

The Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES
VIEWPOINT

Consider consequences in voting on Willow Creek Dam

Residents of Heppner have the unique opportunity to determine the future of their town when they go to the polls March 28.

Along with the ballot for a maintenance and operating levy will be an opinion ballot asking "whether or not you are in favor of Willow Creek Dam."

The explanation of the ballot question reads: "Presently the City of Heppner is extremely vulnerable to floods. Are you in favor of the Willow Creek Dam to reduce the Flood Plain level in the City of Heppner, Oregon?"

The kicker in the ballot explanation is the reference to the "flood plain." Unfortunately, no explanation is given as to what the two words—flood plain—actually mean. Therein lies a complex issue is separate from, but greatly affected by construction of the Willow Creek Dam.

The real impact of the flood plain—without the Willow Creek Dam—is that anyone building within those boundaries will be severely restricted. In most cases building couldn't be done, leaving numerous vacant lots in Heppner without potential. If the city planning commission allowed construction, the person doing the building would have to meet floodproofing standards, which in the case of a private residence means elevating the home three, four or five feet off the ground; commercial structures would have to put water-tight covers over doors and windows. In addition, flood insurance which is necessary to obtain a loan, would be cost prohibitive. An example would be a \$100,000 building in a 5-foot flood plain; flood insurance premiums would come to about \$20,000 annually...that's each and every year.

The paragraph above is an over-simplification of the flood plain problem Heppner faces, but it points out the basics.

One of those basics is that before one makes a choice on whether or not they are for the Willow Creek Dam, the individual should become familiar with the flood plain and what it means to Heppner, and every citizen has the opportunity to do just that.

Tonight, Thursday, March 15 at 7:30 p.m., the City of Heppner is sponsoring a public meeting at which time the flood plain and how

the Willow Creek Dam affects the flood plain, will be explained. The Heppner City Council has passed the ball to the residents of Heppner and the outcome will either be a first-and-ten or a punt situation. It behooves the people of Heppner to hang on to the ball.

'Shop Heppner' campaign expands

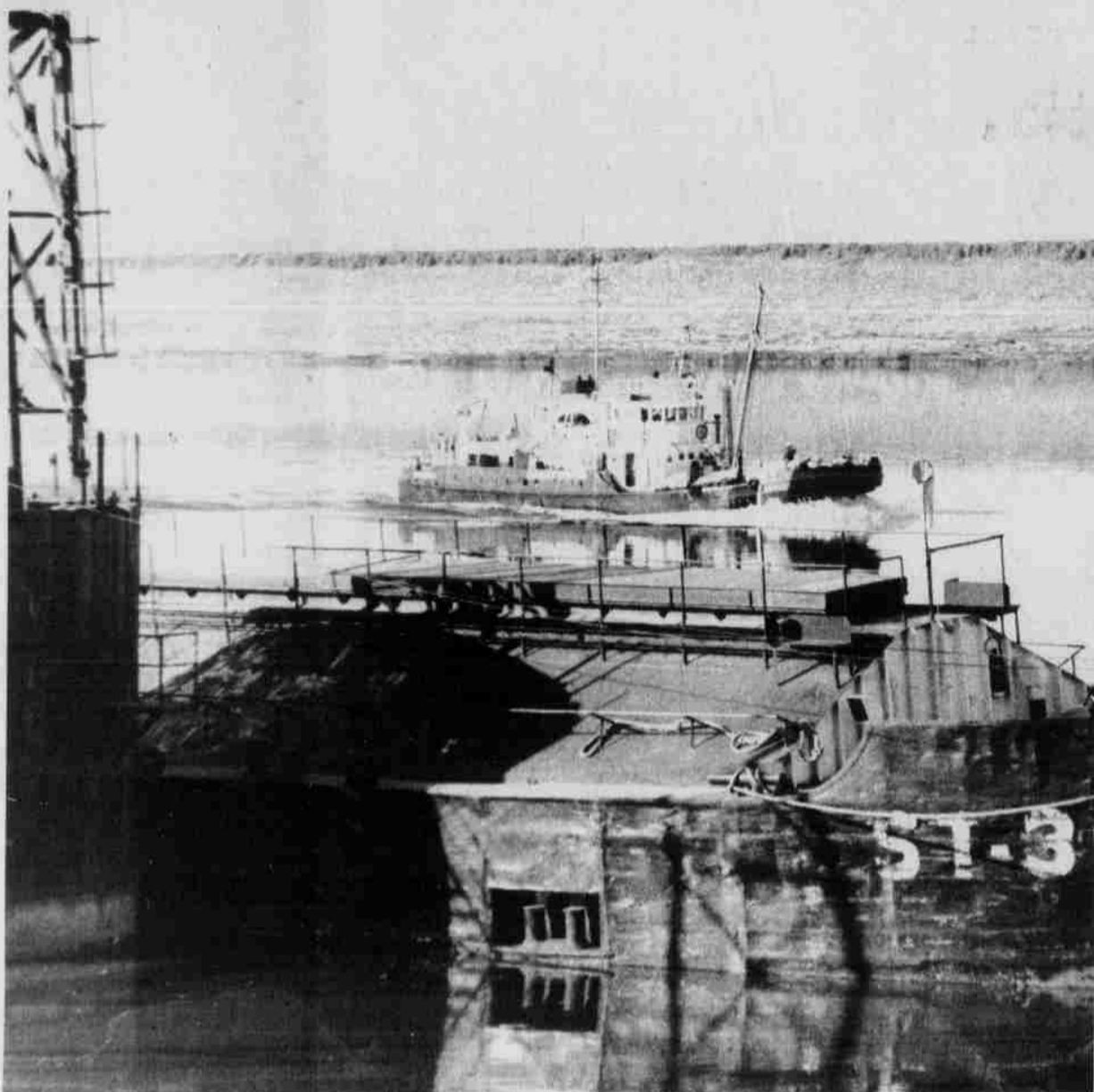
Last week Heppner merchants began a "shop Heppner" campaign in the Gazette-Times for a two-fold purpose. First, the merchants would like to have you shop Heppner first, and secondly, because they're proud of Heppner's business district and what it means to the community.

