



Welcome Home

Ione's Kevin McCabe (12) slaps hands with teammates after slugging first inning homer against Wasco Tuesday. Robin LaRue preceded McCabe with another round-tripper but the Cards lost 19-12.

Court, Committee plan to "wrap up" county budget at today's session

Both the Morrow County Court and County Budget Committee face a long, hard session today (Thursday), with plans to keep at it until the budget is completely "wrapped up", according to Judge D.O. Nelson.

The fourth scheduled budget session will begin at 9 a.m. in the Courthouse.

The size and shape of the budget remained in doubt last Friday after committee members ended their third meeting with the preliminary review of departmental requests behind them and major decision making ahead.

The preliminary budget totaled approximately \$133,000 outside the six per cent limitation after the last request of \$18,000 to replace an obsolete assessment roll machine used by the assessor's and tax offices was made.

Some shifts were made in the budget, including the

transfer of all vehicle requests (\$31,910 total) from individual departments to a new line item in the non-departmental budget. The change was made to facilitate bookkeeping and possibly enable a better buy on the vehicles. A decision on the actual non-departmental requests has not been made yet.

Several departmental budgets were tentatively approved with six per cent across the board salary subject to negotiation on behalf of union workers in the sheriff's office and road department. Nelson said early in the week the Court planned to meet with the union negotiator Wednesday (yesterday) in Executive Session, and the results of that session would be discussed at today's budget meeting.

A courthouse budget of \$13,490 was approved, with \$2,100 trimmed off the initial request. That amount will be

supplied from anti-recession funds earmarked for courthouse maintenance.

The Assessor's Department budget of \$92,582 was also approved, down from \$101,604 initially requested because of the transfer of vehicle requests to the non-departmental budget.

The County Court budget, trimmed by \$600, was approved for \$44,397, substantially more than the \$25,171 budgeted during the current year because of the transfer of commissioners' salaries from the road department budget and additional costs for supplies.

Approved without change were the budget for the County Clerk's Office (\$31,596), the Circuit Court (\$22,323) and the Health Department (\$21,427).

No decisions were made on substantial increases asked for by both the Sheriff's Office and the District Attorney's

Office. Neither have the committee members decided on the \$167,000 request made by the Hospital Board, not included in the general budget at this time.

With the budgets so far approved still subject to change, the Budget Committee and Court are left with a myriad of critical decisions to make at today's session.

Weather

	Hi	Low	Pre.
Wed., Apr. 26	53	49	1.00
Thurs. Apr. 27	52	46	.06
Fri., Apr. 28	60	45	
Sat., Apr. 29	60	39	
Sun., Apr. 30	60	36	
Mon. May 1	65	40	
Tues., May 2	66	42	
April Prec.	2.45		
Normal	1.27		
April 1977	.07		

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Scarce housing in county boosts property tax skyward

Morrow County's housing shortage is being blamed for steep increases in many new property tax statements recently mailed to county homeowners.

Blanket re-appraisals have raised home valuations about 12 per cent in Heppner and about 18 per cent in Lexington. Home values in Ione, Irrigon and Boardman, however, have remained roughly the same. The new valuations will be used in figuring property tax rates during the 1978-79 tax year.

Morrow County Assessor Everett Harshman said the home valuation increase is the result of more people seeking housing than there are homes to buy—sometimes even paying more than the home's appraised value. So long as the housing pinch continues, and people are willing to pay inflated prices for shelter, the tax valuations will keep rising, since the valuations are based on the property's market value, he added.

"It's a problem," said Harshman, "and I don't know what the answer is... People need a place to live, and they're willing to pay maybe more than they should to buy it."

Harshman added that the inflated housing costs "end up penalizing the people who already have homes here, have put maybe a total of \$20,000 into them, but find them appraised at \$40,000."

Blanket property tax re-appraisals are made each year under Oregon laws, which require assessors to keep valuations at 100 per cent of the market value. The blanket re-appraisals are figured by averaging comparative real estate sales in an area during the past year. Harshman sends Morrow County real estate sales information to the Department of Revenue in Salem, where it is processed by computer for comparison with previous valuations. The re-valuation figured by the computer is returned to Harshman, who is required to make county tax adjustments accordingly.

In addition to an increase in home values, the re-appraisals reflected significant raises in taxes for commercial buildings and lots in Morrow County. Unimproved commercial lots in Heppner skyrocketed 39 per cent over last year's tax valuations, and commercial building valuations rose about four per cent. Commercial buildings went up four per cent in both Lexington and Ione, eight per cent in

Boardman, and five per cent in Irrigon.

On a countywide basis, re-evaluations for dryland wheat property dropped roughly 25 per cent from the previous year, largely due to a decrease in wheat prices, according to Harshman.

Irrigated alfalfa land showed a slight increase county wide, and grazing land remained about the same.

Re-evaluations of these agricultural properties are based mainly on an averaging of costs to lease such land. Lease rates fluctuate with the value of the commodity the property supports.

Harshman noted that increases in appraised values do not necessarily mean increases in the amount of property taxes to be paid. The tax rate is determined by the

budgets of county-supported institutions and agencies, such as the county commission, school board, water districts, park and cemetery boards.

Heppner's property tax rate dropped from \$23.78 per \$1,000 worth of assessed property in 1976-77 to \$18.22 in 1977-78, Harshman noted. He added that only one other county in the state has a lower millage rate than Morrow County.

Planning Commission recommends building permit simplification

The Heppner Planning Commission met in an active session Tuesday night and among other things, made a recommendation to the City Council that would simplify obtaining a building permit and coordinate information need by prospective builders.

