

THE HEPPNER GAZETTE-TIMES

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER
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Why We're Against Measure 10

One of the most important measures on the ballot at the general election November 6 will be measure 10, which seeks to repeal the school reorganization law of 1957.

If the proposal should receive an affirmative majority, 80 of the 82 existing administrative school districts in the state would be declared unified school districts. The other two, Hood River No. 1 and Morrow County R-1, would be declared county unit systems.

Fifty of the 82 existing administrative school districts that, at the time the State Board of Education approved the reorganization plan, consisted of single unified school districts and would not be materially affected by the legislation, except that they would be designated as unified rather than administrative districts.

Thirty of the districts could be subject to an election on petition of residents to determine whether they remained a unified district or whether the unified district would be dissolved. If they were dissolved, the former local districts that were included within the administrative district at the date it was created would be re-created.

A provision in the repeal measure specifies that such an election could be called when petitions were presented bearing the names of 10% of the legal school voters of the district or 50, whichever is the lesser number.

School reorganization has had as some of its objectives to gain efficiency in education, improve the curriculum, provide better school facilities and to reduce the cost.

Adjustments necessary in reorganization have not come easily. When it upset local districts that had been functioning for years, it caused some bitterness.

Among foremost opponents to reorganization has been Serve Our State, Inc., which has worked zealously towards its repeal. We admire this organization's spunk and feel that the interest it has taken on reorganization has proved a good safeguard but we believe measure 10 would result in near educational catastrophe.

Mary Hintz, legislative chairman for S.O.S., has stated that the main objection to reorganization is the tendency towards state control. However, repeal of the act would not lessen state control. Small local districts are more subject to stringent state scrutiny on standards than are larger districts who are more nearly able to comply with state standards. The state has leverage under the basic school support plan because it supplies a substantial portion of financing.

Although it has been rough going in many districts in Oregon, gains have been made under reorganization, and students today are getting better education, by and large, than they did before the act.

In 1919, Oregon had a total of 2556 school districts, and the little white one-room school with cloakrooms at either side of the entrance was common. With the development of roads, transportation, and communication, trend towards consolidation began.

Times have moved on; great progress has been made in many fields; we enjoy many advantages that we didn't use to have. All this has created more demands on education, and students whose elementary work is taken in the smallest district with the fewest advantages are pitted against those who come from largest schools with many advantages in curriculum and facilities. They are thrown together to compete in institutions of higher learning.

Today there is less than one-fifth the number of districts that there were in 1919. Oregon has 463 districts, of which 139 are unified (including the 82 administrative districts), four county unit systems, 274 elementary school districts (of which 227 are component to union high school districts), 43 union high school districts, and three county high districts.

Since the 1957 reorganization act was instituted, 31 counties have dissolved 327 school districts, and 26 counties have created the 82 administrative districts. Today, 77.6 per cent of all Oregon pupils attending public schools go in districts that provide education in grades 1 through 12. In nine counties, including Morrow, all children in public schools are in districts that provide education in grades 1 through 12.

True, mere bigness alone is not justification for unification, and the editor, who had his early education in a one-room school, is as nostalgic about their passing as anyone. We full well know the feeling that comes with losing a school as a community center.

But progress commands its price. Small school districts are just unable to offer the educational advantages that are essential today. Only by districts pooling their resources—by combining—can they provide for staff, curriculum and facilities that are necessary in this modern world. To offer less than the best available to our students is to handicap them in the keen competition that they face when they enter adulthood.

The reorganization act of 1957 was not all good. It had its shortcomings. One example was the requirement that a local district that had been included in a unified district could only vote its way out, after voting against unification originally, by a second vote with a 60-40 majority. This truly was an undemocratic provision and should not have been included in the first place. The 1961 legislature changed this provision so that now only a simple majority is required.

Around the state we have noted instances where reorganization brings problems that would test a King Solomon. But, although it has not gone smoothly, there has been substantial progress. Hundreds of people interested in education have turned to and have studied and planned to work out feasible systems in their own areas. The result is that students today are enjoying facilities that their parents never had; they use methods and equipment that the little old one-room school could never get; they have teachers that are better trained; and they take courses that are well beyond those that their elders took.

