

# Flood plain main topic at Heppner planning meeting



## Mothers march tonight

MARCHING MOTHERS Barbara Watkins (1), Debbie Koffler, and Rita Sporseen, show what they'll be after tonight as the annual March of Dimes Mothers March gets underway at about 6:30 p.m. Pairs of mothers will be marching on Heppner and lone to collect those dimes—and dollars—to help fight

birth defects through March of Dimes. Mothers involved will be served refreshments by Beta Gamma in the Bank of Eastern Oregon after the march. All residents are encouraged to leave on their porch lights if they want to contribute to the cause.

"Flood plain" was the crucial term for some 40 Heppner residents attending a public hearing on the city's draft comprehensive plan held at the courthouse Wednesday, Jan. 25.

Providing information and fielding questions on Heppner's 100-year-flood plain, which encompasses all of the city's downtown area, were Chuck Steele, Seattle representing National Flood Insurance Administration, and Ron Barrett, representing the Walla Walla Corps of Engineers.

Repeated questions from the floor concerned the effect extensive diversion and terracing work done by Heppner Water Control District would have on decreasing the flood hazard area. Barrett stated several times that, while the work would be very effective in cutting down damage from minor flooding, he didn't think it would significantly decrease

the flood plain, which is determined on the basis of a 100 year discharge, defined as a 24,000 cubic feet of water per second flow.

Barrett said the 1903 flood, discharging 36,000 cubic feet per second, was closer to a 300-year than a 100-year flood.

Bill Collins, Shobe Canyon resident commented, "I know that diversion ditches help...I don't think there is any possibility of it flooding like it did in 1969 and 1971 as far as Shobe Canyon is concerned...our Water Control District is doing a real good job."

Barrett expressed surprise at the work done on the water shed and promised the Corps of Engineers would "take a look at it" during its present study. He said he doubted it would have much effect in event of a 100-year flood, which would see Main Street under approximately five feet of water.

ECOAC Planner Marie Hall said early in the hearing that there were drafting errors in the sketch plan map, and it would not be used to determine the legal flood plain for insurance and zoning purposes.

Chuck Steele provided copies of the official 1975 map presently used by the Flood Insurance Administration, but warned no map is completely accurate.

"The key is elevation, not the map," Steele said.

He said to participate in the national flood insurance program a community must place strict limits on building in the flood hazard area. "Minimal" participation was approved by Heppner in 1974 and made flood insurance for new construction in the flood plain mandatory. Federally backed banks now must require flood insurance for loans or any financing of construc-

tion in the flood zone. Buildings constructed before the program was adopted are not required to carry flood insurance unless refinancing or mortgages are desired.

Steele said about 50 Heppner residents now carry flood insurance worth about \$2.5 million dollars. The new Corps of Engineer study will update and refine current information and delineate a 'floodway' and 'floodway fringe', replacing the term 'flood plain'. The study will be used to set new rates for flood insurance, depending on the location of the property in the hazard area. Property insured up to the time the new study information is adopted will still be insured at a standardized rate, presently 25 cents per \$100.

The city will be required to pass stiff ordinances limiting construction in the flood hazard area if it wishes to

continue participating in the insurance program. Steele said that no flood insurance will be available for communities not in the program.

Heppner Mayor Jerry Sweeney asked if variances would be allowed and said "I think you're going to kill business downtown" with the building restrictions. Steele said the city could opt for variances, but added, "I don't see it being quite that serious... There are many, many ways to design a commercial building to be flood proof and be eligible for flood insurance."

The question of what effect the construction of the already-authorized Willow Creek Dam would have on the flood plain was put before the two men.

"Except for Hinton and Shobe Creeks, it would pretty much eliminate your pro-

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## Improvement of highways here tied to gas tax, registration fee OK

A six year highway improvement program submitted last week to the Oregon Transportation Commission still shows Morrow County to be out of the picture unless voters approve a statewide gas tax hike on the upcoming May ballot and a vehicle registration fee increase in November.