For an area with the size and population of Southern Morrow County, Heppner's business selection and grouping is one of the best we've seen. Last week's ad touched on the personal service and selection aspects of shopping Heppner. Future advertisements will tell you how the business community contributes financially to the well-being of the area; shopping basket comparisons on items ranging from groceries to drug products to clothing.

This week—on page nine of the Gazette-Times—your Heppner merchants ask the question "You know you're living in Heppner because..."

All you have to do is finish the thought with a sentence or two, touching on some aspects of living in a small town. Three responses will be selected as "winners" and first, second and third prizes will be awarded. The first place thought will bring a \$100 shopping spree to it's author; the second place thought receives a \$50 shopping trip and third place is worth \$25 on the town.

The contest is a fun one and the prizes aren't bad for a few minutes effort and it carries through the merchants' message "Shop Heppner...We've Got a Lot To Offer!"



Coast Guard cutter slips past Morrow County Grain Growers barge loading facility at Patterson ferry. The vessel was making a springtime swing up the Columbia through Morrow County, repairing navigational aids.

Sifting through the TIMES

While the sheep industry is currently unable to keep up with national demands for domestic mutton and wool, the situation was substantially different 50 years ago this week.

At that time, the Gazette-Times carried a front-page article calling for reductions in Oregon's sheep herds, since "Oregon now has all the sheep she can properly feed." According to the 1929 story, "Too many have the idea that there is a lot of money to be made in sheep. All kinds of people who have never been in the sheep business are trying to buy sheep. It is not the old, experienced sheep man, who is expanding the business, but the merchant, lawyer, banker and school teacher...If these amateur sheep speculators could injure no one but themselves, the situation would be less serious, but if they keep on at the present rate, they will put the prices of ewes, feed and pasture to figures that will ruin even our best operators."

During the same March week in 1929, Henry Arbogast and son Eldon returned from a flying trip to Portland, where they purchased a planer, edger and other equipment to increase the output of their Hardman area sawmill. Arbogast's business agent, L.J. Scott, reported to the Gazette-Times "an increased demand for lumber at very attractive prices." Arbogast's mill, at that time, had 500,000 board feet of logs ready to be milled.

Two traveling businessmen from Portland met head-on near Lena in Morrow County during the same week, demolishing a new Hupmobile Six and a Paige touring car. Ed Ziegler, on business for the Ruby Livestock Co. in Portland, claimed the blame for the accident, which resulted in a \$785 loss to the Hupmobile operated by T.H. Newcombe, a traveling salesman for Portland's J.K. Gill Co.

