

The Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES

Morrow County's Award-Winning Weekly Newspaper

Year In Review Issue

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Looking back at 1978 tells some of what's to come in 1979

City government developments opened a new year of Morrow County news in early January, when Heppner City Council hired the first in a series of city foremen.

During the first council meeting of the year, Raymond Schierman of Milton-Freewater was hired to replace outgoing foreman Paul Sumner, who resigned in December.

Also hired during the meeting was city police officer Tom Howell.

Later in the month, Morrow County School District Superintendent Matt Doherty presented the county's new school budget, which showed a 15.4 per cent increase over the previous year. Reasons for the increase included a higher number of employees needed to ease overcrowding in the county's booming North End.

It was in January that Virginia Grieb of Lexington was elected president of the Morrow County Fair Board to succeed Paul Hisler.

Ione's flood plain problems were in the news as early as January, when a public meeting was held on the subject. Officials in Ione city government were attempting to complete a long range plan for the city, keeping an eye towards limiting development in obvious flood-prone zones.

To identify such flood-prone areas, Ione planners used existing flood hazard maps drafted by insurance companies. Many at the public meeting complained that the insurance maps showed the flood plain area to be too extensive, and suggested waiting for an Army Corps of Engineers flood hazard survey for the area be completed before finishing long-range plans.

The Corps of Engineers survey, when completed later in the year, ended up adding

new dimensions to the meaning of the word "extensive." Morrow County's official first baby of the year was in no hurry to claim her distinction. Born Jan. 15 in Pioneer Memorial Hospital, Melissa Dawn Hausaer weighed six pounds, one-half ounce. Her

parents were Mr. and Mrs. Mike Hausaer of Lexington.

On a dimmer note, 17-year-old Kenneth Plant of Boardman was arrested two days later, after he allegedly held up a Boardman Texaco attendant at gunpoint, then

threatened police officers with the weapon when they arrived

at the scene. Plant's shotgun discharged when police struggled with the youth in making his arrest. Plant was later convicted for his role in the incident.

Company town closes

In the closing days of January, Kinzua Corporation announced that it would permanently close down its facilities at the town of Kinzua in Wheeler County, and make "every reasonable effort" to place 160 terminated employees in jobs at the firm's expanding operation in Heppner.

During the same week, John Maas was ordained a Lutheran minister, and installed as pastor of Hope and Valby Lutheran churches. Several days earlier, the Rev. Wayne Smith had been named to take over pastoral duties at the Christian Life Center Assembly of God.

Heppner began discussing its flood plain problems in February, when Chuck Steele of the Flood Insurance Administration appeared in town during a public meeting. At that time, flood plain maps showed Main Street to be under five feet of water in the event of a "100-year" flood, prompting Mayor Jerry Sweeney to comment, "I think you're going to kill business downtown."

When asked what effect construction of a Willow Creek dam would have on Heppner's flood plain, Steele responded that "except for Hinton and Shobe creeks, it would be pretty much eliminate your problem."

Steele's statement lost some

credibility in December, when Corps of Engineers surveys showed that a considerable portion of Heppner would remain in flood plain designated areas, even with construction of the dam.

During the first week in February, officials at Columbia Basin Electric Co-op were tabulating losses received in a recent ice storm that destroyed miles of line and some 680 power poles, mostly in the Condon area. Jack Frost ended up leaving the cooperative with a tab for more than \$250,000 in damages.

In a second meeting on floodplain problems held in mid-February, Ron Barrett of the Corps of Engineers told Heppner residents that construction of the Willow Creek dam would result in "shrinking the flood plain to zero" along Willow Creek and Balm Fork, adding that there was a "strong possibility that flood waters would be contained in the creek channel" for Shobe and Hinton creeks. At the same meeting, Steve Hickock of Sen. Mark Hatfield's staff said that the senior Oregon senator would resume efforts to build the dam, if local residents strongly demonstrate that they want it.

The Heppner Mustangs wound up their basketball season with a 13-7 record—a vast improvement over the previous year. The Fillies fared even better, taking

second place in district competition.

Donna Palmer was named queen of the Morrow County Fair and Rodeo in February. Selected as princesses in her court were Kim Pettyjohn and Laurie Childers of Ione.

Morrow County voters in early March went to the polls for the first of several times during 1978, to approve by a 6 to 1 margin a three-year, \$195,000 levy for maintaining and improving county roads.

Following a series of committee meetings and hearings, the Heppner-Morrow County Chamber of Commerce went on record supporting the proposed construction of the Willow Creek dam. Heppner city government and the Morrow County Court followed suit the next week, stating that they would support the dam only if the impoundment would eliminate flood plains.

