

CEO resigns from health district

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modifications. They also appointed Kilkenny and Ezell to lead the search for a replacement with Board member Donna Rietmann of Ione as an alternate.

The board intends to hire an interim CEO to serve until they find a permanent replacement for Roberts.

Also at the meeting, the board approved a physician employment agreement with Christine Seals, MD as MCHD Chief Medical Officer. The contract is for half time. Seals will be on-site a full week of every month and available for telemedicine at other times.

Seals has been working for the health district since 2021 under various agreements, including clinic medical director and hospice director, and Roberts said this contract will roll all of those into one.

"We're lucky to have her," said Roberts. "I was really excited that she was able to make the commitment of a full half time with us."

Seals also brings experience in quality im-

provement and value based purchasing.

"Ultimately what that means is better outcomes for our patients, and our payers will pay us more because we're achieving the outcomes that we want to be achieving in our clinics," said Roberts.

Specifically, payers like Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) and Moda reimburse at higher rates for better quality measures. Roberts said 20 percent of Morrow County residents use EOCCO.

In other business at the March 31 meeting, the board:

-Approved a community benefit request for an AED (automated external defibrillator) unit for Murray's Drug in Heppner. Roberts suggested including an AED for the Condon store, which the board also approved.

-Approved a community benefit request for the health district to act as fiscal agent for the Morrow Discovery Center until the fledgling organization receives its nonprofit status.

-Approved medical staff privileges for registered dietician Christine Guenther and for a roster of Oregon Health and Science University staff for TeleStroke services.

-Approved a physician associate employment agreement with Amanda Roy, PA-C. Roy will continue to provide care at the Heppner clinic but will also be working part-time in the Good Shepherd emergency room. Roberts said Roy's intention is to develop emergency skills that she can bring back to benefit Morrow County. "She been totally transparent," said Roberts.

-Discussed CDS grant funds and strategic planning. Roberts told the board that the health district has grant requests in for two items. The highest priority is a new CT machine, while the second is a new six-bed hospice care facility in Boardman. Right now, the nearest hospice care facility is in the Tri-Cities, while the nearest Oregon facility is in Bend.

-Elected Ezell as board vice chair.

CEO Roberts's message to the Morrow County community

Last week, I made the difficult decision to resign from my role as Chief Executive Officer of Morrow County Health District. This decision was not made lightly, but after careful reflection, I've concluded that it is time to prioritize and protect my family.

Unfortunately, recent actions by certain community members and staff have crossed boundaries that challenge both decency and legality. These actions have ultimately led to my decision to step down.

The Board of Directors and I have agreed to a severance agreement, which will be made public once finalized. Both par-

ties are committed to full transparency regarding my departure.

I will remain with the district in the short term to assist the board in selecting an interim CEO and to ensure a smooth transition for the team.

I want to emphasize that my decision is not based on concerns about the district's financial health or future. The district is not failing. In fact, we've made significant strides in improving patient access, outcomes and satisfaction. The data backs this up (healthymc.org). I have seen our staff do incredible things over the past few years and I have full confidence in the board,

the management team and the staff to continue providing exceptional care to our community.

Certain behaviors by a small group of community members have created an environment where some staff feel silenced, belittled and unable to speak openly about their experiences. I strongly encourage our community to stand up against this kind of behavior. The health district needs your support to thrive, and that includes standing behind its board of directors and leadership team.

Be the change you want to see.

Emily Roberts
MCHD CEO

Alyssa's Law passes Oregon House unanimously

Legislation named in honor of Alyssa Alhadeff moves forward to improve emergency response times in Oregon schools

SALEM, OR—Last week, Alyssa's Law (HB 3083), legislation that requires school districts in Oregon to consider installing a panic alarm system in their schools consisting of either a wireless or wearable panic alarm, passed the Oregon House 50-0.

Introduced by Representative Emerson Levy (D-Central Oregon), HB 3083 is named in memory of Alyssa Alhadeff, a 14-year-old student who lost her life during the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in 2017.

"As a mom, I know it's essential that our kids are safe at school," said Levy. "From a student needing an EpiPen, to a natural disaster or man-made emergency, this legislation will give our schools, faculty and students the resources they need to react in the little time they have and save lives. In an emergency, every second counts."

