



Gazette-Times Photo

### Winging it

Fall is in the air...as this scene on Clark's Canyon Road depicts. Migrating Canada Geese were making a brief stop in a recently harvested wheat field to glean the combine droppings. Warm, sunny weather the past few days has enabled most farmers to get back into the fields to finish harvest. Observers feel that if warm, dry weather holds through the weekend, most wheat in Morrow County will be in storage.

### Worker hurt in Kinzua accident

Mike Davidson, 28, of Heppner was seriously injured Monday in an industrial accident at Kinzua Corporation's Heppner mill. Company officials said Davidson received head injuries and severe face cuts when he

became pinned between a steel "I" beam and a pin stop at the mill's debarking operation. The workman was rushed to Portland, where he is currently listed in stable condition at St. Vincent's Hospital.

## New X-ray gear ordered, nursing home fees rapped in Board meeting

New X-ray equipment and nursing home facility room costs were the central topics of discussion during a Tuesday night meeting of the Pioneer Memorial Hospital board of directors.

The board voted to order a \$107,000 x-ray unit with fluoroscopic capabilities from the General Electric Corp., pending approval of the hospital's grant request from the federal department of Health, Education and Welfare to fund the purchase.

The grant application was

filed more than a year ago. In recent months, the act containing the grant money was signed into law. Hospital Administrator Robert Byrnes reported that the prospects for receiving the grant money within the next several months "looks pretty good."

Should some snafu cause the federal funding to be dropped, the hospital would be under no obligation to purchase the equipment. The agreement with general electric would only serve to speed up delivery time should the grant

arrive as planned. The grant would also pay for several improvements to the hospital's physical plant, including upgrading of the incinerator facility.

The new X-ray gear would greatly expand the hospital's radiological examination capabilities. Upper and lower gastrointestinal tract examinations could be performed in Heppner, rather than having patients needing the tests referred to medical facilities in larger cities. The new gear would replace the hospital's

15-year old x-ray unit, which hospital officials say is outdated and may be on the verge of being condemned by state health officers, although the old machine has met state standards for allowable radiation emissions during a recent test.

Board President Fred Martin said state examiners have informed hospital personnel that if the old x-ray unit is sold, it could not legally be used for examining humans

## The Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES

Morrow County's Award-Winning Weekly Newspaper

VOL. 96 NO. 39 HEPPNER, OREGON Thursday, September 28, 1978 TWO SECTIONS 20 PAGES 20c

## Paint spree culprits ordered to pay fines and serve jail terms

Two men and a woman who pleaded guilty to criminal mischief charges in connection with the Sept. 1 spray paint spree that defaced numerous buildings and streets in Heppner, were meted out jail terms, fines, and ordered to pay restitution in Heppner Justice Court Tuesday.

Appearing before Justice Court Judge Dee Gribble were Michael Bushke, 19, Randall Jydstrup, 22, and Sheri Rogers, 20, all of Heppner. A

fourth man, Tommy Ray Ayres of Lexington, pleaded guilty to criminal mischief charges in the same incident during a hearing last month, but failed to appear for sentencing and remains at large.

"The court takes a dim view of your actions," Judge Gribble said before handing down the penalties. The three were given six month sentences, with all but 24 days in jail suspended, provided they enroll in a weekend work-release

program at the Umatilla County Jail. In addition, they were ordered to pay fines of \$505 each, and to each pay an additional \$225 in restitution for damage done to Heppner buildings—including City Hall—and to city streets and bridges. They were also ordered to repair doors that were vandalized at the Sears building, and to write open letters of apology to the citizens of Heppner, to be printed in the Gazette-Times.

Ayres, although absent dur-

ing sentencing, was handed down the same penalties.

More than a dozen anti-police and pro-drug slogans and obscenities were painted on Heppner buildings, bridges and roads. A dog was also coated with spray paint during the spree.

Bushke, Ayres and Jydstrup were apprehended shortly after the incident. Ms. Rogers was picked up in the Medford area earlier this week, when an officer stopped her on a traffic violation.

### Gazette-Times News Analysis

# Six or Eleven: What's in the numbers?

by Rick Steelhammer

When the battle of the ballot measures comes to a head during the November election, voters will have a taxing decision to make—in more ways than one.

Ballot measure 6, the California-styled tax relief package, would limit property taxes to 1.5 per cent of full cash value. Number 6 is favored by Republican gubernatorial challenger Vic Atiyeh.

Ballot Measure 11 was drafted during a special session of the Oregon Legislature, with Measure 6 clearly in mind. State lawmakers, at the urging of Gov. Straub, designed 11 to provide a means of property tax relief more applicable to Oregon law.

There are vast differences between both proposed Constitutional amendments, and neither measure is without flaws. Adding to the difficulty of voters making informed decisions on which, if either, of the measures to adopt is the fact that a great deal remains unknown about how 6 and 11 would actually effect taxation.

The following paragraphs will attempt to highlight some of the major features of, and differences between the two ballot measures.

