

Heppner Town & Country awards banquet

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(Top) A packed house waits for the presentations. (L) KC Anderson, 2025 Morrow County Fair and Rodeo Queen. (R) Joe Lindsay entertains the crowd. -Photo by Brooke Christy Photography

row County Health District, was honored for his work with South Morrow County Seniors Matter and the monthly veteran's lunches. "Jerry has a love for helping others, as a hospice chaplain and an advocate for seniors," Rhonda Winters wrote in her nomination letter.

Dennis Wisner wrote in his nomination, "Jerry has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, unwavering commitment to Heppner and Morrow County, and a profound positive impact on the lives of those around him."

Kay Rene Qualls, Chairman of the Board for Heppner Housing Authority, listed accomplishments that included programs for education about dementia, grief classes, beginner computer classes and exercise classes, among many others.

"Jerry is very kind and is putting humanity ahead of his own needs," wrote Qualls.

"Jerry is a true rural community builder," wrote K'Lynn Lane of the Ford Family Foundation, "someone who has dedicated his life to the betterment of others."

Gar Aviation received the Business of the Year award from Rich Harper. Gar Aviation owners John and Kelly Boyer were chosen for the honor because of the company's 40-plus years of agriculture flying and dedication to the community.

Kay Proctor wrote that the Boyers have been financial supporters of local sports, 4-H and other causes and fundraisers. They have also been involved in 4-H and booster club (Kelly) and as a basketball coach (John).

"In the past when there was a fire in fields or our local countryside, John would fill up his plane and drop water to help put it out," wrote Proctor. "Flying a crop-dusting plane is not for the faint-hearted, and to do so as long as John has is exceptional."

Corey Sweeney also pointed to John Boyer's help during fires, as well as his willingness to use his plane to search for lost cattle.

"Gar Aviation is more than just a business; it is a lifeline for our community," wrote Sweeney.

"They exude what it means to be members of a community," Rick and Shelli Britt wrote.

Heppner Jr/Sr High School Principal Ryan

by Ryan Gerry.

"Katie is a competitor in every sense of the word. Whether it is on the court, on the field, or in the classroom, Katie is working hard and putting her best foot forward," said Gerry. "If you looked up intensity in the dictionary, Katie Spivey's photo would be there. Though she has a strong competitive spirit, she is also kind, considerate, and compassionate."

The crowning moment of the night came when long-time Heppner healthcare provider Sheridan Tarnasky received the Lifetime Achievement for her service as a nurse and physician's assistant, as well as an active church volunteer in the Heppner community. Dr. Russ Nichols and Dr. Emily Jack presented Tarnasky with her award.

Janet Greenup summed up Tarnasky's qualifications for the award in three words: "Faith, family and community are most important to Sheridan Wyman Tarnasky," she wrote.

"She has shared her talents and passion with an immeasurable number of people in different capacities," wrote nurse Susie Thompson.

Born Sheridan Wyman, Tarnasky was born and raised in Heppner, graduating from Heppner High School in 1966. She attended nursing school in Portland, where she met husband Ed Tarnasky. The couple moved to Heppner in 1972, where Tarnasky worked tirelessly in local healthcare until her retirement in 2016.

In 1977, she was hired by the Tri-County Health Initiative to establish the first-ever home health agency in Morrow, Gilliam and Wheeler counties.

She worked at Pioneer Memorial Hospital as a nurse, and then PMH Director of Nurses from 1990 until 1996. In 1996, she entered the Oregon State University Hospital Physician Assistant program. After two years of hard work, she returned to serve

Heppner as a physician's assistant.

She also found time to serve on the advisory boards for Morrow County Behavioral Health and Morrow County School District.

She is also a dedicated member of St. Patrick's Catholic Parish, where she has taught confirmation classes, served on the church council and spent nearly 25 years as the wedding coordinator.

"I believe it would be very hard to find someone in the community who hasn't been touched by Sheridan's knowledgeable, generous, kind and caring personality," wrote nurse Shelly Rietmann. "I would be hard-pressed to come up with someone I admire more."

Library district shares dreams

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told the library district that revision or expansion of the existing Heppner building would be problematic for many reasons, but primarily for safety reasons.

"It was a safety concern, in their opinion," said Street.

Most people already know that building sites in Heppner are difficult to come by. The best option for OTLD appears to be building a new facility next to the existing one.

"The one place that it made the most sense to do it is putting the building right next to the building that's already there," Kuhn said.

Since that space is currently Heppner City Park, Kuhn and Street said they wanted to approach the council to see if it would even be an option or if they need to look elsewhere.

Since it would take away part of the city park, they also said their project could include new features for the park, such as a stage with built-in wiring or a covered pavilion with fa-

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cilities in it.

"Again, conceptual ideas, but you can work together with the city to improve both the park and put in a new library facility," said Kuhn.

It would also free up space in the existing building for the museum to expand. The museum might even be willing to relocate the old school building, Kuhn said.

"It would be a place Heppner could be proud of and that would be used, a lot," Street said.

All that hinged, though, on getting the city's nod to proceed.

"Our purpose in coming to the meeting tonight is to see if this is even an idea that could float a little," said Street. "Or if we need to not think about it at all and look at other spots."

While city council members were enthusiastic in support of the library dis-

trict's dreams of expansion, they were more hesitant about giving any kind of formal approval without more details.

Heppner Mayor Corey Sweeney said the city could work with OTLD on whether the site was even viable for building, but the idea raised questions about preserving open space in Heppner, loss of old trees and how the building would fit into the city's comprehensive plan.

"As long as it's conceptual, we have a lot to figure out," said Sweeney.

With a full agenda at the Feb. 10 meeting, the council decided not to discuss it in depth, but rather to ask for a conceptual design and possible footprint. Sweeney said the city would pursue "continued dialogue" with the library district and see where it went from there.

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