

# Assessor notes lowest tax rate in Oregon

Although taxpayers in Morrow County may not feel all that good when tax statements come out soon, they can bask in whatever glory is afforded in paying the lowest tax rate in the state.

Speaking to the Heppner Morrow Chamber of Commerce Monday, Morrow County Assessor Everett Harshman and his staff outlined the details beneath the soon-to-arrive tax statements.

A 21 percent increase in assessed valuation in Morrow County—bringing the total assessed valuation to \$285,976, 903—results in an average tax rate of about \$12.16 per \$1,000 assessed value.

"We were second to the lowest last year," said Harshman, "missing by a few cents to Gilliam County."

Chief Appraiser Charles Patching used a series of charts to depict the steady increase in valuation Morrow County has been experiencing the last several years.

In 1973 the county had an assessed valuation of \$100,500, 000, jumping to \$193,128,000 in 1975—nearly double. Since '75 another \$100-million has been added to the tax rolls.

Harshman said public util-

ities account for a large portion of the increase with desert lands coming under irrigation and constant re-valuation making up the rest of the increase. Growth of residential, commercial and industrial facilities in the Boardman-Irrigon area has also contributed greatly.

"Portland General Electric and the other power firms locating at the Carty Site have added some \$46-million to the assessed value of Morrow County," said Harshman. The increase in valuation in that area will continue at a fast pace in the next few years as the PGE coal-fired plant, when completed, is expected to have a valuation of between \$500-million and \$1-billion.

Breaking down the major portions of the tax rate per \$1,000, Morrow County receives \$1.55; Blue Mountain Community College, \$1.87; Port of Morrow, \$1.13; Water Control, \$1.19 and County Schools, \$7.58. The City of Heppner has a tax rate of \$7.20 and the Heppner Cemetery District receives \$3.30.

Coded tax rate statements are available for the 1977-78 fiscal year from the assessor's office.

## Steeplejack:



Bill Hinrichs shows how one leg wrapped around the pole secures his position as a steeplejack. The pole in the picture sits in front of the Morrow County Courthouse.

## climbs \$3,000 worth of poles each year

The 37-foot flag pole at Pioneer Memorial Hospital has had a shiny new look since last Thursday when semi-retired steeplejack Bill Hinrichs of Aberdeen, Wash., scaled the height, loaded down with brushes, roller and buckets filled with silver paint.

"Want a job?" he yelled down to curious hospital employees. "I sure don't want yours, blood makes me dizzy," joked the man whose precarious profession has seen him hanging from structures as high as 800 feet.

Hinrichs, 65 a former hobo and motorcycle stunt rider, said he has been in the steeplejack business for 42 years. Though he commented that there aren't too many real steeplejacks left, a son and daughter followed their father's lead, taking over the business in Aberdeen when he 'retired'. Daughter Karen, a 'steeplejill' since she was 18, has appeared on nine television programs, including "What's My Line".

Once painting and repairing every kind of structure—church steeples, water towers, smokestacks, bridges—Hinrichs has slowed down, specializing now in flag poles at schools and other public buildings.

He enjoys travelling and has motored to almost every part of the U.S. in his red, white, and blue Toyota which registers 137,000 miles, supplementing his Social Security income by painting "no more than \$3,000 worth" of poles a year.

A far from modest man, Hinrichs claims he has been written up in more than 30 newspapers—and carries around a stack of clippings to prove it. He is the author of one book, "Fiddle Foot and Free" about his experiences as a steeplejack, and is working on his second.

His next goal is Hollywood—he has an agent there trying to sell a script about his exploits. Hinrichs would like to play himself in a movie and said interest has been shown.

A born-again Christian, Hinrichs said his faith in the Lord gave him confidence during his dangerous work. He is proud of his membership in the Gideon Society.

Although he has never fallen, Hinrichs has experienced some painfully close calls. "I once had 7,200 volts go through me, he claimed. "It burnt holes in the bottom of my shoes and in my back."

