

The East County Journal Circulation Group II

**NEWS DIVISION
316 Headlines**

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Homecoming Week at Morton features games and costumes Page 7



Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday. Be sure to set clocks back one hour.



Mossyrock Volleyball wins second league tournament title Page 12

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Ric Hallock | East County Journal

S'more the merrier

Fiona Latkiewicz, 2, of Mineral, enjoys a freshly made s'more while at the Pleasant Valley Christian Camp Trunk or Treat Halloween display on Front Street in Mineral Sunday. For more Halloween photos from across East Lewis County, see pages 6 and 11 of today's Journal.

Morton Hospital reports COVID cases down from recent surge

BY BUDDY ROSE
East County Journal

Lewis County Hospital District 1 commissioners reviewed the current status of COVID-19 in the area during their regular meeting Wednesday, Oct. 27. The recent surge of the Delta Variant of the virus seems to be lessening considerably from what it was a few weeks ago.

Chief of Nursing Sara Williamson reported the current 7-day average number of confirmed and probable cases in Lewis County is now 32. That compares with an average of 95 cases at the peak of the Delta Variant outbreak experienced in the area in early September, she said. The same plateauing of cases is occurring at the facility, she added. However, she noted, the baseline level is still much higher in the community than it was back in July.

"Vaccination is the theme of what we want to encourage to protect ourselves, our families and our patients," Williamson said.

She announced COVID boosters for Moderna are now available at area clinics for those age 65 and older, or those with underlying conditions or working in at-risk settings or occupations. The clinics will begin a kick-off for community boosters as well as the regular vaccine starting this week, she added, with a

big event at Morton on Nov. 6.

Both Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines and boosters should be available at the event, she said, and added that it is OK to mix and match any COVID booster after receiving any initial COVID vaccine. Williamson also reported a drive-up flu vaccine event a couple of weeks ago was a huge success.

— “ —

Vaccination is the theme of what we want to encourage to protect ourselves, our families and our patients.

— Sara Williamson
chief of nursing

According to the State Department of Health as of Oct. 30, there have been 40,298 people in Lewis County that have received at least one dose of COVID vaccine. That is 50.2 percent of the total county population of 80,250.

In other business at the meeting, Commissioner Wes McMahan reported the recent Arbor Health Foundation auction was a success with gross proceeds of \$22,273 from 82 bidders on 102 auctioned items.

Commissioner Craig Coppock provided a review of the Finance Committee meeting that took place Oct. 20. He said they discussed healthcare claims for district employees, which, through the third quarter of 2021, have exceeded last year's claims by 12 percent. Regarding the

See **Hospital** Page 3

Fall colors are outstanding in region this year

BY BUDDY ROSE
East County Journal

In case one hasn't taken notice, fall colors this year are spectacular in most places in East Lewis County compared to the average year. The hillsides and roadsides are ablaze with intense yellows, oranges and reds. Sunny, fall days and cool, but not freezing, nights

are a major contributor to these vivid fall colors.

Fall colors occur when chlorophyll production within the leaves of plants and trees begins to diminish. Chlorophylls are green and usually overwhelm other colors that may be in leaves during the growing season. They break down during the food manufacturing process, but are

constantly being replaced in leaves. Hence, summertime leaves are mostly green.

As fall approaches and the days get shorter and nights get cooler, chlorophyll production slows down and a layer of cork begins to form at the base of each leaf where it will eventually break off. The amount of green chlorophyll pigment within the leaf

diminishes and other colors that have been there all along begin to dominate.

The most common fall colors are yellows, oranges and browns and all shades in between. They come from substances called carotenoids that are in leaves throughout the growing season. As the

See **Colors** Page 4

Election results out past press deadline

Unofficial election results from the General Election were posted by the County Auditor's office after press time on Tuesday night. The East County Journal will post election results on its Facebook page today and will also run the results in the Nov. 10 edition. Results can also be seen online at elections.lewiscountywa.gov. Certification of the election results will take place 10 a.m., Nov. 23.

