

Hagewoods recognized for July's 'Yard of the Month' in Heppner



Tony and Whitney Hagewoods, the July 'Yard of the Month' winners.
-Photo by Kay Proctor

By Kay Proctor

The home at 135 Rock Street was built in 1974 and Tony and Whitney purchased it in 2015. The yard had good basics, and the couple have worked hard ever since adding and improving upon that. Multiple pine trees have been thinned, but a large maple in the front yard remains providing thick shade. A Littleleaf Linden tree was planted a few years ago as a skinny stick and is now thriving in the backyard. The Hagewoods also planted Aspen trees yet there are still great views to the hills around them.

Basalt rock is close to the surface in the yard and drilling for fiber internet



The Hagewoods yard decorated with an antique items, garden decor, and plants.
-Photo by Kay Proctor

was not possible because of it. Previous owners had landscaped with river rock which Tony has moved so that more lawn could be planted. Digging around their place resulted in finding an old spoon and mason jars, some still with their original contents.

Their deep family roots in the area are reflected with collectibles and rustics from their families' farms and ranches displayed throughout their property. Whitney's artistic eye turns salvaged items into yard art or re-purposed. An old metal gate she rescued from a fence being torn out is now a gate to their fenced-in garden. Tony states that she is the 'brainchild' for projects and ideas and he helps by building to make them happen.

That enclosed garden takes up an entire side yard

and its' raised beds are filled with flowers, herbs, vegetables, and yard art. Arched wire panels with vining vegetables also have a trapeze swing for daughter Piper who is very proud of her pumpkins "growing everywhere." Favorite plants are tomatoes and lettuce for Tony while Whitney's are cucumbers.

The large backyard holds a firepit, play equipment for Piper who is very quick on the slide, and family dogs, Tripp and Jet. Future plans are to install underground sprinklers.

Tony's favorite place in the yard is the shop and his barbecue. Whitney's favorite is the backyard where she can sit to enjoy her morning coffee and then again relax there at the end of the day. Quail and deer are visitors.

Next-door neighbors



-Photos by Kay Proctor

are Whitney's parents, so a gate was installed in the side yard for easier visits. Whitney laughs about trying to keep up with her folks' yard, previous Yard of the Month winners, and mentions that is probably where she got her love of gardening from.

Yard of the Month recognition is presented by the Heppner Volunteers with sponsorship by MCGG Green Feed & Seed, and the City of Heppner. Heppner Volunteers is a combination of the past organizations of Heppner Garden Club and the Blue Mountain Master Gardeners. Yard of the Month has been awarded since May 1998 to 120 different homes in Heppner.

Pioneer Memorial Hospital nurses and techs unionize

-Continued from PAGE ONE
ONA on July 12th, 2024.

"Nurses and techs decided to form a union so our voices would be heard," said Kathleen Greenup, RN at Pioneer Memorial Hospital. "It's been difficult to work at the hospital these last few years because of the high turnover of staff and management's unwillingness to make necessary improvements to encourage staff to stay."

Pioneer Memorial Hospital opened in 1950 and serves the small town of Heppner and surrounding areas. As a community access hospital, the public facility is vital to the farming and ranching communities. This is the second group of public employees to organize with ONA in 2024. Nurse practitioners and physician associates from across the OHSU system formed a union in January.

"We try very hard to maintain a high standard to provide the best patient care we can. This is our community, and everyone knows everyone else," said Greenup. "But we need hospital administration to listen to our expertise and experiences. We have many medical professionals who live in the community, but they would rather work in a hospital an hour away where they are respected and have the support of administration."

Morrow County Health District Press Release

On July 12, 2024, the Oregon Employment Relations Board (ERB) certified the Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) as the exclusive representative of the following positions at Pioneer Memorial Hospital:

All registered nurses and technical employees (including Registered Radiology Techs, Radiology Lead Techs, and Medical Laboratory Technologists and excluding Medical Assistants) excluding supervisory, confidential, and "casual" employees.

Pioneer Memorial Hospital looks forward to negotiating a first collective bargaining agreement with the ONA. Morrow County Health District has maintained a positive working relationship with the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME, ALF-CIO) for the past 30 years. AFSCME represents many of the district's administrative, laboratory, emergency and medical services staff. Pioneer Memorial Hospital expects to have a similar positive working relationship with the ONA.

The Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) represents 20,000 nurses and healthcare professionals throughout Oregon.

MC BOC wants to create a clean water consortium

By Andrea Di Salvo

The Morrow County Board of Commissioners voted on Aug. 7 to move forward with forming a clean water consortium between Morrow County and the Port of Morrow.