Why vote against measure 10? Because it would be a step backward. It could undo the progress that has been so difficult to achieve in many districts. It could create almost unlimited trouble and confusion in attempting to split districts presently unified. One example of this would be the division of property. How could directors split a newly-built high school among local districts should the residents vote to return to the old districts?

The measure provides that after repeal of reorganization, an election could be called any time within two years by petition of 10% of the residents, or 50, whichever is the lesser number. This small number could force an election in a district of thousands of voters. Then, if a majority of voters in each of a majority of precincts in the district favored the dissolution of the unified district, it would be done.

This provision is more undemocratic than the 60-40 provision that was in the reorganization law.

For instance, consider a mythical unified district that includes seven precincts, of which, say, four had approximately 50 registered voters each, and three had 500 registered voters each. Fifty voters in any portion of the unified district could call the election by petition. Then, if the majority of voters in the four small precincts favored the dissolution, it would be effected, no matter how strongly the three larger precincts voted to retain it. In this hypothetical instance, the precincts with 200 voters would override the wishes of the majority in

the precincts that had 1500 voters. A minority could truly destroy a unified district.

Henry Hartley, superintendent of schools at North Bend, brings out another pertinent point in regard to this election procedure in measure 10. If it is passed in the general election, unified districts all over the state will not be able to make a major step forward, no matter how badly it is needed, for two years, because they would never know when an election would be called to dissolve the district.

Systems bulging at the seams and in dire need of new buildings could not call for bond elections because of this uncertainty. If they disregarded the implications and went ahead anyway, it is almost a certainty that they could not sell the bonds because of the cloud thrown on them by this election provision.

Ballot measure 10 could also lead to overlapping property tax districts with additional financial burden on the taxpayer. But the greatest reason it should be defeated is that it would nullify all the good work that has been done, create confusion and doubt. This is not a time for that; this is a time to move forward.

Let's take a look on the local level. Morrow county and Hood River county, under terms of the bill, would revert to county unit systems from their present administrative systems. This would mean little change in organization, and they would not be subject to the vote, as dealt with above, during the 2-year period.

They would remain essentially as they are, and there could be no return to the previous local districts for at least six years because of a provision in the county unit law that stipulates this. Thus, if measure 10 passes, Morrow county would be in an abyss of uncertainty for six years. It could not undertake any major construction or other major improvements.

Incidentally, measure 10 undemocratically gives the state-at-large the opportunity of voting on the future of the educational systems in Morrow and Hood River counties, and this is undemocratic in itself. If the majority of the state should vote for repeal, even if Morrow voted against it, we would be changed to a county unit system.

We realize that the school situation in Morrow county has had troublesome times and is still faced with big problems—one of the most notable at present being the Riverside High school site selection. There has been bitterness, and vestiges of it remain.

Looking at it from the standpoint of a newcomer, we might conjecture that reorganization may have come too quickly here, without enough study, and perhaps more was expected of it than could readily be achieved. Certainly, some mistakes have been made and perhaps some decisions have proved unwise.

During the year and four months we have been here, we have studied the matter as best we could. We have attended every regular school board meeting, and we have heard pros and cons on many problems. It is our feeling that the district is moving forward and is making progress beneficial to its student population.

We believe that there is more interest shown from the public on school matters than in any other area in which we have lived, and we have never seen an individual refused a hearing.

This is a time when bitterness, however justified they may be, should be laid aside. It isn't feasible to turn back. To let rancor influence the vote of a thinking person on this matter would be a mistake that would be regretted later.

A strong negative vote on measure 10, although not expected here, would be one of the greatest things that could happen for the county's morale. It would mean that we are ready to unite in spirit, as well as in fact, and join in harmony for better days in the county with the conviction that our children are entitled to the best education we can offer them.

Criteria of a Good Newspaper

On the occasion of National Newspaper Week, October 14-20, we reprint "Criteria of a Good Newspaper," which was written by a study committee of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association.