Speaking of shoes, Hinrichs is careful to point out his trademarks, gold-painted hard hat and work boots. "People don't say much about my hat, but, boy do they talk about my shoes." The boots are the same gold he paints the ball atop each flag pole.

"Be sure to mention my shoes," was the parting remark of the flamboyant steeplejack, yelled down from his perch on the Pioneer Memorial Hospital flagpole.

## Obituaries

### James H. Brannon

James H. Brannon, 67, died Wednesday, Oct. 19 in Heppner.

He was born Oct. 29, 1909, in Hardman, the son of Merly W. and Ella Saling Brannon, pioneer Morrow County residents.

He was a retired house painter and carpenter.

Funeral services were Friday, Oct. 21, at Sweeney Mortuary Chapel, with Rev. Kenneth Miller of All Saints Episcopal Church officiating. Carl and Betty Marquardt sang "The Old Rugged Cross" and "How Great Thou Art". Casket bearers were Marion

Biddle, Darold Hams, Wayne Ball, Sherrill McDonald, Jimmy Hams and Harry Shyder.

Concluding services and interment were at Heppner Masonic Cemetery with Sweeney Mortuary in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Brannon is survived by a son, William Brannon, Heppner; a daughter, Darlene Snyder, Fairbanks, Alaska; a sister, Pearl Green, Lexington; a brother, Marvin Brannon, Mt. Vernon; seven grandchildren, one step-grandchild and one great grandchild, and numerous nieces and nephews.

### Norman Lynn

Norman Lynn, Heppner, died in Pendleton Oct. 23 at the age of 73.

Born in Sunderland, England on Jan. 11, 1904, Mr. Lynn spent his early years there and graduated from engineering school. He served as chief engineer aboard ship for 12 years and traveled to many seaports throughout the world. He later settled in Portland and became a United States citizen.

In 1957 he married Ida Estberg. The couple moved to Heppner upon retirement to lead a more leisurely life and be closer to relatives in 1974.

Mr. Lynn was initiated into

Portland Elks in 1959 and became a member of the Heppner Lodge in April, 1972.

He is survived by his wife Ida, two sisters, a half-sister, one brother, a sister-in-law Mary Bryant, Heppner, and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial services were held Tuesday, Oct. 25 at 2 p.m. in the Elks Temple, Heppner. Exalted Ruler of BPOE 358, Don Ball, officiated. Tom Franks sang "Love is a Many Splendored Thing" accompanied by organist Rikke Tews.

Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner was in charge of arrangements.

## THE GAZETTE TIMES

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### LETTERS

Editor,

My apology to Mr. Gene Burgess of Oregon Humane Society in Portland Oregon.

I must say I goofed, as Ann Landers even does at times. I should have said, "Mr. Baker have you read a copy of the page taken from Morrow County Court House law book and delivered by our Sheriff Larry Fetsch?"

Sorry about that Mr. Burgess. Next time we meet you can give me a lash with a steer busting rope (not a noodle.)

As ever Kindest Regards,  
Lois Winchester

### THE GOLD OF OCTOBER

The gold of October is here. We see its golden beauty, everywhere

Accented by gorgeous colors here and there.

Tree bush and shrub wear a gold gown.

Colors of every hue pass in gold review.

Jack Frost lavishly brushed the canvas-wide.

Guided by The Master Painter He brushed with pride.

Autumn paintings hang in the valley; by the wayside; on the hill.

A gallery enchanting peaceful and still.

The gold of Autumn brocades each party gown.

'Til worn and faded They come tumbling down.

Enchanted we ride on and on. Knowing that when we ride this way again,

The golden Autumn will be gone.

By Katherine R. Farrar

### Bond sales on target

According to statistics just released by the U.S. Treasury, the Morrow County U.S. Savings Bond program, chaired by Gene Pierce, totaled \$83,128 sales in the first seven months of 1977. This figure represents 61 per cent of the county goal of \$137,000 for the entire year.

Americans nationwide have increased their holdings of Series E and H Savings Bonds by \$4.7 billion in the past year. They now own over \$75 billion worth of the government bonds.

