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Snowfall produces cold, but fun filled days for Heppner area youth. Here, a boy masters plastic ski on way down hill near high school. (G-T Photo)

Sumner prepares for fourth term as eight county rep.

State Rep. Jack Sumner, D-Heppner, is preparing for his fourth term in the Oregon House. Though identified by residents of this area as the Morrow County representative, Sumner also represents Gilliam, Sherman, Jefferson and parts of Wasco, Clackamas, Marion and Linn counties.

Multi-county representation is a result of Oregon's move to equalize the counties in their number of house representatives. "I've lived in Morrow County for over 30 years. I earned my living there," states Sumner, "I'm intimately aware of the problems residents face."

Now living in Salem, until the end of this session, Sumner has no planned visits back to the county. "I'm available on request in the afternoon and evening," continues Sumner. "The session meets everyday and an all-day visit would mean my missing a day's session. But I will be going up during the weekends occasionally."

Hearing from county residents usually involves concerns about road conditions, governmental bureaucracy and interference, zoning, school finance and problems of local government officials. Inheritance taxes share a majority of concern with people contacting the representative.

"I don't hear from enough people though," said Sumner. He has received no word from Morrow people concerning the Boardman Navy Bombing Range in the last two years. Sumner is writing a bill, encouraging state support of removal of the bombing range, to be presented early in the session. No bill has ever been presented to the Oregon legislature dealing with this matter.

Each week Sumner writes a newsletter to 20 (daily and weekly) newspapers and radio stations. "It deals with what's happening in the legislature and what's going to happen," he said.

One-third of Sumner's voter contacts are by phone. Hearing opinions by mail sometimes results in a resident simply encouraging him to vote yes or no on an issue. "I would really appreciate it if they would include why they feel this way," said the representative. "I like to know how they feel legislation is going to affect them, nothing fancy just in their own words, and include return addresses especially on petitions."

Last session, the Morrow representative served on the Oregon Ways and Means Committee. Dealing with the fiscal budget, monetary and billing concerns of the state, the committee meets 10 times a week. "I hope to be re-named to that committee," notes the legislator.

Sumner is against equalization of the tax base for the state of Oregon. "Our county valuation is going to double in the next 10 years. Once the coal fire plant (Portland General Electric) starts paying taxes we will have a countywide equalization. Maybe our taxes won't be going down but they won't be going up either and that's the real savings."

Other industries entering the county will also take on a share of the tax burden. Oregon is presently assessed at \$30 billion on the tax rolls.

"A \$1 billion nuclear plant," says Sumner, "would be one-thirtieth of the taxes in Oregon. Why should we share that revenue with the rest of the state. Portland has never shared any of its industry tax with us."



Jack Sumner

Sumner was approached last year with a petition by some Morrow County residents wanting a road connecting Boardman and Ione. The road would run through the PGE Carty Reservoir development. "I signed the petition," states Sumner. "It could be very advantageous to the development of Ione. Though I think much of the future development will be taking place in the north end of the county."

Ione residents who oppose the road have said they prefer that the development stay in the north end of the county.

'Public opinion' wins CBEC franchise fee

"Let's stay with what we have. Public opinion about this council is not good. We said we wouldn't tax on to the city with hidden little taxes. If we do, it'll look like we're doing what we said we wouldn't do," councilman Jimmy Rogers said.

"Measuring public opinion versus \$1,000" Monday night, Heppner's Common Council agreed on a 20 year, two per

cent franchise fee settlement with Columbia Basin Electric Company.

Discussions concerning the 50 year expiration of an old franchise agreement has lasted more than a month. Part of the council was in favor of upping the franchise fee to three per cent to generate additional revenue for the financially strapped city.

But Dave Harrison and

CBEC vowed that if the city did raise the fee, the electric company would "billback" customers for the additional fee.

After about 45 minutes of discussion and research Monday, it came down to four councilmen for the two per cent fee and two plus the mayor wishing to increase the fee.

Mayor Jerry Sweeney came

right out at the meeting and said, "If it came to tie, I'd vote for three per cent right now, I'll tell you that."

Councilman Cliff Green was the first to speak in favor of retaining the two per cent fee.

"I don't see any reason to raise it, Jerry (Sweeney)," Green said. "First, Columbia Basin is not outside the community. We are all members of it. We're going to end run around voters who said no to the budget."

Councilman Mills, along with Green, Warren Plochasky and Jimmy Rogers were for the retention of the original fee, echoed Green. Mills said that Sweeney's comparing the telephone company and Columbia Basin was like "apples and oranges."