The POM has yet to make a decision on the proposal.

Morrow County BOC Chair David Sykes brought forward the proposal. He said forming the consortium would create a vehicle for Morrow County to move forward with multiple future water infrastructure projects currently being identified by engineering firm GSI Water Solutions.

The issue of clean water was brought to the forefront by high water nitrate levels in the north end of the county, specifically in the West Glen area.

"West Glen's the first one, because that seems to be consensus with everybody," Sykes said. "It needs it."

However, Sykes said he wants to focus on West Glen and beyond.

"As we discuss a possible water infrastructure project at West Glen, our thinking and planning should include where our future efforts are headed," Sykes wrote in his proposal. "To have success in building future infrastructure for clean water we need a sustainable, long-term structured process to complete not just West Glen, but also the next project, and then the next, until all our citizens have been provided access to clean water."

He said the consortium would develop and carry out methods and plans to finance and construct water infrastructure projects, as well as handle legal and intergovernmental matters needed to complete the diverse infrastructure projects.

Sykes compared the concept somewhat to the Morrow County Broadband Consortium. He said that group, after two years of planning, had put in for

a grant and had a project ready to go if it comes through.

"I think that's the piece we're missing right now," he said. "We have studies. We have GSI doing a great job out there, but what happens to GSI's work?"

"That hasn't been defined to me in the way it should."

"We're paying GSI to do something, and we don't have an end game for that," agreed Morrow County Commissioner Roy Drago Jr.

Sykes's proposal was focused on the Morrow County portion of the Lower Umatilla Basin Ground Water Management Area (LUBGWMA). Morrow County Administrator Matthew Jensen said the county has "specific resources that are specifically looking at solutions here in Morrow County."

However, Morrow County Commissioner Roy Drago Jr. pointed out that the county has water issues other than nitrates.

"Is this going to be strictly about nitrates or about water?" he asked, saying he merely wanted clarification on the consortium's structure and purpose.

For example, Jensen said he and Drago had recently attended a meeting regarding an aquifer recharge for the Willow Creek Valley.

"They're ready to move forward with that," said Jensen, "So it would be important to discern that document."

Drago said he could see projects like the aquifer recharge happening through a consortium subcommittee.

Sykes said he didn't object to reaching outside the Morrow County LUBGWMA, but he wanted to make sure the group didn't lose focus.

"Sometimes people lose focus when it comes time to actually do the project," Sykes said.

He said he would like to see an Intergovernmental

Agreement (IGA) written for the consortium so the group focused on construction, or "pipes in the ground."

Sykes said an engineering firm such as GSI Water Solutions had a scope of work that would bring on many individual projects because there are different solutions around the county.

"Over here, dig a well," he said. "Over here, public water systems."

"Morrow County can take care of its problems," said Sykes. "Give us the money, and we'll take care of it."

As for finances, Sykes said he didn't think it should be Morrow County's total pull, with all of the money coming from Morrow County's capital improvement funds.

"I think there's enough interest out there at the state and local level that it should be taken care of," he said.

Once the projects have a price estimate and general engineering outline, Sykes said, then it would be time to go after grants.

"When this group gets it, it's going to be a GSI-vetted, laid out, estimated project," he said.

"We want to put a lot of smart people in Morrow County on this," he said. "It puts a structure in place, gives us some direction."

Sykes said he wants to partner with the Port of Morrow for its vast experience with infrastructure projects and grant writing. Morrow County would also

bring grant writing experience to the table, as well as administration and finance experience.

"We're contributing what we do best," he said. "And the Port will be there contributing what they do best."

"Port of Morrow has umpteen years' infrastructure experience," he added.

Sykes also said he wants to keep the consortium slim so it can operate quickly. He said his vision would be an elected official and staff member from both Morrow County and the Port of Morrow, for a total of four members.

Jensen said that, in initial discussions, the Port had mentioned having representatives from Boardman and Heppner, as well.

The next step in forming the consortium will be for Sykes and Jensen to meet with the Port of Morrow at the Port's Aug. 14 meeting.

"If they don't approve on the fourteenth, then end of story," said Sykes.

If the Port is on board, Sykes, Jensen and Morrow County Counsel Gregory Goebel will work on an IGA for presentation at the BOC meeting Aug. 21 or Sept. 4.

Jensen said that he appreciated the board's willingness "explore a vehicle for action."

"The county is the key principal to enact change," said Jensen. "So far we haven't seen the state or the federal or any other entity step up."

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