

The Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES

VOL. 97, NO. 27

HEPPNER, OREGON

THURSDAY, JULY 5, 1979

Weather

	High	Low	Precip.
Tues., June 26	93	57	.05
Wed., June 27	91	52	..
Thur., June 28	93	53	..
Fri., June 29	89	54	..
Sat., June 30	75	51	..
Sun., July 1	69	50	.04

Precipitation for June was .24, far below the norm which is 1.40. In June, 1978, precipitation was 1.04.

Corps designing plans for Willow Creek recreation area

Funds have not been appropriated yet by Congress for construction of the Willow Creek Dam but the Walla Walla District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is working on design plans for the Willow Creek Recreation Area.

At Wednesday's Morrow County Court meeting, corps officials asked the county to put up half of the money for construction of the park, an estimated \$108,000 under a proposed contractual agreement with the federal government.

Jerry Eyestone, project coordinator of the design branch of the Corp's Walla Walla office and Ed Groff, an additional official told County Judge D.O. Nelson and the two commissioners, Dorothy Krebs and Warren McCoy, that they were preparing a draft of the Willow Creek Project Recreational Contract, specifying that the federal government and county would split the costs of completing park facilities on the proposed 88 acre reservoir after the project's completion. The corps said under federal law the county would be required to meet the costs of maintenance and operation.

The corps is required to install such minimum facilities as a boat ramp, parking spaces, access roads and a bulk toilet excluding grass, trees and restrooms if the county decided not to accept the agreement. If the other amenities besides the minimum are built, Eyestone placed the cost estimate of the recreational park at \$348,000. Deducting \$141,000, \$207,000 would be shared by the county and federal government under the proposed arrangement.

If the county goes along with the Corps' recommendations, the arrangement would have to meet the approval of Corps officials in Washington, D.C.

The corps suggested that the county use volunteer labor to construct some of the facilities or "in kind" work.

At one point in the discussions, County Judge D.O. Nelson said, "I'm not sure Morrow County can share equally the costs." And Commissioner McCoy added, "You are paying twice the labor costs as the county."

Groff replied that the cost-

sharing arrangement would only be decided after appraisal of the completed park facilities.

Nelson was interested in whether the county could acquire state Bureau of Recreation monies to develop the recreational area.

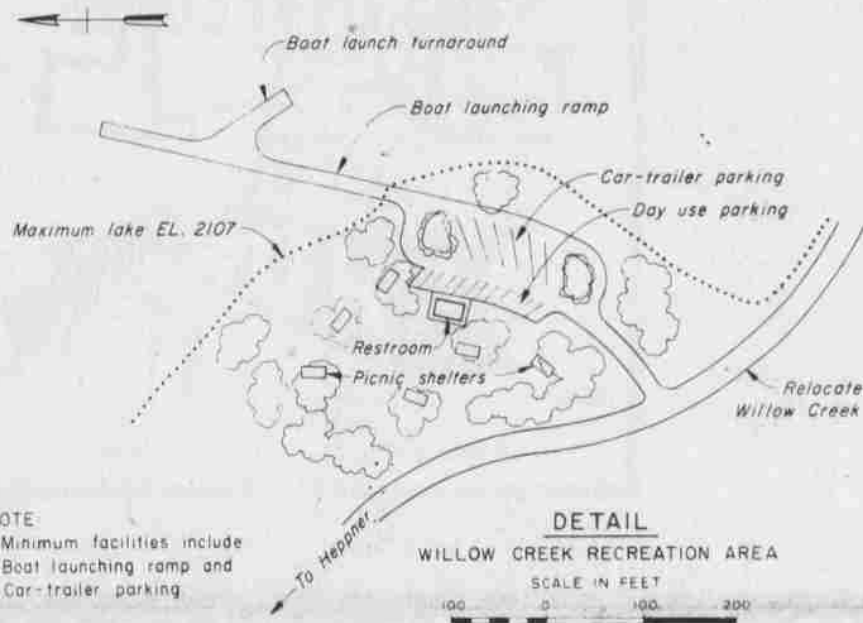
The Corps officials said plans for the recreational area

are not set in concrete and could be changed before final approval.

The Corps will hold the title of the land but the county designated as the local entity required to undertake maintenance and operations, according to Public Law 8972. As for charging fees for daily use of the recreational

area, Eyestone said he didn't think the federal government would approve.

Although the Walla Walla District will be involved in the design and construction phase of the proposed Willow Creek Dam, it will be under the authority of the Portland District of the Corps of Engineers, said Eyestone.



The proposed Willow Creek Recreation Area was outlined on maps shown to the Morrow County Court Wednesday by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers if the Willow Creek Dam project receives Congressional appropriations. Corps officials say this is only a conceptual design and may not be the final plans for the project.