Although the authors represent daily newspapers, the criteria are nonetheless applicable to a weekly paper and may stand as a yardstick by which the public may judge a paper.

We of the Gazette-Times endorse their statements and adopt them as a guide for our publication. We cannot measure up fully to all their tenets, but we try. Whenever one of our readers believes we are seriously failing on any of the principles, we would like to know it.

(Written by a Study Committee of the Associated Press Managing Editors Assn.)

A good newspaper prints the important news and provides the information, comment and guidance that is most useful to its readers.

It reports fully and explains the meaning of local, national, and international events which are of major significance in its own community. Its editorial comment provides an informed opinion on matters of vital concern to its readers.

By reflecting the total image of its own community in its news coverage and by providing wise counsel in its editorials, a good newspaper becomes a public conscience. It also must be lively, imaginative, and original; it must have a sense of humor, and the power to arouse keen interest.

To implement these principles of good editing requires a skilled staff, an attractive format, adequate space for news and comment, and a sound business foundation. The staff must possess the professional pride and competence necessary to breathe life and meaning into the daily record of history. Good writing must be combined with an effective typographical display of copy and pictures to capture the full drama and excitement of the day's news. Good printing is essential.

News and comment of most immediate interest and importance to the local community shall have priority for the available space, which will depend on the size and resources of the newspaper.

To assure a financially strong and independent publication, and one that is competitive with other media, a good newspaper must maintain effective circulation, advertising, and promotion departments.

Finally, a good newspaper should be guided in the publication of all material by a concern for truth, the hallmark of freedom, by a concern for human decency and human betterment, and by a respect for the accepted standards of its own community.

A good newspaper may judge its own performance—and be judged—by the criteria that follow.

INTEGRITY

The newspaper shall:

- Maintain vigorous standards of honesty and fair play in the selection and editing of its contents as well as in all relations with news sources and the public.
- Deal dispassionately with controversial subjects and treat disputed issues with impartiality.
- Practice humility and tolerance in the face of honest conflicting opinions or disagreement.
- Provide a forum for the exchange of pertinent comment and criticism, especially if it is in conflict with the newspaper's editorial point of view.
- Label its own editorial views or expressions of opinion.

ACCURACY

The newspaper shall:

- Exert maximum effort to print the truth in all news situations.
- Strive for completeness and objectivity.
- Guard against carelessness, bias, or distortion by either emphasis or omission.
- Correct promptly errors of fact for which the newspaper is responsible.

RESPONSIBILITY

The newspaper shall:

- Use mature and considered judgement in the public interest at all times.
- Select, edit, and display news on the basis of its significance and its genuine usefulness to the public.
- Edit news affecting public morals with candor and good taste and avoid an imbalance of sensational, preponderantly negative, or merely trivial news.
- Accent when possible a reasonable amount of news which illustrates the values of compassion, self-sacrifice, heroism, good citizenship, and patriotism.
- Clearly define sources of news, and tell the reader when competent sources cannot be identified.
- Respect rights of privacy.
- Instruct its staff members to conduct themselves with dignity and decorum.

LEADERSHIP

The newspaper shall:

- Act with courage in serving the public.
- Stimulate and vigorously support public officials, private

Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

WHILE RESIDENTS OF Western

Oregon are counting their losses in property damage, deaths and injuries in the wake of the week-end storm, we in Eastern Oregon may well count our blessings.

The rain and mild wind that we experienced were nothing. In fact, the rain will prove a blessing as it pours more moisture on the land to give a boost to seeded crops. Harold Erwin remarked as he looked over the countryside near Lexington that the hills are all greening up, and he said that he had never seen the sprouts come through so evenly and so early. We hope that nothing happens to change this good start.

ONE TV weatherman said that the windstorm whipped up the Willamette Valley and the mountain ranges on either side contained it. On the eastern side, the Cascades prevented it from booming into our section of the state, which makes us mighty lucky.