Sweeney was the leader in the council's bid to change the franchise fee. He told the council that the franchise fee "used to equal" the city's payment for street lights.

Sweeney said, "the biggest single customer for Columbia Basin is Heppner," who, according to the mayor, pays the Coop more than \$14,000 annually. Sweeney said the Coop franchise fee amounted to \$3,600 a year.

Sweeney also told the council that the city had changed over from light bulbs to incandescent lights, which he said, required less electricity.

Sweeney compared some other towns of comparable size, in the 1,000 to 2,500 population level. He said the "majority" had three per cent

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lone fire

Arson charges dropped against Gervais woman

First degree arson charges were dropped this week against Vonnie Mae Masi, one of three persons indicted in 1976 for a fire that gutted a home in Ione.

Three people were arrested in mid-September for setting a blaze that destroyed the Old Swanson Home in Ione. Along with Masi, 24, John Kieth Alexander, 19, and the owner of the home, Viola Jay Jackson, 42, all of Gervais, were arrested.

Since their arrest, Alexander has pleaded guilty to second degree arson and has turned state's evidence. Ms. Masi's indictment has been dismissed this week and Ms. Jackson is to appear in court

in Umatilla County on Feb. 3.

Morrow County District Attorney Dennis Doherty cited various reasons for the dismissal.

Doherty said that there was "not sufficient evidence to create a reasonable prospect that the state can meet its burden of proof beyond a reasonable doubt."

Doherty said Masi was "peripherally involved" and that he had to question whether her involvement to incur liability was a matter of fact or matter of law.

Alexander, turning state's evidence, furnished information concerning involvement that was not previously known, also.

Doherty said he could not justify expenditures of public funds which would be required to try this case in Umatilla County.

He said 13 witnesses from five different counties, traveling a total of 3,700 miles in order to attend as witnesses, was too high a cost.

Doherty said that in the interest of justice, it would best be served by dismissal.

On Dec. 28, Alexander pleaded guilty to second degree arson. He was sentenced to three years formal probation, \$750 fine and restitution to the lone fire department and Albert Akers, a land owner next to the burned house.

Dime phone call gives mother ride of her life

"Welcome to the Equestrian Arts" was the opening line of a letter received by Mrs. Dale Holland, Heppner, this week. Funny thing, though, she doesn't ride horses.

Last week, Mrs. Holland and two of her children, Dale and Diane, were in Tri-Cities, Wash., looking for a health food store.

Mrs. Holland stopped at a Safeway store to check directions. She found a phone book next to a mechanical horse. She had to lean across the ceramic four legger to read the book.

Uncomfortable as it was to lean, she draped a leg over the toy horse to check for the store's location. Quickly, Dale came to the rescue and dropped a dime in the slot.

The horse took off and if that wasn't enough of a ride, Diane hit the fast button and off Mrs. Holland went, on a ride to nowhere on a horse with no name and a phone book clutched in her hands.

To say she was embarrassed, Mrs. Holland says, is an understatement. People walked by, she said, and looked kind of puzzled to see an adult woman riding a child's ten cent horse.

"If I would have thought, I'd have yelled 'runaway horse' or something," Mrs. Holland said.

Anyway, the ride over, Mrs. Holland climbed out of the saddle and proceeded, slightly flushed, away from the pony and the store.

But the end was not over. She received a letter in the mail this week with a Pendleton postmark. "I don't know anyone in Pendleton," she declared.

She said she read the letter halfway through before she figured out the writer was talking about her horse ride in Tri-Cities.

Here's what the letter said:

"Dear Mrs. Holland,
"Welcome to the Equestrian Arts. A good performance is enjoyed by participants and spectators alike and being able to read a book while horseback has been equalled only by the itinerant preacher of a past era."

"Total control of the horse is a must at all times, and please remember never to dismount until the horse runs down."

"The enclosed equestrian equipment may assist you in your future endeavors."

"The Western Horseman is a good informative periodical and the Wranglers of Heppner are a most enjoyable group."

Yours Truly,
Saddle Sore

Mrs. Holland maintains she knows no one by the name of Saddle Sore or anyone from Pendleton for that matter. She didn't think anyone she knew saw her in Tri-Cities, but evidently someone did.

Riding horses is not a recent hobby and probably won't begin to be, but nevertheless, Mrs. Holland has a sterling silver horse bit, about a half inch long. She doesn't know what to do with it, really, but if she has her way, she won't be putting it or another dime into a mechanical horse's mouth.