three children: Brent, who resides in Florida, Laurel, who lives in Canyon City, and Kristal, who used to live in Portland.

Before settling in Lexington, Dick practiced veterinary medicine in various locations, including Wyoming, Idaho, Montana, and two provinces in Canada. In 1986, he established a veterinary practice in Hinton Creek, South Morrow County. Two years later, the Temples decided to move to Lexington and made it their

permanent home. They quickly fell in love with the rural community and their clients in Morrow County. Throughout their 38 years in Morrow County, the Temples have been actively involved in various community activities. They have led 4H horse and dog clubs, participated in the Morrow County Fair and

Rodeo, and even taught Sunday School. Additionally, they have worked with a multi-sponsored AWANA club.

The Temples consider themselves very fortunate to be surrounded by friends in South Morrow County. They deeply value the close-knit community they have found in the area.

## Morrow County to receive fiber optics for internet

By Annalynn Black

The Morrow County Board of Commissioners recently made a significant move to bridge the digital divide in the area. They have passed a motion to apply for the Federal Infrastructure grant fund to bring fiber optics for internet to the county. With the potential of up to \$40 million in funds, this project aims to expand broadband access and connectivity in the region.

If approved, the broadband buildout will primarily focus on four main areas in Morrow County. The first area is from Lexington to Heppner, connecting these two towns. The second area spans from Heppner to Lena, further extending the reach of high-speed internet. The third area, from

NW Ione to the county line, aims to bring connectivity to the residents in that region. Lastly, the project will cover Blake Ranch, ensuring that even the most remote areas of the county are not left behind.

This new initiative acts as a natural extension of the county's ongoing efforts to improve internet accessibility. It specifically targets the areas near Heppner, Lexington, Ione, and surrounding regions, covering nearly 70 miles, and connecting 213 households. The success of this project relies on the collaboration of various organizations, each contributing their unique expertise.

The Morrow County Board (MCB), as the applicant, has pledged a substantial amount of technical assistance funds. Their

contribution of \$186,000 in cash will go towards network design, engineering, bid assistance, surveys, and overall project oversight. MCB will also oversee the development, administration, and regulatory compliance of the project.

Operating the network will be Blue Mountain Networks (BMN), which will provide affordable internet service plans, equipment, and customer support. Their commitment to offering low-cost, high-speed options is commendable. BMN will supply the necessary network equipment, including fiber drops, attachment hardware, and ONTs, to connect customers' premises.

Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative (CBEC) brings essential infrastruc-

ture ownership and a commitment to facilitating access. They will assist in obtaining necessary permits and pole attachments, ensuring the smooth execution of the project. CBEC will also aid MCB and BMN in procuring qualified contractors for network construction and provide access to utility poles and transmission rights-of-way for installation, maintenance, and repairs.

The total cost of this ambitious project amounts to \$3,551,451. If successful, it will be a game-changer for the residents of Morrow County. High-speed fiber-based internet will become a reality for previously unserved households, empowering them with faster and more reliable connectivity.

## The East-West Shrine game appreciation luncheon

By Chris Sykes

The East-West - Shine game appreciation luncheon took place Sunday, April 28th at the Masonic Lodge in Heppner. The highly anticipated Shrine game is scheduled for August 3rd at 7 pm in Baker City, specifically at Bulldog Stadium.

Herman Winter the President of the Tri-County Shrine Club and members Cody High, Merlin Hughes, and Gene Orwick hosted the event. Several members of the Desert Shriners were in attendance, including Kelly Nobles, The Potentate's Representative, who spoke about the history of the Shriners organization. Additionally, Randy Smith, Jim Leitch, Clayton Orr, and Paul Miller from the Desert Shrine Club were also present.

Rodney Thompson from the Pendleton Shrine Club addressed the audi-



(L-R) Herman Winter, Greg Grant, Landon Mitchell, Caden George and Les Payne. - Photo by Chris Sykes

ence and shed light on the remarkable work carried out by the Portland Shrine Hospital. He spoke about how the hospital has provided treatment for children facing various challenges such as amputation, burn injuries, and cleft palates. He also emphasized the hospital's commitment to supporting the families of these children.

One of the highlights of the event was a speech by former Heppner player Stefan Matheny, who had the privilege of participat-

ing in the 50th anniversary game back in 2002. Stefan shared his invaluable experiences and the lessons he learned while visiting the Shrine Hospital in Portland, as well as during the week-long practice leading up to the Shrine game.

Coaches Greg Grant and Les Payne from Heppner, along with Stanfield coach James Stradly, were also in attendance. Coach Grant took the opportunity to express his admiration for the Heppner players he had the pleasure of coach-

ing. He mentioned how their incredible talent and dedication not only made them great players but also helped him become a better coach.

Landon Mitchell was selected to represent Heppner in the Shrine game and Caden George as the alter-

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## Hisler breaks 44 year old Heppner track record



Hallee Hisler

Heppner Jr/Sr High School - Congratulations to Hallee Hisler who recently broke a Heppner High School track record in the 400 at 59.29 seconds at Milton Freewater. Hallee Hisler is a junior at Heppner High and she broke her great aunt Maureen Healy's record of 60.3 seconds from 1979.

## Morrow County candidate forum



(L-R) Judicial Circuit Court candidates; Judge Eva Temple, Joanna Marikos, Attorney Jameson Hayes, Attorney John Ballard, Attorney Jill Weygant, Judge Robert Collins, and Judge Thomas Creasing.



(L-R) Kelly Doherty, Gus Peterson, Roy Drago and Rick Drake. - Photo by Annalynn Black

By Annalynn Black

On Monday night, a calm atmosphere enveloped the Gilliam and Bisbee building as the Morrow County Circuit judges and candidates for the 6th judicial district gathered for a forum. Present at the event were Judge Robert Collins, seeking a second six-year term, Judge Thomas Creasing of the Irrigon Municipal Court vying for position 1, Jill M. Weygant, a private practice attorney from Pendleton running for Position 5, John L. Ballard, a private practice attorney from Hermiston also running for Position 5, Jameson R. Hayes, the deputy district attorney for Umatilla County once again seeking Position 5, Judge Joanna A. Marikos currently holding the 5th position in the 6th judicial district, and Judge Eva J. Temple, occupying position 4 in the district.

The evening commenced with the candidates addressing the primary role and goals of a judge. Unanimously, they agreed that ensuring structure and inclusiveness in the courtroom was crucial, emphasizing the need to clear the backlog of cases and demonstrating dedication to public service. However, Judge Temple offered a surprising perspective, stating, "believe it or not our judges have maintained the time standards that are required by the law and our cases are not actually behind but we have a lot of work to do."

As the discussion pro-

gressed, the candidates were asked about the most pressing issue they intended to address if elected. While most candidates recognized drug addiction and distribution, particularly the perils of fentanyl, as a significant concern, along with mental health issues, Ballard differed from the consensus. He believed that the system needed to become more efficient and stringent, asserting that a strong emphasis on treatment alone was insufficient. Ballard asserted, "The push for treatment is fine but that's not what these gentlemen, and some ladies I guess, that's not what they respect. They know there needs to be boundaries, right now it's pretty loosey goosy. There needs to be a deterrent."

Another topic that united the candidates was the execution of equity and equality in the courtroom. They all agreed that providing assistance, such as interpreters for individuals with disabilities or language barriers, was essential. However, they stressed the importance of maintaining a consistent protocol for all defendants. Creasing elaborated, saying, "Equal application of the law regardless of how let me use the word distasteful a defendant may be."

The candidates were then asked about the delicate balance between being an independent judge and

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