This storm caused the greatest destruction in the history of the state, but as an early Associated Press report pointed out, it didn't cause the greatest loss of life. The Heppner flood of 1903 still holds that record at 247.

MEMBERS OF the Methodist Youth Fellowship in the Portland district are beginning to believe they are jinxed. Two years ago their annual meeting was scheduled for Pendleton. The train carrying Portland and valley youth to Pendleton was hit by a slide and several cars were dumped into a slough near Crown Point.

This year, they had their meeting scheduled for Gresham Friday, Saturday and Sunday. A carload from Heppner's Methodist church, with Mrs. Dick Wilkinson taking them, arrived at Gresham just as the storm hit. More than 300 were expected, but only 70 made it. Friday night they had a meeting by candlelight, but on Saturday decided to adjourn.

Fortunately none of the young people were hurt and no damage was done to Mrs. Wilkinson's car. However, they saw homes with roofs gone and other awesome damage in the area.

MR. AND MRS. CLINT McQuarrie were driving down a Portland street at the height of the storm and didn't really realize it had hit until the lights went out all around them and things started flying around. Clint mentioned that the wind was freakish.

Strong metal signs on steel posts were often noticed to be grotesquely twisted by the wind while rickety wood signs sometimes remained intact.

They were among those who attended the OSU-Washington football game in storm-ravaged Multnomah stadium. Quite a few others from Morrow county made it there, too.

Still other Morrow residents were in Portland or the valley for other reasons and went through the onslaught. Mrs. Mary Bryant, on a week's vacation, spent the time in Portland and Beaverton. The latter town, which once was well supplied with trees, became a shambles.

One Beaverton resident reported to a relative in Pendleton that of 13 fir trees that he had

on his place, two were left standing.

MANY OF those who tried to call relatives in the storm area couldn't get through. A recording answered from "Station X-150" or something like that and said that emergency calls only were being taken. I tried to call my mother in Forest Grove about six times, only to get the recording each time. On another occasion I tried through the operator, but she had no better luck. The lines were down and remained so, at least through Sunday. Forest Grove, aptly named because it probably has more trees than any other city of its size in the state, is undoubtedly a terrific sight. Mother writes that the sound of chain saws can be heard constantly all over the city. Brother Harry, superintendent of the power department there, and his crew have been working around the clock to get power restored.

Pacific University's cherished grove of old oaks, long a proud symbol of the institution, undoubtedly is devastated. We wonder at the fate of the giant sequoia trees in Forest Grove, the only town in the northern part of Oregon that has such. Haven't heard whether they went down or not. If they did, it was with a memorable crash.

ED AND ELEANOR Gonty left Heppner about 4 p.m. Friday, headed for Ashland to the Soroptimist convention, going via Spray and Bend. They were in the mountains when the storm hit. Of course, it was nothing compared to the western part of the state, but it was a big blow. They reached Bend with their car a mass of red mud from the Service Creek road, but the next day the rain was so heavy it all washed out.

When they neared Ashland Saturday after spending Friday night at Bend they entered an awesome scene of destruction. Trees had been pretty well cut from the main roads, but they saw barns flattened, roofs missing off other buildings, but were most amazed by the number of phone and power lines down.

By the way, this was Ed's first trip to Ashland since 1927 when he went with his family in his dad's new '27 Oldsmobile. That was a 4-day trip with night stops at East Lake, Bend and Klamath Falls. Gonty thinks that they hit one small stretch that was paved, but the rest was dirt and gravel.

JEWELL HAGER and Betty Pfeiffer went to the Soroptimist convention by airplane and left Pendleton Friday afternoon for Portland on the first leg of the flight. When they got to Portland, the plane couldn't land because of the storm. The pilot pointed out damage to the debris-strewn field. They went on to Seattle where the Heppnerites spent the night in a hotel as guests of the airline, and then flew on down to Ashland the next day, seeing damage everywhere below them.

GORDON HUTCHENS was headed for Portland when the storm hit, but outside of the city was stopped and told that he could not go in. The patrolman told him that in case a wire came down on his car to keep his hands on the steering wheel and

groups, and individuals in crusades and campaigns to increase the good works and eliminate the bad in the community.

