

Nursing home rates discussed by hospital board

Rates charged to residents of Pioneer Memorial Hospital's nursing home was the topic of lengthy discussion during a Tuesday night meeting of the hospital's board of directors.

Jewell Hager complained to the board that nursing home rates for residents not receiving welfare should not be significantly higher than the

daily welfare patient base rate of \$23.23. Base rates for non-welfare patients range from \$27 to \$29.50.

Hospital Administrator Bob Byrnes gave base rate figures for four other area nursing

homes, showing that Pioneer Memorial is charging about the same amount for nursing home care as the other

facilities—even less in some instances. Mrs. Hager responded with a cost survey she had taken for seven regional nursing homes, showing that costs were higher at Pioneer than any other facility. Mrs. Hager's survey was based on price quotations for the care of a specific resident with certain special needs.

Hospital Board Chairman Fred Martin said that current nursing home rates were set

following a study of an auditor's report on the hospital's financial situation. He noted that the hospital board has never intended for the medical facility to make a profit, but adjustments in rate had to be made in an effort to trim losses.

Mrs. Hager countered that Pioneer Memorial ought to be making money at \$27.50 and \$29.50, if other nursing homes in the area who are in

the business for a profit are charging less.

Martin responded that the nursing home—and the rest of the hospital as well—could likely break even or even turn a profit at current rates, if the occupancy rate was higher. As a public, non-profit facility, Pioneer Memorial "must accept everyone who applies," while commercial nursing care facilities may choose not to admit patients who lack

sound financial backgrounds, Martin noted.

Board members stated that they planned to continue to study the nursing home rate issue, deferring any action on the question until more financial data can be gone over. A new auditor's report is scheduled to be completed prior to the next board meeting, which Martin said should aid board members in making any decisions.

LCDC chief hears flood plain woes outlined in Morrow County tour

Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission director Wes Kvarsten made his first trip to Morrow County on Monday, touring booming development areas in the county's north end, and inspecting the flood plain troubled communities of Ione, Lexington and Heppner.

Kvalstrom expressed concern over Ione's recently updated flood plain survey by the Army Corps of Engineers, noting that in addition to causing crippling development problems, the new flood plain map will hold up the community's comprehensive planning effort.

Ione, through the East Central Association of Counties, recently applied to the LCDC for an extension on completing its comprehensive plan in light of the new Corps findings. ECOAC officials also requested an additional grant of nearly \$10,000 from LCDC to fund the re-planning.

Fred Martin, who has been involved with Ione's planning effort, said that the new Corps survey has already had an effect on the town's growth, stating that building permits for sites in the floodway-designated section of the town cannot be issued.

Martin also noted that prior to the Corps findings, Ione planners recognized that there was some potential flood danger, and drafted proposed rules accordingly. "But we never expected anything nearly as extensive" as the Corps flood study, he commented.

After listening to an outline of Ione's flood plain woes, Kvarsten stated "shouldn't this be challenged?"

Martin replied that indeed, it should, and indicated that Ione town officials plan to take the Corps' flood plain report to task.

Kvarsten, who visited the Port of Morrow facility and PGE's Carty coal plant construction site in his swing through the county, said he was pleased with the orderly growth of booming North Morrow. "Eastern Oregon may well be ahead of the Valley" in terms of planning for development, he said.

When asked for a glimpse of what his agency's effectiveness would be like in the event that Ballot Measure 10 is approved by voters, Kvarsten commented that it would "cripple the state program... No agency likes to use authority, but if you don't have it, you've got nothing."

Ione Legion Auxiliary holds sewing workshop

The Ione American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 95, met recently for a sewing workshop. Several items were made to send to the Veterans Administration hospitals.

Ruth McCabe, a guest at the meeting, brought her sewing machine and helped make many of the articles.

Plans were finalized for the Election Day Dinner to be held in the Legion Hall on Nov. 7. A turkey dinner with all the trimmings will be served from lunch through dinner time. Adults and high school will be charged \$3 and grade school students, \$1.75. Pre-school

children will be served free. Pie and coffee will be available throughout the afternoon.

The Auxiliary will again furnish donuts, coffee and hot chocolate after the flag ceremony at the Ione Memorial Field on Veterans' Day, Nov. 11.

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