Basically, Measure 6 would top property tax rates for nearly every property owner, including proprietors of business and rental property through the 1.5 per cent limitation. On a statewide basis, business would get the biggest break, since industry foots the bill for nearly 70 per cent of Oregon's property taxes. Under 6, the maximum tax rate would be \$15 per \$1,000 assessed value, plus the amount for any bonded indebtedness approved by voters prior to July 1, 1979. A two-thirds vote by both houses of the Legislature could allow taxes to be raised under Measure 6.

Under Measure 6, assessed value would be rolled back to 1975-76 levels, and could

increase by a maximum of 2 per cent per year. However, property that changed hands or was constructed since 1975-76 would go on the tax rolls at full market value. This means that in some instances, owners of identical homes could be taxed differently.

Of the total \$15 per \$1,000 allowed (not counting bond levies previously approved) under measure 6, \$10.50 would be allocated for schools, \$2.25 for cities, \$1.50 for counties and 75 cents for community colleges, according to current legislative interpretations.

The current interpretation allows no realistic provisions for funding special tax districts, such as cemeteries parks or hospitals.

Precisely how the Oregon Legislature plans to slice the property tax pie under the terms of Measure Six remains to be seen. But with 39 per cent of local government's spending power expected to be chopped with the passage of Measure 6, some programs will have to suffer. Since voters do not know in advance which programs would be trimmed, or how much they would be trimmed under 6, the decision on which ballot measure to support becomes even more difficult.

On the positive side, number 6 would drop residential property taxes dramatically throughout most of Oregon, where the average homeowner pays about \$25 per \$1,000 valuation per year.

As a result of the reductions, housing could become proportionately more affordable, and rent rates could theoretically drop.

Businesses would be able to spend money that would have been diverted to taxes for investment or expansion, possibly resulting in more private sector jobs.

On the negative side, most public-supported schools, and local government

agencies (towns and counties) would be hamstrung if funding is sought for needed capital improvements, such as sewer and water systems, road construction and the like.



Unlike many other school districts in the state, Morrow County public schools would not immediately be affected by Measure 6, since the county system would be able to operate at its current budget level under the restrictions of the ballot measure.

Blue Mountain Community College, on the other hand, would for all practical purposes be wiped out, if the present interpretation of Measure 6's allocation system remains unchanged.

Under the present interpretation 75 cents of every \$1,000 in valuation could be spent for community colleges. Currently, the rate for Morrow and Umatilla counties is \$2.13, meaning that nearly two-thirds of the college's tax income would be gone.

Since newly built or recently sold property would be taxed at full market value, rather than at 1975-76 levels, Measure 6 could limit the freedom to move, buy or sell property.

Measure 6 could also stifle local development, since communities could not use serial levies (according to the Attorney General) to fund sewer or water plants or new schools. Because of this, city sewer or water systems may well have to increase user fees.

Ballot Measure 11 would essentially shift more of the funding for local government activities to income tax, by mandating that half of each homeowner's property taxes (up to \$1,500) be paid out of the state's general fund.

Number 11 provides more property tax relief for homeowners than Measure 6, but none for business or rental property. Number 11 would also serve to limit state spending, unlike Measure 6, since passage would commit the state to property tax relief obligations—estimated to take up about 20 per cent of the state's 1979-81 biennium general fund. In effect, this would reduce the availability of any new funds for additional state programs, and could force cutbacks in current state spending programs.

Under the terms of 11, all assessed values would be frozen from Jan. 1, 1979 to Jan. 1 of 1980. The Legislature would re-evaluate the freeze every year following that date.

Renters would receive additional relief through Measure 11. About 17 per cent of rent payments could be expected to be returned renters by the state—in most instances, more relief than is provided under Measure 6.

If the state's operating expense surplus exceeds two per cent, the entire surplus must be returned to income tax payers, under the

terms of 11. Spending limits would also be placed on school and local governments based on population increases and the increase in the price index.

Homeowners would clearly benefit the most from passage of number 11. Based on the estimated 78-79 rate of \$27 per \$1,000 for Heppner homeowners, tax bills for a \$25,000 owner occupied home under the existing property tax framework would total \$675. Under Measure Six, they would total about \$475. Under Measure 11, they would total \$337.50—the lowest of the three rates.

An owner of a \$25,000 home could expect to pay roughly \$525 in property taxes during fiscal 1978-79 under the existing tax structure. Under Measure Six, the tax bill would drop to an estimated \$408, and under Measure 11, the bill would dip to about \$262.

In Lexington, the owner of a \$25,000 home would pay an estimated \$395 under the current tax structure; about \$327 under Measure 6; and an estimated \$197.50 under Measure 11. Residents of unincorporated areas of Morrow County could expect to pay about \$373 for a \$25,000 home under current laws; \$307 under Measure 6; or \$186.50 under Measure 11.

The Carty coal fired power plant and other business, industries and utilities in Morrow County would continue to pay existing tax rates under Measure 11, easing the burden on homeowners, but stifling business expansion and investment.

Unlike Measure 6, Measure 11 would not threaten any of Oregon's bond programs, such as the Veterans Home and Farm Loan program. Measure 11 does not discriminate against owners of newly built or purchased home, as Measure 6 does.

Cont on page 3