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Meeting canceled

Due to weather conditions, the meeting scheduled for tonight with members of the Northwest Medical Foundation has been cancelled. NWMF officials were to have explained the draft report conducted recently for Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

Vote set for April 3

Budget for Morrow schools may increase 22% in 79-80

A proposed budget calling for a 22 per cent increase in expenditures by the Morrow County school system during the coming fiscal year was outlined Monday in a budget address by County School Superintendent Matt Doherty.

The proposed budget—scheduled to go to county voters on April 3, since it will exceed the six per cent limitation—would require a total tax increase of \$436,143. How the increased budget would effect the tax rate remains a question mark, until the county's taxable value is computed later this spring. Using an estimate of \$400 million for the county's taxable value, the county school system's cost to taxpayers in 1979-80 would be \$9.37 per \$1,000 of property.

If the \$400 million value estimate holds true, property owners would actually pay less in taxes during the coming year than they did

during 1978-79, since the tax rate during the current year is \$9.59 per \$1,000. The tax base for the current fiscal year is \$328.3 million. However, Doherty said he was "cautious" about the \$400 million estimate, arrived at with the aid of the county assessor's office, since the figure could change in either direction in months to come.

The bulk of the budget increase stems from the need to hire staffs for the new Irrigon junior high and Boardman elementary school, expected to open midway through the coming school year. A total of \$222,404 is earmarked in the proposed budget to staff the new schools. The \$222,404 figure does not include the proposed hiring of two additional teachers needed to serve the increasing student population at Riverside High School, or the hiring of part time physical education and art teachers at Heppner and Ione.

Also contributing to the increase is an anticipated steep hike in the cost of electricity. The school district's two power suppliers have confirmed major increases in power costs,

prompting Doherty to budget for a 40 per cent overall increase.

A total of \$56,644 was budgeted for operating the North End's two new schools once they are built. The cost for building the structures was covered in a bond levy passed last spring.

The proposed budget also reflects increased costs in supplies and services caused by inflation.

In his address, Doherty noted that "it is important to know that at this time, the district and its certificated employees (teachers) have not reached a salary agreement for the period covered by this proposal. The district has reached an agreement with representatives of the classified employees (drivers, cooks, custodians, etc.), but the employees as a group have yet to approve the contract."

"For this reason," Doherty continued, "salary proposals contained in the budget document are largely estimated. Since employee benefits are closely related to salaries, these areas will also require adjustments when final agreement is reached."

Doherty delivered his

address to the school district's budget committee, which is charged with reviewing the document and making any changes members see fit to perform. In closing, Doherty told committee members that "your considerations must be for quality as well as economy at all times keeping in mind that taxpayers caught in the inflationary spiral are becoming increasingly resistant to higher taxes."

The budget committee consists of Bob Stevens, Jerry Holloman and Jim Wishart of Heppner, Judy Currin of Lexington, Earl Trudeau of Boardman, Gene Rietmann of Ione and Francine Evans of Irrigon. School board members also sit on the panel.

Following Doherty's address Monday, the committee elected Rietmann to serve as president and Mrs. Evans to serve as vice president.

The committee then began reviewing the budget document with Doherty.

The budget calendar calls for a second budget committee meeting to be held on Jan. 15, with Jan. 22 set aside as the date to vote on whether to approve the document.



New officers

Outgoing Chamber of Commerce President Don Cole accepts a "plaque of appreciation" from 1979 President Ernie McCabe. Looking on are Bill Kuhn (far left), first vice-president Dave Dollarhide (far right). The new officers were installed at the chamber's noon luncheon Monday at the West of Willow Restaurant.

No wilderness areas proposed for Heppner District of forest

No areas in the Heppner District of the Umatilla National Forest have been recommended for wilderness status, according to an announcement last week by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland.

Under the RARE II land management planning process, six areas in the Heppner District were designated potential wilderness areas. The six areas—Texas Butte, 14,039 acres; Kelly Prairie, 9,500 acres; Skookum, 11,229 acres; Potamus, 5,197 acres; Baloney Basin, 4,489 acres, and Hells Half Acre, 2,975 acres—had been proposed for possible wilderness status during an 18-month review and evaluation period.

None of the six areas were listed among Forest Service land tracts recommended for wilderness status by Bergland last week.

Nationwide, Bergland recommended wilderness designations for more than 15 million acres of National Forest land. About 370,000 acres of that land lies in Oregon, mostly in the southwestern portion of the state. Set aside for further planning in Oregon were nearly 400,000 additional acres—none of them in the Umatilla National Forest.

The largest wilderness area in Oregon recommended by Bergstrom is the Sky Lakes unit, totaling more than 116,000 acres just south of Crater Lake National Park. Only one area—the 34,000 acre lower Minam area in the Willowa-Whitman National Forest—has been proposed for Northeastern Oregon.

In February of last year, wilderness status was granted

to the 180,088 Wenaha-Tucannon area in the Umatilla National Forest, straddling the Oregon-Washington border northeast of Pendleton. More than 500,000 acres in Northeastern Oregon currently hold wilderness status, in the Eagle Cap, Hells Canyon, Wenaha-Tucannon and Strawberry Mountain units.

The decision not to include the six Heppner District RARE II proposal areas in the wilderness package shows that "the concerns of the community here have been properly met," commented Allen Nistad of the Kinzua Corp., a major purchaser of Umatilla National Forest timber. Under a proposed Heppner unit Land Use Plan, "unique areas can still be preserved," and the requirements of "recreation, timber and livestock can be kept under constant review," rather than locked into a no-management situation under wilderness status, Nistad said.

"It's my personal view that there are unique alpine areas that require wilderness status," Nistad stated. But, he noted, the Heppner District, under the proposed management plan, would be able to maintain stands of old growth timber, preserve scenic belts, and curtail timber harvesting along streams.

Beryl Stillman of Heppner, project manager for the Elk Foundation Assn., and an outspoken advocate of including Heppner District land in the wilderness program, said he was "disappointed" that no local units were included in Bergland's package. "But I'm not really surprised," he admitted. The six Heppner District sites "are not that big

and not widely known."

The effort to keep the six Heppner District sites free of development will continue, Stillman said. "We're not done yet."

The Heppner Land Use Plan is in the public comment stage, with public comments on the proposal slated to be taken no later than Feb. 19. Copies of the report are available at the Heppner District office.

In announcing his RARE II wilderness proposals, Bergland noted that during the next 45 days he will seek the counsel of Congressmen and Governors. "After this time, I will make my legislative

recommendations final and send them to President Carter. I expect that shortly afterwards the President will transmit the wilderness proposals to the 96th Congress with his recommendation that these areas be designated as wilderness," he said.

Roadless areas that failed to be included in Bergland's wilderness package—including the six Heppner District areas—will receive no action until 90 days after Congress is in session," Bergland said. After that, these areas will be managed for multiple resource uses other than wilderness.

Scott McEwen nominated for Air Force Academy

Heppner High School student Scott McEwen is one of ten young men and women to be nominated by Congressman Al Ullman for appointment to the Air Force Academy.

The nomination was announced late last week by Ullman's office.

McEwen, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Donald McEwen of Heppner, is an Eagle Scout, a varsity football and baseball player, a high school Honor Society member, and has served as president of the school's backpacking and Spanish clubs.

Final selection for admission to the Air Force Academy is based on the Academy's academic and physical examinations. McEwen said he will not know until early spring whether or not he has been accepted to the Colorado Springs, Colo., academy.

Ullman's nominations were based on scholastic achievement, athletic involvement, leadership qualities and extracurricular activities.

Heavy loads urged off

County roads during thaw

In order to prevent road damage, Morrow County Government is asking ranchers, loggers and other heavy equipment operators to keep heavy loads off county roads during the thaw that will eventually come.

The county is requesting voluntary compliance, since it has no enforcement capabilities, except in areas with posted weight limits.

For information on suggested maximum weights to be hauled over county roads during the thaw period, contact Doc Sherer, Morrow County Roadmaster, at 676-9401.

Grand jury indictments

The Morrow County Grand Jury this week returned eight indictments against three men. Two additional true bills were secret.

Vernon Harold Scalf of Ione received indictments for second degree burglary and second degree theft in connection with a burglary last year at the Hoskins Ranch on Upper Rhea Creek.

The grand jury re-indicted Todd Markillie of Boardman on three pending drug charges and returned a new indictment for delivery of a controlled substance to a juvenile.

Two separate indictments were returned charging Delphin LeRoy Henderson of The Dalles, formerly of Ione, with forgery.

Jan. 19 arraignment appearances have been scheduled for the persons named in the indictments.

Hospital board meets Tuesday

The Pioneer Memorial Hospital board will meet in regular session next Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 7:30 p.m. at the hospital.



Two points

Gregg Rietmann gets past Echo defender to go up for two points during Cardinal basketball action in Ione Friday. Rietmann, a five-foot, nine inch sophomore, was good for nine points in the game.