### No state road projects planned for Morrow County until 1980's

The program was prepared by the Department of Transportation, based on staff studies and citizen comment from 39 public meetings held across the state last fall. In Morrow County, the meeting drew critical response from residents who felt they were being slighted in the scheduling of road improvements.

As a result of the citizen response, the revised program includes an additional \$3 million overlay project for Hwy. 270 from the Bombing Range Road to the Umatilla County line. But the project, along with three other road improvements planned for the county, all fall into the category dependent on the gas tax and registration increase. If voters turn down the two measures, all four of the road projects for the county could be shelved.

A separate part of the six year plan—Program B—includes only those projects assured of implementation regardless of the ballot measures. No Morrow County projects are included in the grouping.

The other Morrow County projects coming under Program A—those dependent on the ballot measures—include:—A \$1.2 million overlay project on Hwy. 270 from Lexington to the Bombing Range Road.

—\$400,000 earmarked for spot repairs on the Heppner

highway from I-80N to Lexington.

—A \$920,000 overlay project for 4.9 miles of road from Ruggs to Dry Creek.

In order to include the Bombing Range Road-Umatilla County line project in Program B, the department had to drop the priority of another Morrow County project—a \$1.3 million overlay project on the Heppner-Spray highway between Rock Creek and the Wheeler County line.

With the juggling of projects and balancing of budgets expected to continue until the Transportation Commission meets again Feb. 22, DOT officials say it is nearly impossible to determine how

the final program will unfold. "Right now we're trying to determine exactly where we're at—there are too many projects and not enough dollars," said Bob Blensly of DOT. As an example, Blensly

said the 1980 schedule includes \$14 million in overprogramming—projects for which there is no money unless other funding methods are implemented.

"I don't really see any

problem with getting all the projects into the total six year program," Blensly said. "Our problem now has to do with phasing the projects, lining up the manpower and maintaining the workload."

## Operating budget of \$3,479,760

# Proposed school budget sees increase

Meeting for their third session Monday, the Morrow County School District Budget Committee pared \$58,699 from the original 1978-79 budget proposal and arrived at a finalized figure of \$3,479,760

that will be presented at a public hearing Feb. 20.

District Supt. Matt Doherty said downward adjustments can still be made at the Feb. 20 meeting, if they appear justified. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Heppner Elementary School.

The figure reached by the committee, if it stands, would lack an additional \$1.07 per \$1,000 valuation on the current tax rate of \$7.58 per \$1,000.

Major cuts in the originally proposed budget came in the area of capital projects and improvements and capital outlay for instruction and support services. Doherty said \$30,000 was trimmed from the capital projects and improvements category leaving \$22,200 to be prioritized by the district administration.

A cut of \$21,430 was made from capital outlay for instruction and support ser-

vices, which includes items of equipment and materials but does not involve teaching

personnel. Also, the committee trimmed \$7,011 from the insurance category by chang-

ing the fire insurance deductible amount from \$1,000 to \$25,000.

## Martin visits here today

Roger Martin, Republican gubernatorial candidate from Lake Oswego, plans to be in Heppner today (Thursday) in a "meet the people" campaign stop.

Martin will meet with residents at the Courthouse at 9:30 a.m. and will take a tour of Main Street to meet local merchants. At 11:45 a.m. a no-host luncheon will be held at the West of Willow Restaurant.

Steve Peck, who with his wife Cathy are Morrow County campaign co-chairmen for Martin, said ample time will be given at the luncheon for questions from the audience.

Martin is currently minority leader of the Oregon House of Representatives and has served in the state legislature for 12 years. He is a businessman connected with an electrical supply house and supports small business, local control and reducing the size of government.

The House Republican leader says, "Government is too remote from the people. It's the people, their ideas and their courage that make this state great. As governor, I would spend one week each month outside Salem, involving the people in each town in the decision making process."