Boyer, Roper walk to make Morton a little bit cleaner

BY CATHY KANE
East County Journal

You have to get up pretty early – usually between 4:30 and 5 a.m. – to see Bob Boyer, better known by his nick name, Goat, as he and his trusty canine companion, Roper, begin their daily trek through the streets of Morton, picking up trash and treasures along the way.

Wearing his safety vest and carrying his handy garbage picker, Boyer and Roper begin their weekday loop at Third Avenue and Main, proceeding south to Westlake Avenue.

"Then, I pick whichever street looks like it has the most trash and try to make it look a little better," Boyer said. "I always pick up trash around Gas Plus and a lot of times, I take the little sidewalk that goes by the market. I usually get one bag full of trash – sometimes two. Every day it's that way."

On weekends, Boyer and Roper walk down Westlake to Knittles Way and Jubilee Park before heading home.

"Sometimes I find good stuff, but mostly trash that gets thrown out the car window or people walking who just don't care and just throw things down," he added.

Some of the good stuff has included a neatly folded \$100 bill, two wrenches and a bar stool. Some of the trash these days includes lots of discarded face masks.

Boyer's said his clean-up efforts have not gone entirely unnoticed.

"I get a lot of compliments. People will do the two-horn honk, which at least used to mean thank you," he commented.

Two of the most appreciative local

residents are Bob Mogan and Myrna Norris, who serve as Jubilee Park volunteer caretakers throughout the year. "Bob's a heck of a guy. I just admire the heck out of Bob and Myrna. They are very complimentary."

Boyer also recalled the laudation of Mountain Transit Director Doug Hayden. "He pulled up alongside me one day and said, 'I want to say thank you for what you are doing.' He said he really appreciated it. It's always nice to get a compliment."

"I wish people were brought up like I was when I hunted and fished with my dad. Dad always had a policy that we packed (our garbage) out and if we saw (trash) in the woods, we packed it out, too – an old beer can, pop can or candy wrapper, whatever. And we hiked into some pretty rugged places in those days and still we would find trash," he said, emphasizing the importance of building good habits, including not littering, in children. "Good habits start in childhood."

Other ways Boyer volunteers in the community after his regular job as support vehicle driver for Morton Elementary School includes playing Santa for Lewis County Fire District 4 and the Morton Moose Lodge. He also facilitates Karaoke at the Moose on Friday nights.

Boyer said he has no plans to stop his clean-up efforts any time soon, come rain or shine.

"I like to make things a little better for people. It makes me feel good to do it and it gives Roper a break. It's good for his legs," he said, with a smile.



Ric Hallock | East County Journal

Morton resident Bob "Goat" Boyer walks the streets of Morton, picking up litter, while accompanied by his best friend, Roper, an Australian shepherd-Corgi mix.

SCHOOLS

Myriad of activities keep Mossyrock students busy

Sometimes high school is a piece of cake

Mossyrock High School's family and consumer science class had a blast baking cakes this week. Mrs. Emily Hawkins is the teacher of this home skills class. She displayed a homemade cake that she had baked for the class.

Then, she let everyone pick their own group and each group chose a recipe to follow that helped them step by step to bake a successful cake. The students made the cakes to participate in a baking competition held in class.

Our students were so creative that there was a team that made their frosting out of ice cream. When asked, many of the students had agreed this was their favorite assignment of the year.

-- Nevaeh Murillo

Right: Nayson West uses his icing skills to cover the cake he made for the competition.



Yessica Lopez cuts the top off of her cake while her partner, Ana Munoz, watches.



Mossyrock Junior High School students with their harvest of pumpkins, squash and corn.

Agriculture class sows lessons of growing, giving

A piece of land on school property ended up growing plenty of healthy crops, but who is behind it?

Planted by the Mossyrock Junior High agriculture class, this large garden located near the school barn has produced many crops for the families of the 40 students who have planted it, and those same students have distributed the bounty of the garden throughout the surrounding community as well. A variety of plants have been grown, like corn, watermelon, other melons, squash and mainly pumpkins.

While these crops were all harvested at different times throughout the year, each of them took about five to seven months to grow, they were just planted at separate times. The first to be planted was corn, which was planted in May, and the last planted was pumpkins, that were harvested in October.

These crops were grown over the summer and were watered by an automated watering system, which meant that little work had to be put into the garden, and only a few hours total was spent checking up on the crops by the teacher, Mr. Hankins.

This garden has been a great way to teach students about the growth of crops, and is something that brought many people together, including students, families and members of the community.

-- Sabrina Courtright

Photos by Mossyrock School District

For The East County Journal

Right: Campbell Senter with the shoebox ofrenda she created to honor her grandmother.



Spanish students celebrate Día de los Muertos

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a celebration of life that many people of Hispanic heritage honor annually, from Nov. 1-2. The origin of Day of the Dead dates back to Aztec civilization, when it was believed that the veil between the dead and the living is lifted, and those who have passed can come spend a day with the living.

Mossyrock High School Spanish II students have been assigned the project of making a shoebox ofrenda, where they have to have five objects of importance to remember a loved one that has passed. Ofrendas are used during Día De Los Muertos as an altar to display items for the holiday.

Spanish II student Campbell Senter made her shoebox

ofrenda for her grandmother, Jenelle Dunn, who passed away in 2003. Her grandmother loved her family, especially her grandkids. Campbell used her grandmother's old knickknacks in her ofrenda, such as a boot figurine and cowboy statue. She loved cowboys so much! She collected many things, and loved shopping.

Campbell also added circus peanuts, because "she would always pinch the peanuts in the bag to find the softest ones, because they were her favorite." Finally, Campbell added a picture of her grandmother holding her older brother, Kade. This is a project that Mrs. Voelker, the Spanish teacher, has done in Spanish II for six years, and is an all-time favorite of the students.

-- Autumn Imes



A book character parade included The Witch Who Went for a Walk.



An always popular fictional character among youth is Harry Potter.

Elementary students dress as book characters

On Oct. 29 the Mossyrock elementary hosted a book character parade. This event has become a tradition at school to encourage young students to engage in reading and highlight students' favorite book characters.

Students were able to dress up as their favorite character while carrying the book they chose and march down the long, covered pathway by the playground. Fun music was blared over the loudspeaker as Harry Potter, the Cat in the Hat, and many other interesting characters waved and smiled at one another.

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Mossyrock students keep busy leading in to winter break with gingerbread houses
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Reconciled Christian Fellowship welcomes Pastor Jody and Shannon Caskey
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Morton/White Pass boys basketball takes two of three contests in a week to improve to 8-4
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Raise the butter cups, Packwood crab feed returns

BY CATHY KANE
East County Journal

After the cancellation of last year's event due to COVID-19 restrictions, the sounds of fun and laughter echoed once again through the Packwood Community Hall during Saturday's night Crab Feed benefit, sponsored by the Packwood Improvement Club (PIC).

With 136 tickets sold and generous bidding in the silent, live and dessert auctions, the event was deemed a success by President Ron Blankenship.

"I am tickled to death that so many people came out with all that is going on," Blankenship said, referencing recent adverse winter weather conditions, the off-and-on closing of White Pass and omicron concerns. "We put this all together in just a little over a week."

Besides the good ticket sales, Blankenship said the community volunteers who showed up to help was nothing short of

amazing.

"We had lots of help. We went from four volunteers to nine to 10 people decorating the hall. We ended up with 11 dinner servers," he added, noting all dinners were plated and served in 14 minutes. "It's amazing what can be done when people cooperate and work together."

PIC trustee Sheryl Hall, who invested days of preparing for the event alongside Blankenship, added her own accolades.

"I am so impressed with the Blankenship family and all they do. Also, Deb Townsend from Randle, who stepped in to help. She was amazing – a jewel. Also, the kitchen help, including head cook Jim Rehn, Lee Grose for driving down to pick up fresh crab and Toni Just who gave all she could while suffering from pain," she said, adding all of the volunteers from Packwood and Randle really stepped up to make the event

See **Crab feed** Page 10



County Commissioner and long-time Packwood Improvement Club member Lee Grose presided over the live auction at the club's annual Crab Feed benefit on Saturday night.

Cathy Kane | East County Journal



Chris Johnson | East County Journal

Future hoopster

Kaeston Westover, 3, is hoisted up to the hoop by his dad Nick in hopes of making a basket to win a bottle of soda at halftime of a recent basketball game in Morton.

Morton SD seeks \$24.5M bond from voters Feb. 8

This is part 1 of a three-part series on the 2022 school bond measure to be put before voters on the Feb. 8 special election ballot. Parts 2 and 3 will be in the Jan. 26 and Feb. 2 issues, respectively.

BY CATHY KANE
East County Journal

On Tuesday, Feb. 8, Morton voters will be asked to approve a 30-year bond of \$24.5M for the expansion and renovation of Morton Junior/Senior High School.

"A bond is a school's way of taking out a mortgage," Morton School District (MSD) Superintendent John Hannah said,



referencing the adage – levies are for education and bonds are for building.

"It's either buying a building or paying for a renovation just like you do with your own home. That's why we have anywhere from one to 30-year bonds. You are basically taking out a mortgage as a community to pay off that building," Hannah said.

Before choosing the bond, the district also looked at bringing the current elementary school building up to current code and that expense was estimated at just under \$21M, while the new wing is estimated to

See **Bond** Page 3

Mossyrock City Council sets aside funds for summer fests

BY BUDDY ROSE
East County Journal

Mossyrock city council members passed a resolution during the regular meeting Thursday, Jan. 13, that will make up to \$30,000 in city funds available to the Mossyrock Area Action League (MAAL) to plan and organize two festivals next summer.

The Freedom Festival – hosted last year for the first time and well-attended – will take place over the Fourth of July weekend and a second event will take place during the first weekend in August. The latter was previously called

the Blueberry Festival, but according to Mayor Randall Sasser, MAAL members are planning to change the theme of that event and call it something different.

In other business during the council meeting, Sasser reported the recent heavy rains resulted in the city sewer system struggling to handle all of the extra water. The lift station on Meadow Lane was unable to keep up with the high flows, he said, and they had to hire a pump truck to empty the tank there several times and transport the wastewater to State Street, where it could be discharged into the gravity

system.

Sasser reported that an inspection of the system afterwards discovered several leaking manhole covers that added to the problem, as well as identifying several locations where private roof drains were emptying into the sewer system, which is not allowed.

City Treasurer Angeleetta Hartmann provided a summary of the city's 2021 budget. She reported city revenues were \$1,710,031.19, which was slightly over the projection. Expenditures, however, were only 88

See **Funds** Page 2



East Lewis County saw the end of 2021 come in with a bit of wild weather, with high winds striking the area in October causing power outages all along the Highway 12 communities; an atmospheric river hitting the region with heavy rains in November, seeing the heaviest flooding along the Cowlitz River between Packwood and Randle; and a winter storm that produced a white Christmas bringing more than a foot of snow to the east end of the county.

Part 3 of a three-part series recapping life in East Lewis County in 2021. Parts 1 and 2 appeared in the previous two issues of The East County Journal.

October

- Lewis County firefighters were saluted for their dedication to the community during Fire Prevention week.
- Arbor Health Commissioners approved an operating lease and

- purchase of a portable imaging machine to augment recently added orthopedic surgery and podiatry services at the hospital for Drs. Robert Williams and Garret Paresko.
- Morton School District pre-kindergarten through sixth grade



Chris Johnson | East County Journal file photo

Fall fishing along the Tilton River in Morton proved to be beneficial for anglers ready to limit out.

- students took part in a Jog-a-thon to benefit the Associated Student Body.
- An afterschool program between the county and Cispus Learning Center was approved for Morton and White Pass School districts.

- A weekend storm on Oct. 22 and Oct. 23, featuring 60-mile mph winds and fallen trees and branches, left 4,000 customers in Mossyrock, Morton, Mineral, Salkum, Glenoma and Randle without power, according to PUD operations manager Cory

- Moses.
- Halloween fun was enjoyed with a trunk or treat and bake sale in Mineral; haunted house sponsored by LCFD 4 and trunk or treat at Gust Backstrom Park

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