Hatfield asks \$3.2 million for construction start during 1980 year

Senator Mark Hatfield told a group of citizens gathered at the Morrow County Courthouse Monday afternoon that \$3.2 million in construction funds for the Willow Creek Dam project has been asked for by the sub-committee on public works appropriations for the 1980 fiscal year.

"I hope Rep. Ullman will be able to persuade the House of Representatives to go for the appropriation," said Hatfield, who is the senior Republican on the Senate sub-committee. Earlier this year Rep. Ullman withdrew support for the Willow Creek project from the main appropriations bill, then came back to say he would seek funding of the dam in the supplemental budget.

Hatfield, who has been a leading figure in getting the Willow Creek Dam funded in the last couple years, said committee approval of the \$3.2 million was one of the biggest hurdles the request would have to overcome. From his committee the appropriation request moves on to a full Senate committee for approval before being sent to the House.

The Senator noted that

preliminary figures show the Willow Creek project to have less than a 1-to-1 cost-benefit ratio which is generally needed to receive funding.

"People tend to forget the 1903 Heppner flood is still the record loss of life for a flash flood," said Sen. Hatfield, "and that is one of the factors that bothers me about the cost-benefit ratio; no consid-

eration is given to loss of life and need—it's strictly based on property values."

If the \$3.2 million appropriation is approved by the Senate and House committees, the funds would be used to begin construction of the dam and related facilities.

A group of about 20 persons attended the informal session with Sen. Hatfield.

FAA okays airport at Port of Morrow; fall start expected

The Northwest regional office of the Federal Aviation Administration in Seattle, has given the go-ahead to the Port of Morrow to construct the new Boardman-Irrigon Airport, according to Port officials.

FAA officials have approved an application for a 3,500 ft. runway accommodating 30 single engine and 10 multi-engine aircraft to be constructed along old Highway 730 on Port property. Construction is expected to begin

in the fall after the harvest of crops and be about the same size as Boeing Field in Seattle, according to Port Manager Buddy Toadvin.

The U.S. Navy, who uses the nearby Boardman Bombing Range, told the FAA the proposed public-use airport on the east side of the port property would not conflict with its operations.

A special meeting was expected to be held Wednesday at 10 a.m. in Boardman by the Port of Morrow board of

directors to make a decision on the Port's waste water system.

DMV Office closure for July 11-12 noted

The Oregon State Motor Vehicle Office in Heppner will be closed July 11 and 12 because of scheduled trips to Condon and Fossil areas.

Butter Creek groundwater decision July 16

The Water Resources Department will announce its future intention in connection with ground water study and regulation in the Butter Creek area near Hermiston no later than July 16, according to Jim Sexson, Department Director.

The Department's order, declaring the area a critical ground water area, regulating

and limiting water use, was reversed by the Oregon Court of Appeals and remanded to the Director.

"The Department now has several alternative courses it might pursue," said Sexson. "We're evaluating all of them to determine the most responsible way to protect the area's ground water resource. In

deciding how we will proceed, we are examining data that have been compiled since the order was first issued."

Sexson added, "I hope to hold a meeting with area residents in connection with the Department's announcement to explain the decision and get a first-hand reaction to it."

Hospital levy back to voters again August 2

Amount of levy to be decided

The Morrow County Court has decided to resubmit the Pioneer Memorial Hospital levy to a third voter test on Thursday, August 2 following last Tuesday's rejection of the \$549,077 request by five votes, 624-620.

The county assessor was requested by the court to allow the measure to be placed on the ballot 35 days after the June 26 election or August 2. According to County Judge D.O. Nelson, the court has received assurances that there are enough funds to operate the hospital until that date.

Hospital board members met in a special meeting Monday night at the Nomad Restaurant in Boardman to make recommendations on the levy amount to be resubmitted to the voters, but postponed a decision until a further meeting, next Monday, 7:30 p.m. at Columbia Basin Electric Co-op to allow more input from the medical and nursing staff. The board also established a deadline for citizen comments about the hospital budget on Friday.

Chairman Fred Martin said the board must make a recommendation before next Tuesday to the County Court whether to cut the budget or leave it intact.

Ed Dick, one of the board members, introduced the motion postponing action on the tax levy request because of expected input from licensed personnel at the hospital but expressed support for the budget as written.

Board members were not sure whether there would be any more support for the tax levy from north end voters if submitted a third time and asked Boardman Mayor Jerry Peck to assess the situation.

Said Peck, "I really don't know. Boardman has changed. There's a lot of new people here. Cutting the budget isn't going to attract votes over here."

Peck recommended placing the north and south ends in hospital districts.

