

THE HEPPNER GAZETTE-TIMES

Heppner, Oregon 97836
Phone 676-9228

MORROW COUNTY'S NEWSPAPER

The Heppner Gazette established March 30, 1883. The Heppner Times established November 18, 1897. Consolidated February 15, 1912.



WESLEY A. SHERMAN
HELEN E. SHERMAN

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

ARNOLD RAYMOND
Shop Foreman
Printer

REGGIE PASCAL
Linotype Operator

GAIL BURKENBINE
Society
Circulation

RANDY STILLMAN
Apprentice

JIM SHERMAN
Pressman

Subscription Rates: \$4.50 Year. Single Copy 10 Cents. Published Every Thursday and Entered at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon, as Second Class Matter.

Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. until noon Saturday.

Special Election Coming

Even though the county has depended on a serial tax levy since 1948 to carry a major portion of financing its road program, it may come as a surprise to some that a special election is called for Friday, December 8.

At that time voters will cast ballots on a \$150,000-per-year levy for a five-year period to be used in constructing, improving, maintaining and repairing county roads.

There are quite a few new people in the county since the last road election in early 1965, and there may be some other voters who have forgotten that this serial road levy election comes up every few years.

It is particularly for the benefit of these persons that we point out that this is not a new or an additional levy that is being proposed. It is continuation of a plan that has gone on for some 19 years.

The proposition would increase the levy from \$125,000 per year to \$150,000, which is what the county deems necessary to do the job that the road department has to do. Also, it would cover a five-year period instead of three years. The last serial levy was voted early in 1965 for a 3-year period, but others were for five-year periods.

The serial levy method of financing roads was started in 1948 when voters approved a 10-mill levy each year for a period of five years. This was voted again in 1953 and once more in 1958, still as a 10-mill levy. In February, 1962, it was discovered that a change in the county's tax ratio from 22% of true cash value to 25% of true cash value brought the county more money than could legally be collected, since the law limited the increase on serial levy proceeds to 6% above the previous year's proceeds.

Using the millage basis, the proceeds increased as the amount of taxable property increased. Thus, as the county's valuation went up, the amount available for roads increased.

Union Pacific—a major taxpayer here—discovered the illegality which had gone unnoticed by county officials. The legal limit for the year 1961-1962 was \$147,916, but the 10-mill levy brought \$165,347. After considering the matter, the county decided to refund the overcharge and this was done, the refunds going to taxpayers in proportion to their payments. Most of their taxes for the year had been paid as of November 15, 1961.

Meanwhile, the legislature passed an act stating that such serial levies could no longer be voted in terms of a millage levy but must specify a certain sum to be collected. Thus, the amount would remain fixed annually through the years covered by the levy and could not escalate with higher valuation.

In May, 1962, the county presented a measure in an attempt to establish a tax base of \$115,000 for county roads. But before this could come to vote, it was ruled illegal by the attorney-general. County Judge Oscar Peterson announced the illegality before the election and asked voters to vote against it. Consequently, it was defeated.

Two months later, the county presented a return to the serial levy as the method of financing roads, asking voters for \$115,000 annually for three years. This was approved.

In late 1964, the county again proposed a serial levy of \$115,000 for three years to carry on when the 1962-voted levy expired on June 30, 1965. This was presented without much publicity or advance information and was defeated.

Then the bad storms struck. The Christmas flood of 1964 hit, followed by the January, 1965, floods. The county proposed its serial levy again, this time asking \$125,000 per year for a 3-year period. In the emergency, it went over by a landslide.

Now, this levy will expire on June 30, 1968, and so the matter faces voters once more.

It is interesting to note that if the old 10-mill levy were still being imposed, the proceeds this year would total some \$240,000! This is due to the gain in valuation. But the county is asking for \$150,000 and asking to return to the five-year levy instead of the three-year basis. The longer term will permit better planning for the road department and will eliminate the cost of holding an election so often.

Morrow can be proud of its county road system. Its successive county administrations have done good work in bringing roads to the present conditions.

One of the outstanding achievements has been the oiling of many important county roads. Those who have traveled the Baseline road recently know the improvement there.

Many of these important county roads are more comfortable to travel than several of the state highways within Morrow's boundaries. State highways are in crying need of improvement here.

The county roads serve all. They are vital to the farmer; almost equally vital to the businessman. They are important to tap recreational areas, and considerable improvement has been made in roads to recreation spots in the past few years.

Improvements are well distributed around the county, too. Much has been done on roads in the northern part of the county and more is in the offing, one being a frontage road that will be necessary as a result of the construction of Highway I-80N. Probably some road construction will be needed to serve lands opening there for agricultural development.

We think Orville Cutsforth put it about as good as anyone could when he said that the average taxpayer will spend about as much per year on the serial levy as he would in buying one tire.