Commission member Lee Hazen asked what could be done to coordinate inspection information and simplify issuance of building permits.

Hazen stated that he talked to a family currently building a home in Heppner. "They documented what they had to go through, including the number of people they talked to and the number of long distance phone calls made in arranging construction of their home," said Hazen. "It was amazing."

Hazen said their biggest complaint was that no one within the city administration seemed to know where to

obtain various inspections. Another issue was the amount of time it took to obtain a building permit.

At the present, a person wishing to build a home or commercial business or remodel an existing structure at a value of \$2,500 or more, must appear before the city council to obtain a building permit.

If a variance is required, the prospective builder must also appear before the planning commission, receive his var-

iance and then appear before the council. Under the present system, the process means a wait of at least 30 days.

After considerable discussion, the Planning Commission decided to ask the City Council to give the proposed City Administrator authorization to issue building permits if the structure meets zoning specifications without a variance or conditional use being required.

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Heppner budget passes

Heppner's city budget was approved by a wide margin in Tuesday's election, despite a dismal 25 per cent turnout at the polls.

A total of 133 voters cast ballots in favor of the measure, with 78 voting no.

The vote was required by state law, since the new budget exceeded by \$36,759 a six per cent limitation on annual municipal spending.

"Needless to say, I'm very pleased with the results," commented Mayor Jerry Sweeney. "I think the city now has a direct obligation to the people to give attention to the streets, and make improvements in city services."

YES

133

NO

78

No opposition for county positions unless write-ins

Unless write-in contests develop, Morrow County Judge D.O. Nelson, Assessor Everett Harshman and Commissioner Homer Hughes will run unopposed for their respective positions on both the primary and general election ballots.

Nelson, a Democrat, was appointed by Gov. Bob Straub to fill the vacancy left by the resignation of Judge Paul Jones and took office as county judge on July 1, 1977.

A 31-year resident of Morrow County, Nelson's background includes farming and chairmanships of the Budget Committee and the School Board. He was also a past president of Morrow County

Grain Growers, served on the County Planning Commission and was active in 4-H and Fair activities. County judges are elected to a six-year term.

is running for his second four-year term.

Harshman was nominated for his position in the primary campaign in 1974 with a

ELECTION
VOTE
MAY
23
'78

Everett Harshman, also a Democrat, is a native of Eastern Oregon and took over as county assessor in 1975. He

write-in campaign he said he knew nothing about, receiving 61 write-in votes on the Democratic ballot and 80 on the Republican ballot. He went on to defeat the incumbent Joyce Bergstrom in the general election. Harshman was a wheat and cattle rancher and a businessman before his election.

On the Republican ballot for his third four-year term as county commissioner, Homer Hughes is a native of Morrow County. He worked for Morrow County Grain Growers for seven years before going into wheat farming in 1949. Hughes helped lay the groundwork for Blue Mountain Community College and is a former member of the BMCC budget committee. He served on the Morrow County School District Advisory Committee and on the MCGG board of directors.

Dan Creamer of Irrigon, a member of the Morrow County Budget Committee, was questioned about the possi-

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News Briefs

PMH plans Hospital Week open house

Pioneer Memorial Hospital wishes Morrow County and the citizens of The Tri-County area well this week and all other 51 weeks of the year," said Administrator Bob Byrnes in announcing the start of National Hospital Week, 1978 (May 7-13). National Hospital Week is an annual observance sponsored by the American Hospital Association and its member hospitals to show appreciation for the work done by hospital employees and to encourage hospital-community interaction.

On Friday, May 12, Pioneer Memorial Hospital will host an open-house and tea from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the hospital solarium. A film "A Life in Your Hands" will be shown and CPR will be demonstrated. There will be a blood pressure clinic for those who may be interested, and pamphlets will be available on nutrition and other aspects of health maintenance.

"This year's theme, 'Hospitals Wish You Well!', carries a goodwill message from hospitals for the continued or renewed good health of everyone in the community," said Byrnes. "And we'd like to make this an occasion to remind people that good health doesn't just happen, it takes effort."

"We hope that National Hospital Week will signal the

need to change unhealthy lifestyle patterns—like smoking, eating or drinking to excess, getting too little rest or exercise, or not having the routine medical care recommended by your doctor. National Hospital Week is an appropriate time to start doing what you can to stay out of the hospital," he said.

Kenneth Plant sentenced

Kenneth Logan Plant, 18, of Boardman, was sentenced to five years' probation, a 60-day jail sentence, fined \$1,000, and ordered to take part in a mental health program, following his third-degree robbery conviction for the January holdup of a Boardman Texaco station.

The sentence order was handed down Friday by Circuit Judge Jack Olsen, following a pre-sentence investigation by Oregon Corrections Division officials. Appearing before Olsen in March, Plant pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of third-degree robbery.

The Boardman man initially had been charged with first-degree robbery, first-degree kidnapping, recklessly endangering and driving under the influence. He was arrested in Boardman by state police and sheriff's deputies, after he allegedly held officers at bay with a shotgun.

Hunter safety courses offered

The Morrow County Search & Rescue Posse will sponsor a series of Hunter Safety Courses for area residents.

Sheriff Larry Fetsch said five members of the Posse have received certification as instructors and the first class will be scheduled as soon as ten persons sign up.

Fetsch noted that all hunters between the ages of 12-18 must have a Hunter Safety Card in their possession before a hunting license will be issued. "Anyone over 18 that wants to take the class is more than welcome," added Fetsch.

The class includes films, hand-out materials, live firing of a gun and tests.

Interested persons may sign up at Morrow County Grain Growers or the Sheriff's Office.