Thirty years ago this week, Rod Wentworth and Omar Rietmann gave a demonstration of their new stubble cutting machine, invented by the pair in Ione.

The machine operated on the principle of a fan-blade lawn mower, working off a power take off unit of a tractor. The Nelson Brothers wheat operation at Lexington was to use the device during the 1949 wheat season.

During the same week, Malarky and Moore of Portland submitted a low bid of \$167,300 for construction of the proposed Pioneer Memorial Hospital, LaVerne Van Marter was attempting to organize a summer baseball league, and Heppner's William Kenny was nominated in Gonzaga University's "Most Popular Irish Lad" contest.

Twenty-five years ago, Juergen Dobberke, journalist for the Berlin newspaper "Der Tag," spent a week on the Gazette-Times staff as part of an exchange program worked out by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Assn. Among other things, Dobberke observed that "Heppner is not yet a paradise-lost, because it does not have any TV sets. You still have the time available to read a book, talk to friends, or listen to a good record."

Ten years ago this week, Vernon "Pete" Gilman became the 20,000th patient admitted to Pioneer Memorial Hospital, then in its 19th year.

Losses to Sutherlin and Dayton high schools prevented the Heppner Mustangs from receiving the State A-2 basketball crown in state tournament action at Coos Bay. However, Heppner's John McCabe was made an honorable mention choice for the state's A-2 All-Star squad.

Five years ago this week, Heppner's planning commission gave tentative approval to Kinzua Corporation's planned \$385,000, 22-unit housing project, to be located on 2.12 acres adjacent to Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

Sincerely,
Cliff W. Green

Meg Murray

LETTERS FROM READERS

Green defends city vote on dam

Citizens of Heppner:

At it's next regular meeting, April 2, the Heppner City Council will make a decision that will, in my opinion, determine the future of this town. We must decide if we can live with the flood plain as recently presented to us, or if the reduction of flood plain and flood depths expected to occur from construction of Willow Creek Dam, warrant construction of such a dam.

This is such a serious decision, that the council felt the people should have an opportunity to express their desire. Consequently, on March 28 at the budget election, you will have a chance to mark a ballot advising the council of the direction you wish to go.

It is most important that all be well informed as to the consequences of their choice. There is a lot of misinformation being passed around about

the flood plain and the dam. Accordingly, we have arranged a town meeting for 7:30 p.m. March 15 at the grade school multipurpose room to explain the options available to us.

The City Council has been criticized for asking to hear from you on this issue. It has been alleged that the people don't understand the situation sufficiently to make a decision. I will continue to defend the council's action and I have faith in the people of this town. However, I cannot emphasize enough that we must all have the true facts as to our choices before we vote. Therefore, I will expect to see the multipurpose room filled on March 15. Please don't let me down.

Leave emotions out of Willow Creek Dam vote, writer urges

Editor:

It seems these days we are all faced with situations for which we do not feel wild enthusiasm, and which are brought on by circumstances over which we have no control. The Willow Creek Dam seems to be a case in point. We can't stop the flooding if nature deems it, nor can we stop the government from denying us financing if it feels we are not doing all we can to prevent the flooding.

Heppner at least has a choice, unlike Lexington and Ione at present. It behooves the people of Heppner to really understand all aspects of "to have or not have" a dam before casting their vote.

All areas in Morrow County were happy to have the federal grant come through for Pioneer Memorial Hospital, enabling us to secure the badly needed x-ray machine and other improvements. Does anyone know whether we would be eligible for any further government help with our hospital if we turn down the proposed dam?

Who knows which businesses would be the

first to go for lack of funds for flood insurance? Or a business loan? Which businesses do we consider dispensible? Are our banks dispensible? Is building to cease? And each homeowner welded to their property for lack of mortgage money?

I was in hopes that Heppner could apply for funds to construct a low cost apartment house for the elderly, such as John Day has just completed. It could provide homes at a reasonable cost so our retired could stay in the community as many wish to do, and help free up housing for growing families. But we could cross off all types of assistance of this nature with no federal funds available.

The people of Heppner are being asked by their city council to vote on an apparently emotion-fraught issue; unfortunately, emotion has no place in a decision of such consequence. It is vitally necessary that every person understand what a "no" or "yes" vote signifies for the future.