## Weather

	H	L	Prec
Wed., Jan. 25	42	32	.20
Thurs., Jan. 26	45	32	
Fri., Jan. 27	45	29	
Sat., Jan. 28	38	30	.11
Sun., Jan. 29	42	33	
Mon., Jan. 30	34	31	
Tues., Jan. 31	41	28	.04

Precipitation for Jan. 2.21  
Normal 1.29  
Jan. 1977 .36  
Prec. Sept. 1, 1977 to Jan. 31, 1978—8.66  
Prec. Sept. 1, 1976 to Jan. 31, 1977—1.69  
Normal Prec. Sept. 1 to Jan. 31—6.13

## Inside this week Willow Creek Dam straw ballot

On page two a straw ballot appears on which readers can indicate their thoughts on the Willow Creek Dam

## Dam meeting Feb. 9

Residents of Morrow County will have the opportunity to make their own decision on whether or not the Willow Creek Dam should be constructed at a public meeting scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. in the Courthouse.

Steven G. Hickok, field representative for Senator Mark Hatfield, approached local officials last week with the proposal of building the Willow Creek Dam under the original plan authorized by congress in 1965.

Interest in seeing the dam

built has increased in recent weeks as the cities of Heppner, Lexington and Ione

finalize comprehensive plans required by the state. Each of those cities has a major problem with flood plains that include existing commercial and residential areas.

After the comprehensive plans are completed the cities will be required to adopt ordinances prohibiting further construction in the flood plain unless that construction meets federal flood proofing requirements. In most cases flood proofing of commercial structures would add 50-60 per cent to the cost of construction.

If the Willow Creek Dam were built the flood plains in those cities would be virtually

eliminated. In order to proceed with construction of the dam federal monies would need to be appropriated by congress.

Hatfield said the necessary funds could be obtained by including the project in the massive Public Works Appropriation Bill passed each year by congress. The Senator is willing to do just that if he gets assurances of support from the county and the cities involved.

City and county officials are now looking to the people for direction and urge attendance at the meeting next Thursday.

## Happy birthday, Peter Rabbit



Peter Rabbit celebrated his 75th birthday last week in Heppner with not one but 11 birthday parties held in his honor in the Heppner Elementary School library. The parties were attended by approximately 250 youngsters in grades kindergarten through four and in addition to marking the famous bunny's birthday, were intended to encourage the reading interests of the young students.

The special day was the culmination of a month of half hour library sessions devoted to the stories of Beatrix Potter, who wrote not only "The Tale of Peter Rabbit", but such favorites as "The Pie and the Patty Pan", "Tales of Mrs. Tittlemouse", "Tale of Squirrel Nutkin", and 24 others.

Librarian Sue Jones has been holding story telling sessions in the library for each class once a week, and the study of the Beatrix Potter tales were "just more elaborate." Library assistant Nancy McElhany drew scenes to illustrate many of the stories, fourth and fifth grade art students under the direction of Ron Farris created a garden background for the bulletin board for Peter's party, and a 'five baby rabbit owned by fifth-grader Tom James was loaned for the youngsters enjoyment.

An extra touch was provided by two stuffed Peter Rabbits, complete with jacket and brass buttons, made from patterns by Mrs. McElhany's mother. And the best treat of all were the 11 birthday cakes baked for the parties in the shape of a rabbit. Cooks for the occasion were Betty Christman, a former Wheat League Bake-Off cake winner; Bebe Munkers, Betty Galbraith, and Fay Seitz. The cakes, topped with fluffy coconut, were made with—what else?—carrots.

Mrs. Jones said that the Peter Rabbit party and the special treatment of Beatrix Potter's stories were part of a continuing effort in the library "to interest primary children in reading". She commented, "This has been really fun; the children have been very responsive."

And with youngsters clamoring to check out books—ones about rabbits were especially popular—the effort to interest children in reading appeared to be succeeding.

Looks good!

These first graders from Mrs. John Edmundson's class look wistfully at one of the 11 coconut-covered carrot cakes created by the cooks at Heppner Elementary School for the birthday parties last week celebrating Peter Rabbit's 75 anniversary. It was served with punch to the youngsters in the library only a few minutes later.