The mobile-based emergency system is not limited to increasing response time in the worst-case scenario. Schools around the country that utilize the system found that 80 percent of alerts have been utilized for students having allergic reactions, seizures and heart issues.

Through these systems, teachers or school staff can immediately connect to Emergency Medical Services and first responders.

Funding for Alyssa's Law is available to school districts through the Oregon Department of Education's School Safety and Emergency Management (SSEM) program. The Wireless Panic Alarm Grant is open to school districts that provide ser-

vices to students during the regular school year.

Applicants may request grant funds for every school building used by students during the school year. School districts will be reimbursed \$2,000 per school in their district.

House Bill 3083 now moves to the Senate for a vote. It is currently in the Senate Committee On Education.

South Morrow scholarships open to Heppner and Ione seniors

Deadline to apply April 29

College or Trade

The South Morrow County Scholarship Board will award scholarships to Heppner High School and Ione Community School Seniors based on academic achievement and school/community/work involvement.

Students must have a 2.5 GPA or higher to apply. Students must be continuing their education at a community college, trade school, or four-year college or university. Funds are to help students pay for tuition, program fees, books, supplies, rent and other expenses.

To apply, please complete the form and attach a high school transcript and resume of school and community activities and work experience.

Multiple scholarships will be awarded. If selected, students will need to submit their current college class schedule or verification of

enrollment to receive the funds.

Applications are due by 4 p.m. on April 29. To receive the application link, contact Brandi Sweeney at brandi.sweeney@morrowdsd.org.

Coach LaRue Scholarship

The Coach Del LaRue Scholarship was developed in memory of Del LaRue, a long-time teacher and coach at Ione High School.

LaRue had a passion for coaching basketball and track and loved seeing students set and achieve their goals. After retiring from teaching, he continued to coach track for 12 additional years. During that time he helped many student athletes achieve their goals and was honored as National Track Coach of the Year.

This fund awards one \$1,000 scholarship to a college-bound Ione High School senior based on

demonstrated academic achievement, community involvement and with preference given to students who have participated in the Ione High School track program.

Students must be continuing their education at a community college, trade school, or four-year college or university. Applicants must have a minimum 3.0 accumulated GPA and show involvement in community/school activities.

Applications will be accepted and awarded by the South Morrow County Scholarship Board of Directors using the Coach LaRue Scholarship Google Form Application. Applications must include a transcript and activities/work experience sheet.

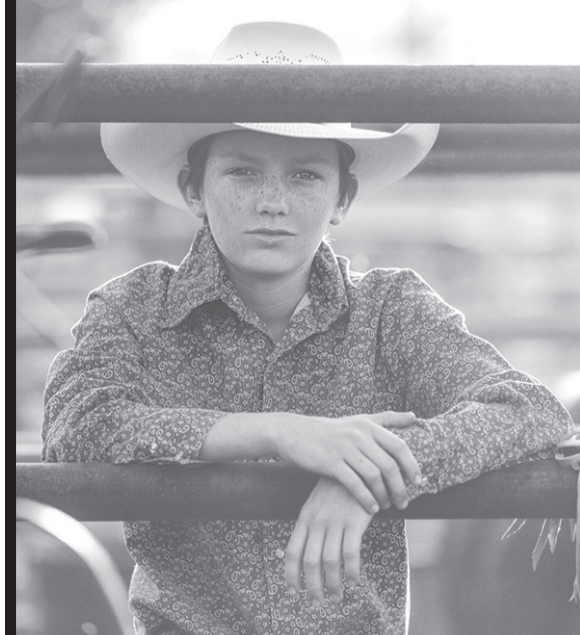
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WWW.HEPPNER.NET

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Ag/Commercial Loan Officer



SHANE LAZINKA
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Ione
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Discover a timeless treasure with this beautifully preserved Craftsman-style home, featuring 1,174 sq ft on the main level and an additional 1,008 sq ft in basement, perfect for storage or extra space to customize. This 2-bedroom, 1-bath gem combines classic charm with modern comforts, including a newer furnace, forced air heat, and a freshly painted exterior. Located in a prime spot near the school and within walking distance to downtown Heppner, this home provides both convenience and a sense of community. Experience small-town living with easy access to downtown. Don't miss the chance to make this spacious, character-filled home your own! 240 N COURT ST Heppner MLS#:24652848