"At that rate, we make a profit on our investment," he said, meaning, logically, that wear and tear from bad roads would cost a person more than that.

The road department has proceeded in an orderly, well-planned manner and its results are readily apparent. But much needs to be done to complete the county's road goals.

We recommend that voters approve the serial levy on Friday, December 8. It will cost taxpayers \$1.57 per \$1000 true cash value of his property, but if he drives any distance at all, he will save more than that on the better conditions of the roads.

Land Sale Postscripts

Sale of 22 of 26 tracts of Bureau of Land Management lands in north Morrow county Friday afternoon provided probably the most exciting local news event of the year.

While the BLM would have preferred that all tracts were sold, the officials were pretty well satisfied with the results. Chester Conrad, manager of the Baker office, BLM, expressed this after the sale. The plan at present is to offer the remaining tracts at some time in the future.

Many do not realize that also to come up for sale are quite a number of small tracts in central and southern Morrow county. These are much smaller than those that were on the block Friday, and they will be sold under a different act with the sale to be conducted in Portland. Some of them may be lands withdrawn from the National Forest by the U. S. Forest Service. In all they will total some 3500 acres in tracts of 20 acres and more.

One of the biggest surprises that was incidental to the Friday auction was the announcement that 5% of the proceeds of the sale will go to the state to be apportioned back to Morrow county.

Apparently none of the county officials here were aware that Morrow county would receive any direct benefit from the sale. For some reason, this didn't come out during the long time that the county and BLM officials were jointly considering how the land should be offered to the public.

Judge Paul Jones says that he understands now that the state will turn the 5% share to the county after taking out an "administrative charge." Amount of the charge is as yet unknown.

Since the 22 tracts brought a total of \$472,500, a five percent share would be \$23,625. That's quite a tidy sum in itself.

Indications are that whatever the county receives, after the administrative charge, must go into the general fund since it has not been budgeted for any purpose.

It's probably too early to speculate what it may be used for. It could be that it would have to be shared with other dedicated funds, such as county schools. Or it could be held until the next fiscal year when it might be listed as a cash carryover.

In any event, it is a little too early to "count the chickens" since the money has not been paid as yet.

In view of the pre-sale buildup about big agricultural industries being interested in the land sale, it was a bit of a surprise that no such interest was apparent in the bidding Friday. It could be that some land combinations will be formed now that it is in private hands, but most of the purchasers were quite mum on their plans, saying that they bought the land for their families or that their plans were indefinite.

It is interesting to note, too, that the only actual Morrow county residents making a purchase were Oscar Peterson and his son, Gerald, who bought 640 acres (tract No. 10). This is located near the bomb range road and is the same one for which Peterson filed for Desert Entry.

After the first few tracts offered brought no bids, there was some spirited bidding on a few of them, one of which was the 640 acres that the Petersons purchased. The Anders brothers, Joe and Fred, of Echo, had sought some tracts that stimulated lively bidding because their lands are adjacent to them. But they backed off when the price went up. Later, after all tracts had been offered, and 12 remained to be sold, the unsold ones were offered again, and Joe Andrews purchased three tracts near to their present holdings.

The total of \$93,000 paid for six tracts by Rex Ellis was the highest investment made by any buyer. Joe Andrews paid \$83,000 for three tracts.

As a result of the fact that the 22 tracts were purchased by a number of different buyers from scattered points, no clearcut picture for development unfolds. Had a large operation bought a number of them, such as a food processing firm, it would immediately be quite evident what plans are in the offing.

But since the stakes were high—totaling \$472,500—it is apparent that the purchasers have some plans in mind to realize profits from their investments, even though they have not been revealed.

Addition of these 22 tracts, totalling 9,744.74 acres, to the county tax roll will be no big bonanza for the county coffers. The BLM appraisal on them is \$431,900, an average of \$44.32 per acre. However, the county appraisal is considerably less than the BLM appraisal with average around \$25 per acre.

Judge Jones points out that the county is not permitted to use a government sale in establishing value. Private sales only may be used. Values on the county appraisal are similar to those of private lands in the same area. Thus, the lands probably will go on the 1968-69 tax roll at approximately half the BLM appraised value.

This would mean the addition of only some \$3,000 in taxes, and that won't broaden the base much!

But still the hope remains that these lands will be brought to their productive capacity. Through irrigation, agricultural development and improvement they may eventually add considerable in sharing the tax load, making the land purchase itself only "peanuts" in the total economic picture.

The buyers apparently have faith in the future for it takes a considerable amount of courage to write out a check of \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000 or even \$80,000. It is good that they have that kind of confidence in the area and its potential.

When water is brought to the land, the possibilities can challenge the imagination.

