

The Official Newspaper of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

The Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES
Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper
U.S.P.S. 240-420

Published every Thursday and entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon under the Act of March 3, 1979. Second-class postage paid at Heppner, Oregon.

Office at 147 West Willow Street, Telephone (503) 676-9228.
Address communications to the Heppner Gazette-Times, P.O. Box 357, Heppner, Oregon 97336.
Sales in Morrow, Umatilla, Wheeler & Gilliam counties: \$10.00 elsewhere.

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Salem Scene Number of registered voters declines

BY JACK ZIMMERMAN

Reports indicating a significant decline in the number of Oregonians registered to vote is a source of concern among the state's election officials.

One of those concerned is Secretary of State Norma Paulus, the state's chief elections official, who considers promotion of citizen participation in the election process one of the prime duties of her office.

It's quite possible people who show up at the polls late on election day will not have time to travel to their county individual polling places.



Legislative Report from the State Capital EXCLUSIVE to Oregon's Weekly Newspapers from Associated Oregon Industries.

Mrs. Paulus has consistently expressed concern about declining voter turnouts during recent elections on both local and statewide levels and has mobilized voluntary forces to publicize both registration and balloting.

By publicizing the number of purged voters, Mrs. Paulus hopes those who recall discarding their county clerks' notices will make an effort to re-register before the last minute. And that's a simple procedure.

It was her office that announced the most recent dip in registrations following the biennial purge of registrations conducted by county clerks throughout the state last fall.

Normally, she said, each statutory purge results in a loss of about 8 percent of total registrations—due in most part to deaths and persons who move out of state or change addresses and neglect to notify their county clerk. But the most recent purge turned up a net loss of more than twice the usual number, a whopping 16.78 percent.

In actual numbers, the pre-purge registered voter total of 1,472,536 dropped to 1,198,640.

Law states that county elections officials must purge their voter lists every two years and remove the names of persons who have failed to exercise their voting privilege during that period. The law was enacted in 1975 and the purge is conducted in the fall of each odd-numbered year.

County election officials send each person being purged a notice, urging them to respond within 20 days if they believe they should not be removed from the list or re-registered.

Response to the notice constitutes re-registration. Mrs. Paulus believes a significant number of recipients of those notices simply failed to respond and may be surprised when they show up at the polls during the primary election and fail to find their names on the poll books.

Actually, only a few of those types of persons are in danger of being disenfranchised during the primary. Law permits qualified persons to register to vote right up until the polls close at 8 p.m. The only hitch is that registration must be accomplished at the county elections office, not at the

elections department office before the polls close.

Another concern that elections officials are expressing about the number of people purged involved the record number of initiative petitions being circulated to place measures on the November general election ballot.

Each of those petition campaigns will be seeking signatures of either 54,669 registered voters for measures that would change state law or 72,891 for measures that would change the state constitution.

As a rule, elections officials advise initiative campaign managers to obtain at least 10 percent more than the required number of signatures although they are not registered voters. Officials now are suggesting obtaining at least 15 percent more than the required number of signatures because of the large number of purged persons who may sign in the belief they are registered.

And if one adds the nearly 17 percent purged figures to the normal 10 percent cushion, petitioners might be well advised to exceed the required number considerably to avoid disappointment at the last minute.

This development may well cause concern among those promoting initiative petition campaigns, as well as election officials who supervise the placement of issues on the ballot. Conducting a statewide initiative campaign is not a simple, inexpensive undertaking.

Twenty five years ago the Heppner Mustangs won the District 6B basketball tournament for the third year in a row. The team beat St. Mary's 53-36, Culver 49-42 and Maupin in the championship game 51-26. Skip Ruhl, Dick Kononen and Jerry Haguewood won all-star honors. Heppner

also won the sportsmanship trophy. The team was going to state games in Salem.

Immunization clinics were set by Dr. A.D. McMurdo at all of the schools in the county. Cost was 25 cents each for small pox and diphtheria and 50 cents for typhoid.