Public Officials

U.S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield

Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510. Member of Appropriations Committee, Interior Committee, Rules Committee, and Indian Policy Review Commission. Portland office, Pioneer Courthouse, Rm. 107. 520 S.W. Morrison. Portland, Ore. 97204, phone 221-3386.

U.S. Sen. Bob Packwood

Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510. Member of Finance Committee and Commerce Committee. Portland office, 1002 N.E. Holladay, Rm. 700 (P.O. Box 3621), Portland, Ore. 97208, phone 233-4471.

U.S. Rep. Al Ullman, Of The Second District

House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515. Member of Ways and Means Committee. Salem office, 530 Center St., Rm 330 (P.O. Box 247), Salem, Ore. 97308, phone 399-5724.

Gov. Vic Atiyeh

State Capitol, Salem, Ore. 97310, phone 378-3100.

State Sen. Ken Jernstedt

(Morrow, Gilliam and other counties), State Capitol, Rm. S317, Salem, Ore. 97310, phone 378-8850.

State Sen. Robert Smith

(Wheeler, Grant and other counties), State Capitol, Rm. S323, Salem, Ore. 97310, phone 378-8176.

State Rep. Bill Bellamy

(Morrow, Gilliam and other counties), State Capitol, Rm. H364, Salem, Ore. 97310, phone 378-8853.

State Rep. Max Simpson

(Wheeler, Grant and other counties), State Capitol, Rm. H481, Salem, Ore. 97310, phone 378-8789.

Persons wanting information on bills, hearings, and other doings of the Oregon Legislature may call, toll-free, 1-800-452-0290

Tax relief proposals again being considered in Oregon Legislature ; initiatives abound

By Kathleen Glanville Eagle Newspapers Capitol Correspondent

SALEM—If the Oregon Legislature does nothing else this year, it has to come up with a tax-relief plan that will make most Oregonians happy.

If it doesn't, taxpayers are likely to take things into their own hands. No one scoffs at a frustrated electorate, particularly after proponents of tax-limitation gathered a record number of signatures to put Measure 6 on the November 1978 ballot.

Some people aren't waiting to see what kind of tax relief the Legislature is going to produce. Nineteen initiative petitions have already been filed for the 1980 election. Six deal with some form of tax reform and more are expected.

But it's not just tax reform that has inspired people to circumvent the Legislature.

Leslie V. Bahr of Salem wants to limit legislative salaries and expenses. Marc Chaitlin of Ashland wants to limit legislative terms. Lynn Abraham of Salem wants highway taxes to be used just for highways. Peter Applegate of Ashland wants a constitutional amendment to keep women from charging their husbands with rape. And Karl Wiensz of Rickreall wants to repeal the 55 mph speed limit.

Six of the initiatives were filed by Jimmy Dale Whittenburg, former Portland pharmacist. His prescription for good government over the past two years has been a

series of initiative petitions aimed at abolishing the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

It was Whittenburg who copied California's Proposition 13 to give rebellious taxpayers in Oregon a banner to gather around.

Whittenburg, who has recently served time in jail on bad check charges, hasn't filed any tax proposals this year, but he has a petition to prohibit banks from charging a penalty for overdrawn checks.

Secretary of State Norma Paulus says some people manipulate the initiative process. It's simple to file a petition, hold a press conference to publicize an issue, and

never gather a single signature, she says.

It costs the state about \$400 to process each initiative petition, frivolous or not.

Paulus and Attorney General James Redden are backing legislation requiring 20 signatures before an initiative petition can be filed. That might weed out those who fill out their petitions on the spur of the minute in the capitol coffee shop.

"I'm not trying to keep down the number of petitions," says Paulus. "It would just preclude to some degree having Mr. Whittenburg file petitions dealing with his personal problems."

Although some of the proposals are silly, illegal of

self-serving, Paulus thinks the Legislature should take note of the surge of interest in the initiative process.

Dissatisfaction with state government prompted Oregonians to adopt the initiative and referendum provisions in 1902 and Oregon was the first state to make use of the measures. There were seven initiative measures on the 1978 ballot, the largest number for any year since 1936.

"When representative government is working very well in the minds of the people, there wouldn't be any need to do this except in an extraordinary occurrence," she says. "Yet now it's an everyday process."

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