School Bells



Christmas Program
By Alan R. Martin, Principal
Heppner Elementary School

This year the Heppner Elementary School Christmas program will be held at 8 p.m. Monday, December 11. Featured will be the bands and voices of the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Mr. Hedman and Mrs. Groshens are already deep in the middle of practice.

This year the program will be presented in the multipurpose room instead of the gymnasium. Many factors have influenced our decision to use this area. It is difficult to have a Christmas program practice that must also be used for basketball practice. We found that the stage in the gym was not suitable for this year's presentation. The acoustics in the multipurpose room are far better. Both instructors wished to use the multipurpose room. The stage there is far better equipped for such programs—light control, adequate curtains, easy access, etc.

Such a plan to use the multipurpose room is not without its problems. The most important, of course, is that there is a smaller seating area in the multipurpose room than there is in the gym—380 seats as opposed to 500. However, we believe that if the audience is limited to adults only, we will have room for all interested parents.

To allow children to see the program we would present a repeat program during a school day for children in particular.

We do not wish to prohibit anyone from enjoying our program. We do believe that the multipurpose room is a far better area for this presentation and that limiting the audience on Monday evening, December 11, to adults only will permit the largest number of persons possible to celebrate Christmas with us.

FFA Boys Start Tree Sale Sunday

The Heppner Chapter, Future Farmers of America, will again hold its annual sale of Christmas trees. Members plan to cut trees in a variety of sizes this Saturday, December 2, and will place them on sale starting Sunday, December 3. For the second year, members will again provide a flocking service.

The Christmas tree sale has been one of the Chapter's leading money-making projects in past years. Trees will be placed on the corner lot of Inland Chemical company, corner of Main and Center streets, next to the Heppner TV.

The FFA flocking machine, donated to them by Mrs. Helen Cox last year, has increased the organization's profits considerably, and has allowed the boys to furnish a more complete Christmas tree service. Orders may be placed through the high school or with any of the members.

Chaff and Chatter

Wes Sherman

NEITHER the carpenter who pounds his thumb with a hammer, the cook who burns his omelet, nor the dairyman who sees Old Bess kick over the milk pail have a monopoly on frustrations.

The newsmen has 'em, too—in Spades!

We, along with representatives of other newspapers, spent most of Friday at the BLM land sale. We sat the session out, visited with some folks for a few minutes after most of the crowd dispersed, and thought we had all the facts and figures.

So did the Oregon Journal reporter. So did Dean Holmes of the East Oregonian. So did Stan Federman of The Oregonian.

We spent several hours getting up the map that is on page 3, section 2, to give a good record of the sales for time immemorial. We spent more time today averaging the appraisals, the selling prices, and totalling the figures on the transactions. We wrote the editorial that appears on this page.

The second section went to press earlier today (Tuesday) and the map was printed.

Only now do we hear a report that more of the tracts were sold when most of the crowd was gone, and the officials opened the bidding again at the request of some of the linger-longers.

Now our averages shown in connection with the map are off. Tracts 1, 7, 19, and 21 should be marked as sold. Correct figures are in the story on page 1—unless they have sold more tracts since Friday!

Apparently there is nothing wrong with reopening the bidding as long as the officials were there to hear the offers. As a matter of fact, Judge Jones says that it was announced that oral offers would be entertained at any time as long as the officials were there.

But they fooled all the newsmen. None of the dailies had the complete story, either. Like us, their representatives had folded their tents and left before the last tracts were sold.

Meanwhile, we'll join the carpenter who has his thumb wrapped in a Band-Aid, the cook who is throwing his omelet into the garbage can, and the dairyman who is crying over spilled milk.

WHEN THE sale was progressing, there was no doubt that the land was really moving. Wind was howling in a gale, and all you had to do was look out the window and see it move.

We tried to get to the Riverside school to take some pictures. We drove down by the school and got caught in a dust cloud. This was a little different, though, since it held close to the ground across the flat that some day will be landscaped. The dust came along in waves, buffeted briskly by the wind. They looked similar to whitecaps on wind-swept water. The dust obscured the street, and we figured we'd probably get off and get stuck in loose sand.

Even Irving Anderson of BLM, who did the auctioneering, quipped that land was really moving that day.

He also had one other joke. He said, with tongue in cheek, that they had had a bid from Las Vegas—from Frank Sinatra, who hoped to buy the Morrow county lands for a song.

That would be the day!

WE SEE by the papers that Mac Hoskins and Jim Doherty are continuing at Blue Mountain College right where they left off last year with the Mighty Mustangs' basketball team.

The two ex-Heppner High stars are playing with the Timber Wolves and came back Sunday after a trip to Sitka, Alaska, where they won three games played with Sheldon Jackson Junior College of Sitka.