- Help to protect all rights and privileges guaranteed by law.
- Serve as a constructive critic of government at all levels, provide leadership for necessary reforms or innovations, and expose any misfeasance in office or any misuse of public power.
- Oppose demagogues and other selfish and unwholesome interests regardless of their size or influence.

ANNOUNCING

The Opening Of

Pecks' Ski Shop

NOVEMBER 1

In The Collins Bldg.

Main Street, Heppner

(Former Location of Pacific Power and Light)

Specializing In Quality Lines Of

Ski Equipment

Boots and

Sportswear

At Economical Prices

We extend a cordial invitation to all to come in and get acquainted.

Headquarters For Arbuckle Ski Area

Bank Shows Gains Over Year Ago

A 13 per cent gain in loans over a year ago was set by First National Bank of Oregon in its statement of condition for September 28, it was announced by President Ralph J. Voss.

Both loans and deposits were at all-time highs for the statewide bank. Figures were compiled at the request of the U. S. Comptroller of the Currency.

The Heppner branch of First National reported third quarter deposits of \$5,565,748 and loans outstanding of \$3,163,428, according to Branch Manager J. H. Bedford.

Comparable totals for the branch a year ago were \$4,825,993 in deposits and \$2,446,169 in loans.

Loans outstanding for the system at the end of the third quarter totaled \$555,999,098 compared to \$493,401,142 for the same time a year ago.

Deposits of \$950,107,387 were six per cent above the \$895,752,179 figure a year ago. Capital funds total \$78,311,927 which is an increase of \$2,329,783 from 12 months ago.

Total resources also reached a new peak with a figure of \$1,051,064,222 for an increase of \$40,870,890 above the corresponding total of last September.

The 89-office banking system has three new branches under construction. One will be adjacent to the Peninsula Center Shopping Center in North Portland. The other two are the University branch near the University of Oregon campus in Eugene and the Standard Plaza in downtown Portland.

Spanish Class Due To Start October 23

An evening Spanish class for those wishing to learn the language or continue with the instruction of last year, is announced to start Tuesday evening, October 23, in room 14 in the Heppner High school building.

Instructor will be Mrs. Ray Williamson, who also taught an adult Spanish class last year. It will cover a series of six lessons, given on six consecutive weeks. Cost of the series is two dollars per student.

Classes are scheduled for Tuesday nights, October 23 and 30, and for the four Wednesday nights in November, between 7:30 and 9:30 p.m.

The first two weeks will be used as a refresher course for the advanced students. However, beginning students are also encouraged and asked to be present at the first meeting. Books will be available at the class.

For further information contact Mrs. Williamson or Mrs. Ray Smith.

his feet on the floor mat, and not to move. This was enough for Gordon. He turned around, went back to Hood River and stayed there.

OUR FELLOW Oregonians who went through the storm have shown themselves to be courageous and resourceful in this emergency. As Governor Mark Hatfield put it in a release to the press Wednesday, "The destructive power of the elements could not match the constructive power of the will, initiative, neighborliness and determination of our people."

Metsker maps of Morrow county, \$1.25, at the Gazette-Times office.

COMMUNITY BILLBOARD

Coming Events

LEGION MOVIES
Saturday Night, 8:00 p.m.
Legion Hall
This week "Tarzan" Feature.
Plus one-half hour cartoons.

HOME FOOTBALL GAME
Heppner High versus Pilot
Rock High
Friday night, 8:00 p.m.
Heppner Rodeo Grounds
Support the Mustangs

MYF CAR WASH
Saturday, October 20
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Methodist Church
Corner Church and Gale Sts.
Outside wash \$1; Inside and
Outside \$1.50

WRANGLER BUCKBURGER
FEED
Saturday, October 20
6:30 p.m., Fair Pavilion
Dinner, Awards, Prizes
Drawing for Colt

This space will be used
each week to announce com-
ing events of a public service
nature at no charge.

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