The second election in a year of many decisions was held in mid-March, with Morrow Countians voting 764-428 in favor of a \$4.8 million school construction bond issue. Passage of the measure allowed the county school district to accommodate North End growth by building a new junior high school in Irrigon and a new elementary school in Boardman, as well as to build a new Riverside High



Governor-elect Vic Atiyeh was only one of many political candidates visiting Morrow County this past year. Shown here with his local campaign chairman, Don Peterson, Atiyeh carried Morrow County in the November election, as did Republican Bill Bellamy who became the District 55 State Representative—a seat held by former Heppnerite Jack Sumner.

shop facility and make renovations at existing schools in Heppner and Ione. Work on the new North End buildings was well under way by the end of the year.

Former county judge Oscar Peterson resigned his post on the Port of Morrow Commission in March, and Kenneth Smouse, a Baseline Road area dryland wheat grower was

named the 1978 Conservation Man of the Year.

The county's medical problems began surfacing in March, when Heppner physicians J.H. Diehl and Richard Carpenter notified the Morrow County Court that they would be unable to staff and operate the new medical clinic in Boardman. Plans had called

for the doctors to start practice at the clinic on April 1. Prompting the doctors' decision not to operate out of the Boardman facility was the departure of Dr. Joe Gifford from the area. Gifford had been a partner of the other two physicians, and his leaving caused his former associates "considerable concern regarding our ability to staff

the clinic in both Heppner and Boardman," according to a letter to the County Court.

The Gazette-Times celebrated its 95th birthday at the end of March. The newspaper, Heppner's oldest business establishment still in operation, became the eighth oldest newspaper in the state to be published continuously since its founding.

Tax elections mark spring

Elections were held in Morrow County again in April, with the county school budget passing by a 584-443 margin, while voters turned down the first of several Blue Mountain Community College budget proposals 524-466. Bob Rietmann was successful in turning back the challenge of Beryle Brizendine to retain his seat on BMCC's board of trustees.

Heppner's first annual Spring Lumberjack Show in mid-April attracted professional logging sports contestants from throughout the northwest—much to the delight of 800 hometown enthusiasts who gathered to watch the event. All-around lumberjack honors went to Roy Booth of LaGrande, a past world champion in three events. Best local competitor was Monte Stookey. Events ranged from a choker cable race to axe throwing.

During the same week, Randy Krueger was hired to replace Ray Schierman as city foreman. Krueger had been serving as the operator of the city sewer treatment plant prior to his appointment as foreman.

Frank Anderson was appointed to the Port of Morrow Commission in April, filling the vacancy created by the

resignation of Oscar Peterson in March.

Morrow County and Heppner City governments were in the midst of paring down budget requests from various departments, but neither agency was able to keep funding requests below the six per cent limitations.

Heppner's increased budget went to the polls in early May, with voters approving the measure by a 133-78 margin. Less than 25 per cent of the city's voters bothered to turn out for the vote. The budget exceeded the six per cent limitation by \$36,759.

The Ione Cardinals took home their first track trophy in a decade in early May, when they upset eight other teams to win the Big Sky Conference district track meet in Arlington.

Linda LaRue was appointed Ione's mayor during the same week, replacing Robert Drake, who resigned after selling his Independent Garage.

Heppner High's Maureen Healy took first place in the State Class A track meet at Lewis and Clark College in the high jump event. Heppner's girls golf team took State Class A top honors for the third consecutive year during state tournament action in Portland. The Mustangs lost

their final baseball game of the season to Condon, forcing the Heppner nine out of a playoff berth despite a 6-2 league record. Condon, with an identical 6-2 record, went on to post-season play, since the Blue Devils accumulated more AZZI points than Heppner.

Reaching a major landmark in their lives in late May were 52 Heppner High and 14 Ione High School graduating seniors. Kathy Wolff served as valedictorian during commencement ceremonies at Heppner, while Natalie Tews was Ione's top student.

The May primary election saw political newcomer Chuck Bennett of Gates defeat in-

cumbent Jack Sumner of Heppner for the Democratic nomination for District 55 representative. A revised Blue

Mountain Community College budget went down in flames for a second time, while Morrow County voters broke with a statewide trend for Vic

Atiyeh to cast in favor of Roger Martin as the Republican gubernatorial nominee.

Several city streets were partially blocked during the month, as Pacific Northwest Bell workers began laying underground telephone cable throughout the city. May also marked the start of two-hour parking zones in the downtown area.

This week...

This issue of The Heppner Gazette-Times looks back at what has transpired in southern Morrow County over the past year. As the headline at the top of this page says, looking back at 1978 forecasts some of what's to come in 1979.

Regular features and this week's general news appears on page two and Birdine Tullis' regular column appears on page nine.

The Gazette-Times office will be closed next Monday, Jan. 1, 1979 and all news and advertising deadlines will be at noon next Tuesday.



Kinzua Corporation officials announced early in the year that operations at the company-owned town of the same name would cease come mid-summer. The announcement was a shock to many Kinzuans who have spent most of their lives nestled in the mountain valley.