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Morrow County's Award-Winning Weekly Newspaper

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HEPPNER, OREGON

TWO SECTIONS—18 PAGES

Morrow property taxes climb skyward; 1978-79 statements are in the mail

While property tax rates are dropping across most of Oregon during this year of the tax revolt, rates for Morrow County are on the upswing in every district.

Morrow County will lose its status as having the second lowest millage rate in the state as property evaluations and local government spending spiral upward.

There will be a little something extra for nearly every Morrow County resident in tax statement letters that will begin to be mailed this week.

While the statewide property tax rate appears to be dropping to an average of below \$20 per \$1,000 valuation for the first time in recent history, the rate will climb to above \$20 for the first time in recent years in Heppner.

Heppner property owners can expect to pay \$24.25 per \$1,000 worth of property—up from \$18.82 last year.

Next highest will be Irrigon, where property owners can expect statements seeking \$19.48 per \$1,000. Boardman residents can expect tax bills of \$19.12—up from \$14.74 last year. In Ione, the new rate will be \$19.22—up from \$16.56. Lexington's new rate will be \$14.79, an increase from \$11.90. Three rural tax code areas—0-1, 1-3, and 40-1—each share the lowest new tax rates in the county, \$14.

Taxes went up an average of \$3 per \$1,000 in each of the 30 Morrow County tax districts.

During the 1978-79 fiscal year, a total of \$5,106,582 is expected to be collected, up from \$3,501,968 during 1977-78. Morrow County's taxable total value has increased by more than \$42 million to a new high of more than \$328 million.

The increase in millage rates is due mainly to voter approved budget increases in

the various local, city and county government agencies. Most of the budget increases were sought to keep abreast of inflation.

County government will take \$2.75 per \$1,000 worth of property this year, up from

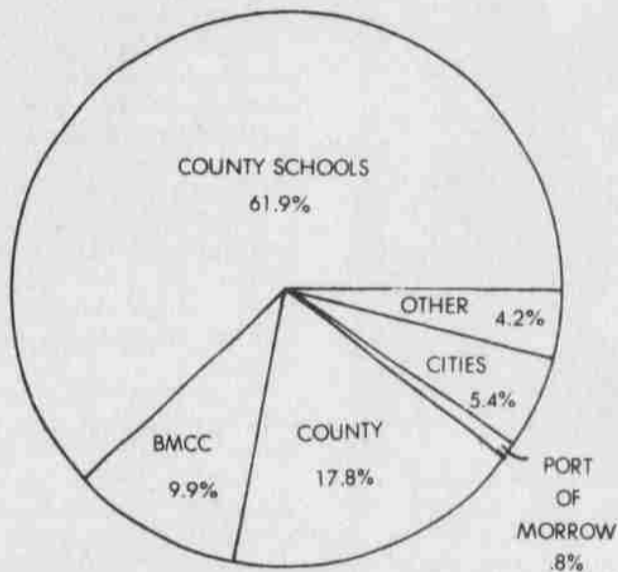
\$1.55 last year. Morrow County schools will cost taxpayers \$9.59 per \$1,000 this year, compared with \$7.58 in 1977-78. Heppner city government will cost \$9.78 per \$1,000 during the current fiscal year, up from \$7.20 a year ago.

Several tax receiving agencies show decreases this year, on the other hand. A scaled-down Blue Mountain Community College budget passed on the second go-around will cost taxpayers \$1.54 per \$1,000 this year, down from \$1.87 last year. Heppner's water control district dropped from 19 cents per \$1,000 last year to 17 cents in the current budget. The Port of Morrow assessment will be 12 cents per \$1,000 this year, down from 13 cents last year.

Another cause of the higher millage rates is the fact that several utility companies with property in Morrow County—including PGE's Carty coal plant—have appealed their property tax valuations.

According to Morrow County Assessor Everett Harshman, the county cannot collect taxes on the property valuations—totaling about \$20 million—that are under dispute.

Artificially high values on homes resulting from the current housing crunch also contribute to the higher tax statements, Harshman said.



Your tax dollar

Donkey basketball at Ione Friday

Donkey basketball is coming to Ione Friday, Nov. 3 with the Ione Lions Club—sponsors of the event—taking on Ione High School alumni.

The game starts at 7:30 p.m. in the Ione High School gym.

Mounted on the beasts of burden, team captains will be especially interested in a victory for their respective

squad as a cream pie awaits the smiling face of the losing team captain.

Proceeds from the game will be used by the Ione Lions

for their community service programs. Admission is \$2 for adults; \$1.50 for students age 12-17; \$1.00 for children 5-11 and under 5, free admission.

Debra Palmer Queen of 1979 Morrow County Fair & Rodeo



A pert five-foot, five-inch blonde with a vivacious and contagious smile will reign over the 1979 Morrow County Fair & Rodeo. Debra Palmer, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lee Palmer of Ione, has been named Queen of the coming year's festivities.

The 19-year old student at Blue Mt. Community College follows in the footsteps of her twin sister, Donna, who was Queen of the Fair and Rodeo Court in 1978. Both girls previously served as princesses on the court and before that, penant bearers.