Sifting through the TIMES

1930
Fifty years ago Lexington, Umatilla and Arlington were victorious at the sub-district tournament in Heppner and advanced to the district competition in Pendleton in high school basketball action. Arlington edged Fossil 26-25. Umatilla stomped Boardman 46-19 and Lexington came from behind to beat Heppner 24-20.

The city of Heppner was having a well dug and the driller was 150 feet into the ground and still had not hit water. Lions member Jasper Crawford asked the city council to think about obtaining street signs and house numbers. Also discussed at the city council meeting was the reorganization of the city volunteer fire department. Fire Chief S.P. Devin was sent to Portland to attend a fireman's school.

William R. Poulson, acting school superintendent, was elected to that position for one year by the school board for a salary of \$2,600.

County Clerk Gay M. Anderson was reported to be very busy as dog owners were coming in to pay their 1930 license fees. Unpaid licenses after March 1 became delinquent and a penalty was imposed making the license cost twice as much.

County court ruled that when a dog kills a sheep, the dog owner only has to pay two-thirds of the cost of the sheep to the sheep owner instead of the full price. This would be more equitable, the court said, and the sheep owner would have a better chance for financial recovery.

1955
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Josephine, 26.90; Multnomah, 21.91; Clatsop, 20.42; Coos, 19.73; Baker, 19.58; Hood River, 18.39; Jackson, 17.98; Linn, 17.80, and Crook, 17.83. Percentages of decline in remaining counties range from a fraction of a percent in Sherman County to 17.15 percent in Marion County. The percentage of decline for Morrow County is 5.91; for Gilliam, 11.76.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

'Excellent coaching job at Heppner High'

Editor:
As parents of one of the senior girl basketball players at Heppner High School, we would like to express our appreciation for the excellent coaching job done by Sheri Brock. Miss Brock's coaching skills were reflected in the manner in which her girls played as a team.

While she coached the Fillies to fourth place at district, only two Heppner girls placed in the all-star selections—one on the second all-league team and one receiving honorable mention. Teams not reaching the district tournament may have placed more players on the all-star team but the Fillies, with Miss Brock's coaching, placed fourth at district. Thank you, Sheri, and your Fillies for an interesting and exciting basketball season. Sincerely,
Bob and Marion Abrams, Heppner

CENSUS'80

'Person in Column 1'

The U.S. Census Bureau is one federal agency that recognizes that a variety of lifestyles exists in America. Its questionnaire for this year's head count is almost delicate in its probing about the relationships of people living under the same roof. It doesn't ask for the "head of household" and "spouse" but the "Person in Column 1" and the "Person in Column 2."

The "Person in Column 1" would be the member in whose name the home is owned or rented. "If there is no such person," the instructions say, "start in this column with any adult household member."

Relationships of people within a household may be ticked off by a series of multiple choice questions. If they are unrelated by blood or marriage, they may be "roomer-boarder" or "partner-roommate" or even "paid employee." That, of course, might cover the maid, butler or handyman, and no judgments are drawn.

For households of more than two persons, there are spaces for "Person in Column 3," "Person in Column 4," and so on. Other questions relate to age and date of birth, of course; to racial or national origins, and to educational attainments. Other sections of the questionnaire pertain to all households or to "sample" households, such as whether the building has a passenger elevator or is connected to a public sewer.

The federal census is taken every 10 years. Its main purpose is to establish legislative representation. Oregon reportedly is to gain another member in the U.S. House of Representatives after reapportionment based on the 1980 census.

The questionnaires are to be mailed to every household in the land on March 28. In eastern Oregon, starting on April 1, enumerators are to call to pick up the questionnaires. The U.S. Census Bureau gives assurance in advance that all of the information to be collected will remain confidential "for 72 years," without even the President of the U.S. having access to the files.

3-county health survey: A response to Judge Leckie

Last week, we reprinted from the Condon Times-Journal a letter by Judge Andrew F. Leckie of Fossil, Wheeler County, objecting to a three-county survey of health-care services provided by Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner.

Judge Leckie took particular exception to the 14th question in the survey that sought the views of those responding regarding the possible formation of a health-care taxing district that could extend beyond the boundaries of Morrow County to include portions of Wheeler and Gilliam counties. If formed, such a district could assume the management of the hospital which now is owned by Morrow County. Judge Leckie said the questionnaire was "blatantly seeking" to get Wheeler County tax money to support the Heppner hospital.

(Following herewith is a reply to Judge Leckie by R.D. Ellingson, vice president of Medco, Inc., a national management engineering group, which is tabulating the results of the survey at its Portland office. Mr. Ellingson formerly was director of management systems for the Oregon Association of Hospitals, a position he left last Sept. 1. In his new connection, he directs a contract with the hospital association to help Oregon hospitals "utilize their resources more effectively.")

Judge Andrew F. Leckie
Wheeler County
Fossil, Oregon 97830
Dear Judge Leckie:

We were disappointed to receive your response to the health survey that was circulated recently to Morrow County, and some Gilliam and Wheeler County residents. As you know, the survey questions were formulated by a group of responsible people from each of the major communities in the area. Neither Mr. Felt, nor Mr. Burns, the previous administrator, were members of that committee because each served as chairman of the hospital's Management Planning Committee that was holding meetings concurrently with the community advisory group. A third group, the Medical Staff Planning Committee, was also meeting at the

same time. Each of the three groups had, and still have, as its major goal the identification of health care needs, services and facilities in the area. We were pleased when you agreed to serve as a member of the committee and were sorry when your busy schedule kept you from attending many of the meetings.

This coordinated effort was begun when the Eastern Oregon Health Systems Agency mailed out a directive to all Eastern Oregon hospitals stating that by June 1, 1979, they must have an organized planning process. At that time, the hospital Board had three choices: (1) To attempt establishment of a planning process on their own; (2) To hire a professional planning consultant, which might have been costly; or (3) To implement the Oregon Association of Hospitals (OAH) "do it yourself" strategic planning process with organizations and date collection assistance as needed being provided by the OAH Director of Management Systems. The third alternative was approved by the hospital board and the various committees shown on attachment No. 1 were established. (Appended to this letter was a chart showing community, management and medical staff planning committees.) Early in the formulation of these groups, it was recognized that the Tri County Health Commission should be an important resource and sounding board in the process because of their previous experience and knowledge of health care in the three counties.

As far as calling the survey, the "Tri-County Health Planning Survey," we could, and possibly should, have called it the "Three County Health Planning Survey." There was no intention to impose or infringe on the name of the Tri County Health Commission. Since we were trying to determine health needs in the three counties, it just seemed natural to use "Tri" instead of "Three." Of course, the committee itself is simply named, as stated in the cover letter to the survey, the "Community Advisory Committee." We are sorry if this has caused a problem for the commission, because we have actively sought to work in a cooperative way with that group for the best interests of the residents in all three of the counties.

Question number 14 on the survey was included, almost as an afterthought, by one of the committee members at one of the last meetings. It is a simple attempt to obtain public opinion relating to basic methods of offering hospital services in our area. It is consistent with the opinion that all citizens in our country should have the right of self-determination. Since the surveys will be summarized by zip code areas, each will know the consensus of opinions on this, as well as the many other, questions included in the survey. Of course, the results of the survey cannot be binding in any way.

On September 1, 1979, I changed positions from Director of OAH Management Systems to vice president of MEDCO, Inc., a national management engineering group. We still have a contract with OAH to provide services that are helping Oregon hospitals to utilize their resources more effectively. May I assure you and other members of the Tri County Health Commission that only the best intent was meant from the survey and that the members of the Community Advisory Committee are sincere as they gather information from their respective communities. Hopefully, it will all result in a better information base for planning improved health services and facilities for the hospital's geographic service area. When the survey is summarized, the committee will meet again to formulate written recommendations to Pioneer Memorial's Board Planning Committee as shown in attachment No. 2. (The appended chart shows interrelationships between committees.) You will be invited to attend, if you wish.

May I express regret for the misunderstandings, and offer to be of personal assistance to the Commission at any time in the future.

Sincerely yours,
R.D. Ellingson
Vice President
MEDCO, Inc.
12835 S.W. Bowmont,
Portland, Oregon 97225

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