### EMT's form organization

Approximately 20 Morrow County residents with Emergency Medical Training and experience met recently to form an organization designed to keep members up with the required education and training needed for EMT certification.

At the meeting held Tuesday, Oct. 18, in the "old library" corner of the Heppner city building, the organizing group elected officers and did some planning for future meetings. Betty Curnutt was elected president; Paul Sumner, vice-president; Maxine Schmitt, secretary and Ira Owens, treasurer. The first three officers live in Heppner; Owens lives in Lexington.

"This organization extends a cordial invitation to any EMT's in the area to come join us," Curnutt said. "Our next meeting will be Tuesday, Nov. 29, at 7:30 p.m. in the same place where we met in October."

### Library .....

and member of the library board, said information obtained from a legislative assistant in Salem supported some points of opposition to the formation of a boundary commission in Morrow County by District Attorney Dennis Doherty. Kuhn indicated that even if petitions were obtained, the County Court would still have the option of deciding that there was no need for a boundary commission in the county. Kuhn suspected that is exactly what would happen.

The Heppner library board met Wednesday, Oct. 26, to discuss the petition and explore other options. The decision of the board was not available at press time.

When Doherty was asked about his stand on the boundary commission, he stated emphatically, "It's a rotten idea for Morrow County."

Doherty explained that boundary commissions were created as a means of dealing with boundary disagreements between service districts of heavily populated metropolitan areas.

He cited the example of the existence of 54 rural fire protection districts alone in one area of Western Oregon and pointed out the potential confusion of the situation without any governmental body to arbitrate disputes.

"Altogether, Morrow County has 16 service districts with no turf disputes. We don't need a boundary commission," Doherty commented.

herty commented, "It would be an administrative nightmare," he added.

The District Attorney also gave several more reasons for his opposition, including the fact that any member of the commission could not participate in any other county committee; that as an appointed body it would have power

that should belong only to elected officials; and that it would create too heavy an administrative load on the County Court.

"I'm sympathetic with the problem of funding the library but service districts with taxing authority were never meant to operate that type of facility," said Doherty.

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### CBEC.....

following zones: Candidates from Zone No. 1 (north of Condon) are Floyd Anderson, incumbent; and Earl Weatherford. Zone No. 2 (southern Gilliam County and rural area in Wheeler County) Walter Jaeger, incumbent; and Ed Bates. Zone No. 5 (southern Morrow County, south of Heppner, and the Gurdane area in Umatilla County) Kenneth Wright, incumbent; and Harold Peck. City of Condon, no incumbent and candidates are Fred Greiner and Bob Eaton.

A new director to bring the board to 12 members will be elected from the Heppner area. Candidates are Bill Collins and Forrest Burkenbine. Hold over members include: Dick Krebs, Dick Wilkinson, Paul Tews, Herb

Wright, Van Rietmann, Kenneth Smouse, and Randall Peterson.

Of interest to many members will be an auction scheduled for the conclusion of the business session. A surplus boom truck owned by the Co-op will be auctioned off. The truck is a 1959 1 1/2 ton, 6 cylinder, International 4 x 4 with new tires on the rear, hydraulic boom and front mounted winch. The motor was recently overhauled and is in good running condition. Auctioneer will be Gary Grieb.

The usual door prizes will also be given away at the end of the meeting.

All members are urged to attend or at least cast their ballots for the candidates of their choice.

Continued from Page 1

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### Elks Calendar

Thursday, Oct. 27 Reg. Lodge 8 p.m. Kitty Dinner drawing	4:30 p.m.	Wednesday, Nov. 2 Senior Citizens 4:30 p.m. Pinochle 7:30 p.m. Indoctrination, 7:30 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 28 Happy Hour 5-7 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m.		Thursday, Nov. 3 Ladies Night Dinner 6 p.m. Lodge 8 p.m.
Saturday, Oct. 29 Dinner, 6 p.m.		Initiation and State 3rd Vice-President Visitation
Tuesday, Nov. 1 Senior Citizens		Elks and out-of-town guests only.

B.P.O.E. 358 Heppner, Oregon

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