A farmer's daughter—with three sisters and no brothers—Queen Debra knows her way around the family farm on Rhea Creek where changing sprinkler pipes, driving truck in harvest and working with her own 4-H projects is a way of life.

Studying business marketing and management at BMCC, Debra hopes to enter the field of fashion buying. Sewing and cooking are favorite pastimes, but Queen Debra is athletic by nature and enjoys water and snow skiing and roping.

Debra is looking forward to being an ambassador of goodwill for Morrow County in 1979, a job she is experienced at through her family's long association with the Fair and Rodeo.

"I really enjoy getting out to

meet the literally hundreds of people in other communities and invite them to visit us in Morrow County during our festivities," said the new Queen.

Fay Seitz of Heppner is chaperone for the 1979 court.

Few face opposition

No surprises expected in voting for local candidates on Tuesday

The race among local Morrow County office seekers should cause little adrenalin to flow when voters head to the polls on Tuesday, barring a serious, eleventh hour write-in campaign.

The lack of excitement stems from the fact that all candidates seeking council or mayor's positions in Heppner, Lexington and Ione are running unopposed. If there was ever a good year to enter the arena of local politics, it would have to be 1978.

In Heppner, Mayor Jerry Sweeney faces no challengers in his bid for a fourth term at the helm of city government. Ione Mayor Linda LaRue, appointed to the number-one spot in her town's administration earlier this year, is unchallenged in her first bid for a full term.

Seeking council slots without the inconvenience of opponents in Heppner are Bob Laughlin, Frank Pearson and Joe F. Miller for four-year terms, and Ron Forrar for a two-year term. In Ione, Elmer Holtz, Billy J. Rietmann and E.J. Akers face no challengers in their quest for four-year council terms. In Lexington, Edward Baker and Willard "Bill" Smith are the candidates for two four-year council terms, and Charlene Papineau and Bill Sheirbon are running for two two-year council slots.

Lexington voters will also be deciding on whether to authorize a tax serial levy to buy a new fire truck. The \$44,400 cost of the new fire truck would be paid over a six-year period.

On the county level, Judge D.O. Nelson, Commissioner Homer Hughes, Assessor Everett Harshman, and District Attorney Dennis Doherty are all up for re-election. Only Hughes faces a challenge on the ballot, from Democrat Dan Creamer, a write-in candidate during the primary election. Creamer has not mounted a concerted effort towards unseating Hughes.

however.

Unopposed in bids for director's positions on the county soil and water conservation districts are Pete Richards, Kenneth Wright, and Albert Osmin. A vacancy exists for a fourth director, but no candidates have offered to fill it.

About the only hotly contended local race facing voters will be the decision on who will fill District 55's seat

in the Oregon House of Representatives.

It remains anybody's guess whether the replacement for defeated incumbent Jack Sumner will be Republican Bill Bellamy, a Culver vo-ag teacher, or Democrat Chuck Bennett, a former Salem newsman, now affiliated with a public opinion research firm.

Third bid opening set for Morgan St. bridge

Perhaps the third time will be the charm.

Bids will be opened on Nov. 16 for a new Morgan Street Bridge over Willow Creek in Heppner. Two previous bids for a new span were rejected when they exceeded by far estimated costs for the project.

This summer, the city's

consulting engineer withdrew from any responsibility for keeping the current span open.

The Morgan Street Bridge proposal is one of 12 projects for which the Oregon Department of Transportation will open bids on Nov. 16. The total cost for the dozen projects is expected to be \$1.7 million.

Five from Heppner to attend FFA Convention in Kansas City

Five Heppner High School students will travel to Kansas City, Mo., this weekend to take part in the National Future Farmers of America convention.

Representing the Heppner FFA chapter will be Julie Grieb, Marie Van Schoiack, JoLyn Daly, Dan Nix and Scott Sherer. The five local youths will leave by bus on Saturday, arriving in Kansas City on Monday. After taking in a week of convention activities, the Heppner FFA members will return on Nov. 12.

Last week, the Heppner FFA chapter took first place in district soil judging competition at Blue Mountain Community College. The local soil judging team will take part in state competition at Beaverton next week.

Members of the soil judging team are Ron Young, Lee McCarl, Pat Clark, and Ken Bailey. Accompanying them on the trip to Beaverton will be Tony Currin, Jim Angel, Joe Mollohan and Earl Hammonds.



Bound for Kansas City to attend next week's national Future Farmers of America convention are Heppner High School FFA chapter delegates (from left) Jolynn Daly, Dan Nix, Marie Van Schoiack, and Julie Grieb. The trip will mark Julie's second journey to attend a national FFA convention.

Weather

By Don Gilliam

Date	High	Low	Precip.
Wed., Oct. 25	58	24	
Thurs., Oct. 26	63	27	
Fri., Oct. 27	60	35	
Sat., Oct. 28	59	31	
Sun., Oct. 29	52	35	.06
Mon. Oct. 30	50	26	
Tues., Oct. 31	49	22	

Precipitation for October was .06. The norm for the month is 1.29. In 1977 we had .36. A record was set in 1917 with 0 precipitation for the month.

Mustangs
are CBC
champs

More Sports
On Page 6