Doherty was a starter in the final game, which BMCC won, 117 to 73. Mac Hoskins scored 12 for the Timber Wolves in that one, but Doherty was held to 2. In a previous game, Doherty tallied 9 and Hoskins 3, as the Timber Wolves won, 104-78.

The BMCC hoop squad has won five straight and they have averaged 101 points per game. Their high to date was 111 against the Sitka team last Thursday, when they won, 111-69.

On Friday night the Timber Wolves play Portland State Frosh at the Memorial Armory in Pendleton. Saturday night they play Columbia Christian College, also of Portland, in Pendleton.

Heppner fans ought to make the journey over and see them perform in college spangles.

WITH CHRISTMAS coming up fast, we'd like to remind Morrow county parents of sons in Vietnam that the Gazette-Times will send them the home paper free of charge. All that need be done is to provide us with the name and address. We're happy to do this little bit to help keep them in touch with home.

Notice by the Red Cross survey of most wanted items on the Christmas list of overseas servicemen is the hometown paper.

HOLIDAY INNS have fine accommodations for travelers and they also put out a good

monthly magazine. We picked up one on a recent trip, and found some rib ticklers in it that we thought we might pass on:

—Joe Morrow says this is the age of tension—everybody is living in fear of bending an IBM card.

THE TOURIST, marveling at New England's scenery, finally asked a New Hampshire farmer where all the rocks came from.

The native replied, "The great glacier brought them here." "Well," demanded the stranger, "where is the glacier now?" "Drawled the farmer, "It went back for more rocks."

AN OLD Chinese proverb: If thine enemy wrong thee, buy each of his children a drum.

MORE men are known by their mortgages than their deeds.

A BRIDEGROOM is a man amazed at the outcome of what he considered a harmless little flirtation.

ROSES are green. People are pink. His color TV has gone on the blink.

THERE are three basic rules for having good teeth. Brush them twice a day. See your dentist twice a year. Keep your nose out of other people's business.

Pioneer



Ponderings

By W. S. CAVERHILL

The Special Session

The outcome of the special session is not surprising. It was too much to expect that the same group of men who failed to reach agreement on a tax program during the regular session would find it in a special session. Their performance has engendered a rising opposition to all tax increases. Their persistent effort to impose a sales tax in the face of adverse polls was a political mistake. The raid on the Veterans' surplus was another. Their refusal to adopt a modified income tax to meet the emergencies of the biennium exhibits indifference to the realities of the situation. The result may well be stronger support for the 1 1/2 per cent limitation, which, if passed, would throw our taxing system into utter chaos. It is regrettable that the members didn't make the necessary cuts in the budgets, supplemented by a revised income schedule, and go home.

TO THE EDITOR...

People Friendly

November 25, 1967

Dear Wes: We just finished reading Mrs. Nolan's letter to the editor in the last issue of your Heppner Gazette-Times. As newcomers to Heppner, our experience has been entirely different. We have found the people to be most friendly and hospitable, and for this we are deeply grateful.

Very sincerely,
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Follensbee

Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Childers and family of Ione spent Thanksgiving visiting in Helix at the home of Mrs. Childers' parents, Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bechtel. Also joining the group was Mrs. Childers' brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Dale Brock and daughters of Lewiston, Idaho.



Coming Events

ECW HOLIDAY BAZAAR
Episcopal Parish Hall
Saturday, Dec. 2, from 11:00 a.m.
Many homemade Christmas gifts and foods
Luncheon in Tea Room from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m.

OES SOCIAL CLUB
Monthly meeting, Saturday, December 2
Heppner Masonic Hall, 1:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP
Social Rooms, Ione United Church of Christ
Tuesday, December 5
Sponsored by Ione Garden Club
Afternoon, 1 to 5 p.m., evening, 7 to 9 p.m.
Everyone welcome. Bring Christmas materials

BLUE BIRD CANDY SALE
Starts Tuesday, Dec. 5, house-to-house
Kathryn Beich candies, \$1 per can
Make nice Christmas gifts

HEPPNER HIGH BASKETBALL
First home game, Friday, Dec. 8, 7 p.m.
Heppner vs. Grant Union
Heppner vs. Burns at Burns, Sat., Dec. 9

SPONSORED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE BY
C. A. RUGGLES
Insurance Agency
P. O. Box 247 PH. 676-9625
Heppner

BLUE BIRD CANDY SALE

Will Start
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5
And Continue
FOR ONE WEEK
DOOR-TO-DOOR

KATHRYN BEICH
CANDIES
\$1 Per Can

By 2nd AND 3rd GRADE AGE BLUE BIRDS TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES

THIS MESSAGE SPONSORED BY YOUR HOME-OWNED BANK AS A COMMUNITY SERVICE

BANK OF Eastern Oregon

HEPPNER—IONE—ARLINGTON
MEMBER, FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION