

# The Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES

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HEPPNER, OREGON

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by Don Gilliam

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## Court decides against early county budget vote

Morrow County Court decided not to have an "Emergency Election" to vote on the county budget.

So the county budget will be voted on Sept. 16.

If an emergency election had been declared, the vote could have been three weeks earlier on August 26.

The county budget has been defeated twice in two previous elections so the county will have to operate on \$170,000 in carryover from the last fiscal year and whatever resources come into the county until the Sept. 16 voting date along with the tax base of \$367,990 plus the six percent increase limitation amount of \$22,079.40.

Budget Officer Alma Green said it is hard to tell right now if the county has enough

money to operate from July 1 to Sept. 16 so all of the county departments are going to have to operate at the bare minimum.

About \$98,000 in cuts have been made in the budget that was defeated June 24 plus about \$100,000 more is expected in resources that had not been planned last February when the budget was first formed. The budget has been reduced to the point that taxpayers will actually pay less for county taxes than they did last year.

On the ballot voters will see the figure \$1,014,082.

County Court Judge Don McElligott and Commissioners Warren McCoy and Dorothy Krebs decided that

because of all the special actions

that need to be taken to call on emergency election and because there is only three weeks difference they thought they could stretch the budget

and not have to call a special emergency election.

In other County Court news, Rachel Harnett will be the director of the county museum

next to the library and Joann Wood will spend 20 hours a week at the museum and 20 hours a week as secretary for Planner Deane Seeger.

## Commissioner criticized for helping establish county salary schedule

County Commissioner Dorothy Krebs has been attacked recently for helping to establish a new salary schedule for county employees instead of hiring an independent outside firm.

Krebs defended her actions in an interview last week.

She said the county did pay for an independent study to be done in 1977 by the Local Government Personnel Institute. But that rate schedule did not work.

"There was a lot of dissension in the courthouse about that study because employees were doing the same type of work but were not being paid equally," Krebs said.

She said the job descriptions were not defined in the LGPI study so a salary committee was formed earlier this year made up of county employees from every department at every job level. That committee defined the different jobs and equalized the salaries.

Krebs said the LGPI study also established raises by merit and time on the job. Since the county does not have a personnel officer, it

was impossible to give raises by merit so some county departments would just give the increase automatically on the time basis while others did not bother with the study at all. So there was dissension because raises were given in some departments and not in others.

The salary committee, led by Krebs, came up with a schedule for raises to be given in automatic time steps at 2½ year increments with no merit decision involved.

By drawing up their own salary schedule, it saved the taxpayers money, she added.

## Real fireworks 'no problem' at display

A brush and grass fire started by fireworks at the Fourth of July celebration last week in Boardman wasn't any problem and was put out in fifteen minutes, according to the Boardman Police Department.

The fire burned about an acre of brush and grass near the marina on Columbia River. A fire truck on hand for the big fire works display rushed to the site and quickly doused the flames.

"The fire was no problem," said Larry Phillips of the

Boardman Police Department. "It took about 15 minutes to knock it down and 30 minutes to wrap it up."

He said the fire probably was started from fireworks set off by spectators there to see the big show. "It caused some excitement," Phillips said. "There were about two to three thousand people there to see the show, and a lot of them rushed up to watch the fire."

## Councilman resigns

Frank Pearson has resigned from the Heppner City Council. It was announced Monday night.

Pearson, who served 1 ½ years on the council, said in a letter he was resigning because he had taken a job in Portland and was moving.

According to Clifford Green, council president, a replacement for Pearson may be named either by himself or the mayor. However, the replacement would serve only until the next general election (November), at which time a candidate would be elected to serve.



While Ione and Boardman scheduled pyrotechnics displays on Independence Day, this youngster had a mini Fourth of July celebration of his own in Heppner.

## PGE's coal fired Boardman plant begins production

Portland General Electric's coal-fired plant near Boardman began producing electrical power for the first time this week, according to PGE spokesman Dave Eagon.

It will only be producing at five percent of its capacity, however.

Oil is still being used to turn the turbines but coal will be burned to produce the power in about a week, Eagon said.

Even though power is being produced, the plant is still in its testing phase but it is scheduled to go on line full time the first week in August.

"The start up and testing will include going up to 100 percent of our power," Eagon said.

He added that the power tests include holding the power at a certain level for a sustained period of time.

Even though oil is being burned to heat the water that turns into steam which turns the turbines, Eagon said the emissions that will be coming out the smoke stack at the coal plant probably will "not be visible."

## Pooch's bail will cost you

If your dog gets picked up in Heppner, and you plan to contest the impoundment, it will now cost you \$20 to get your pooch back instead of the former \$15, the city council ruled Monday night.

People had been paying \$15 deposit on the dogs, and then forfeiting the bail, thus avoiding a \$20 ticket, said Police Chief Dean Gillman.

Also under the new ordinance enacted by the council, the second time your dog is picked up it will cost you \$40 to bail him out. The third time will cost \$60.

All the electricity that is produced, even during testing, from the plant will be transmitted to the Willamette Valley.

## Child Support—a problem in county

Collecting child support from an absent parent is a big problem in Morrow County—just like every other county, according to Ann Spicer, assistant district attorney.

District Attorney Dennis Doherty has assigned his assistant with the impossible task of trying to track down and prosecute non-paying absent parents when complaints are presented to the county.

Some statistics in the D.A.'s office show that of 163 average absent parent cases in Oregon, 38 percent of the absent parents will comply with a court order, 20 percent will partially comply with the support payments and 42 percent will not comply at all in just the first year. Only about 19 percent of the single parents with custody of the children will take legal action against the non-paying parent.

After 10 years of being absent parent, the statistics are even more alarming. Only 13 percent of the parents are fully complying with the court ordered support payment eight percent are partially complying and 79 percent are not complying at all with the child support payment. But after 10 years, only one percent of the parents with custody (usually the mothers) are willing to take legal action against the absent parent to get the child support payment the court says they are entitled to.

## Study to 'find out what makes county tick'

An Oregon State University economist commissioned to study economic life in Morrow County says he wants to find out "what makes the county



Dr. Fred Obermiller

tick." Dr. Fred Obermiller of OSU told the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Monday that he will begin a study soon which, when completed, should give a pretty accurate picture of economic life in Morrow County.

Obermiller told the chamber that graduate students from OSU will begin interviews of businesses, farms and households soon, and, when the information is compiled and analyzed, it should provide county officials and others with data for future economic planning.

This study will show how many different types of business are in the county, and will also show, from the household interviews, where people are spending their money, Obermiller said.

He said that although the study will draw no conclusions, such as where future economic expansion in the county should go, he did say the study will be valuable in planning any such expansion.

Letters explaining the economic study have already been sent to 250 businesses county-wide, Obermiller said. And he said questionnaires will be mailed to every fourth household in the county soon.

The study was commissioned by Morrow County at a cost

of \$16,000, and similar ones have already been done in Grant and Union counties.

"Most of the time counties ask to have the study done when a crisis arises (and they need economic data) . . . but Morrow is asking before a crisis," Obermiller said.

He said interviews should start next week, and last for about two weeks. He said the confidential information gathered will be put through a computer and the final study will be ready by the end of the year.

"This study will document to firms the value in locating in Morrow County," Obermiller told the Chamber of Commerce. He said it will also help when dealing with the federal government by showing the economic impact of a change in the use of federal timber and range lands.

## Campbells named 1980 Conservationists

Roger and Robert Campbell of the R&R Campbell Ranch in Lexington have been named Morrow County Conservation Men of the Year for 1980.

Don Bennett, last year's winner, and Paul Tews, member of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, chose the Campbells out of a list of 15 candidates. The award is given annually for excellence in the use of conservation practices on farms in the county.

The Campbells will compete with other county winners for the state title. Judges will tour the winners' farms from each county and announce the state honor at the Oregon Wheat Growers League state meeting in Portland in December.

A Field Day is currently being planned for early September after harvest so the public can tour the farm and to honor the Campbells for their work, said County Extension Agent Harold Kerr.

## Public works office to be moved to Lexington

Morrow County Court has decided to move the Public Works Office to Lexington instead of having it near the County Fairgrounds next to the Road Dept.

CETA employees will assemble the Public Works Office at a permanent location in Lexington. If it would have stayed at the fairgrounds, it could have only been there temporarily.

County Planner Deane Seeger will stay at the courthouse instead of moving into the Public Works Office with director Don Briggs. Until Briggs is in the Lexington office, the county is renting office space for him above the Coast-to-Coast store.

Commissioner Dorothy Krebs said the permanent Public Works Office will be

fixed up by the CETA workers so it will "look nice."

Krebs said the county has had trouble obtaining the proper permits for the office because Oregon state officials have ruled it to be a modular instead of a mobile unit. The only state inspector for modular buildings is in Salem and the state government wants the county to pay for everything to have the man fly here and inspect the building.

"It is a matter of economics and that is why it is taking the county so long to get Mr. (Don) Briggs into an office," Krebs said.

Krebs said that Briggs has been in the county for four months without an office, a secretary or bookkeeper "so he has not been able to prove himself."

## Man found dead at Willow Creek

A 27-year-old former Pendleton man was found dead at Willow Creek, about 18 miles south of Heppner, Saturday, July 5, according to Morrow County Sheriff Larry Fetsch. The cause of death is unknown.

Sheriff Fetsch said that the body of Gregory Robert Belknap was found between 6 and 7 a.m. Saturday by a friend, Eldon Tucker of Ione. Belknap and Tucker had been camping and fishing at the Willow Creek site with friends, according to the sheriff's report.

"The cause of death is pending," said Morrow County Medical examiner L.D. Tibbles. Tibbles said that it would be two weeks before the autopsy results are returned.



Roger and Iris Campbell

Don and Jean Bennett of Heppner won the award in 1979 and they had a Field Day

in their honor last summer. They went on to win the state award too, which was the

occasion for the state tour of their ranch and Field Day last month.

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