Gladys Hobbs, an Irrigon

board member, wondered why over 200 people voted against the hospital issue in the Heppner area and Ed Dick, referring to merle Cantin, as the spokesman for the no votes on the hospital levy, asked Cantin why voters cast no ballots.

Replied Cantin: "I don't think the budget is part of it. There were no qualms about the budget, but other things involved."

Hospital board members also met Wednesday and Thursday in executive session to discuss personnel matters with court officials but no official decision has been announced. The Gazette-Times was invited to attend but declined because according to Oregon state law, the "governing body may require that specified information subject of the executive session be undisclosed."

John Maas, a member of a Heppner committee supporting the hospital levy, told the court Wednesday, "I am hoping the court will not

overreact. It is very clear the south end is supportive of the budget."

County Court Judge D.O. Nelson noted that the county was responsible for the funds allocated for the hospital and added, "We are in a rough situation for lack of five votes."

"I don't see the vote as a loss," Maas said, "People see the need of the hospital."

While the hospital levy ran into its stiffest opposition from Boardman and Irrigon voters, Boardman City Manager Jim Thompson denied that it was because of the differences between north end and south end voters.

"We don't like the idea of playing the bad guys. This north-south business means nothing. It was strictly a matter of money," Thompson said Friday.

Thompson said north end voters felt the costs were just too high to support a hospital 45 minutes away with an increase from a tax rate of \$75 per \$1,000 assessed valua-

tion to \$1.22 per \$1,000 this year. The Hermiston hospital is only 25 minutes away by freeway, says Thompson.

The city administrator has recommended that the county court establish north and south end health care districts. Thompson feels Boardman and Irrigon residents would support such a concept.

Asked by the Gazette-Times if the negative feeling on the hospital issue carried over to the strong vote against the county tax levy, Thompson said no and that vote was directly related to road problems on Wilson Rd. Thompson and Peck recently appealed to the county following the May 22 rejection of the county budget to do something about the entire length of the road. Court officials said the county would be resurfacing about a mile of the roadway.

Betty Curnutt, president of the hospital employees union, had no comment about the second levy defeat Friday and said most employees were quiet about the situation.

New assessor, appraiser appointed July 1

Greg Sweek of Heppner has been appointed Morrow County Assessor as of July 1 by the County Court as the successor to Everett Harshman who resigned July 1 for health reasons.

Tom McElligott was appointed chief appraiser by Sweek.

Sweek, an appraiser in the assessor's department for two years, will continue his appraisal work half time and promised the Court at its meeting June 27 that he would reconsider his dual responsibilities if it became necessary.

He was born and raised in Heppner, a 1970 graduate of Heppner High School and a 1978 graduate of Oregon State University in range management. He and his wife, Marsha, reside at South Court Street. His parents are Ned and Lillian Sweek.

Outside his duties at the assessor's office, Greg teaches stained glass and enjoys cross country skiing in the winter.

As an appointed official, Sweek's term of office runs until the next election in 1980. Sweek said he would learn in the next few months whether he likes his new job.

The assessor's office is processing tax relief applications from home-owners and renters taking advantage of the state's announced 30 percent tax savings programs. With applications submitted since the statewide mailing of the tax relief announcement, Sweek said his office has a busy job ahead with 1,800 applications expected from Morrow County.

Sweek appointed to the County Court Wednesday for allocating \$4,200 from the General Fund's nondepartmental budget to reprogram the county's computer. Sixteen hundred dollars of that cost will go towards purchase of a pair of \$800 memory panels to process the tax relief savings to county taxpayers. The county expects to re-



New appointees at the Morrow County Courthouse are Assessor Greg Sweek and Chief Appraiser Tom McElligott. The assessor was appointed by the Morrow County Court July 1 to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Everett Harshman for health reasons. McElligott was appointed by Sweek.

ceive \$9,000 from the State Department of Revenue for reimbursement of that cost in July and February installments.

Sweek said extra help would not be required.

The county's chief appraiser is a 1969 graduate of Lone High School and a 1974 graduate of Spokane's Gonzaga University. He was born and raised in the county and had experience in residential, commercial and farm appraisal work.

The assessor's office will

soon begin reappraisal of property values in Boardman, Lexington and Lone. Heppner's reappraisal is expected in September, 1980.

Tax rates won't be known until after a decision on the hospital levy is made by the voters or the county court and until utility valuation comes in. It has been estimated that the assessed valuation could total \$450 million this year with \$6 million valued from an addition to the Kinzua plant.

Juvenile sent to MacLaren for acts of vandalism

One of two juveniles charged with vandalism to lone school buses, has been sent to MacLaren School for Boys for two years, according to the Morrow County Juvenile Officer Carolyn Holt.

The decision was made Friday in a juvenile court hearing at the Courthouse in Heppner.

A decision is pending on the other juvenile case.