

# The Heppner Gazette-Times

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper



Weather

February 18-24

	High	Low	Rain	Snow
Tues.	36	26	.07	1/4 in.
Wed.	34	26	.00	Tr.
Thurs.	49	28	.00	Tr.
Fri.	48	28	.30	00
Sat.	62	43	.35	00
Sun.	68	43	.00	00
Mon.	74s	45	.00	00

VOL 104 NO 9

Heppner, Oregon 25<sup>th</sup> WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1986 12 PAGES by the City of Heppner

## Contract reached; ratification expected

It's all over but the shouting. Morrow County teachers and the school board reached a contract settlement at 4:05 a.m. Friday, Feb. 21. The all night bargaining session was the culmination of many months of negotiations between the two parties for a three-year contract for county teachers. "Neither side got everything they wanted," said teachers negotiator Bill Jacobson, "so the agreement was O.K."

perform general supervision. No teacher shall be compelled to perform general supervision in excess of eight hours per month.

Neither the factfinder's or either side's position was adopted for Maintenance of Standards. General language which the board objected to was made more specific in terms of items and conditions related to the contract.

Fair Share or money withheld from paychecks of non-union member teachers to be used for collective bargaining was not included in the contract.

Insurance will continue with the current coverage carrier for this year. In 1986-87 long term disability insurance will be added with the district and teachers dividing the cost 95 percent-5 percent respectively. Both teachers and the district agreed that if in any given year the premium increases more than 20 percent, the two groups would split the cost 50-50.

Extra duty and extended responsibilities were excluded from Just Cause protection. New teachers in the district will not be protected by just cause for dismissal or renewal for the first two years they are employed by the district. Added back in the contract was language from an earlier contract requiring due process for dismissal and non-renewal.

Teachers agreed to the board's (February 10) last offer for Salary. Increases will be nine, eight, seven, and four percent depending on how many years of experience the teacher has and length of time in the district. The board did agree to a four percent increase for each of the three years on the longevity step and reduced the last step from 19 to 18 years. The board also added a

BA+90 equivalent to a MA+30 step which especially will benefit elementary teachers who take many courses in different areas but do not work toward a graduate degree.

The school board was to meet Monday night to review the tentative agreement and decide when to vote concerning ratification. "I can't see any reason why they would not agree to the proposal," Starr said. The district, he said, feels very

positive about the agreement that the salary schedule will make the district more competitive in recruiting and keeping teachers, and that some language matters have been worked out in a satisfactory manner. Both sides have been willing to bargain all along, he said, but some areas were so serious that it was difficult for either side to give in and it just took a lot of time to work out all the details, Starr concluded.

## Pre-applications needed for retirement housing project

Pre-applications for apartment rentals in the retirement facility planned for the Heppner Hotel site are now available at Heppner City Hall, Case Furniture Store, and Murray Drugs in Heppner.

State offices need reassurance from pre-applications that the proposed facility will be fully used, says local spokesperson Meg Murray.

Some similar facilities in the Willamette Valley are not fully rented at present because many such facilities are available in that area. State officials need firm data stating how many will apply for rental units at the facility. The information will be used in a feasibility study concerning the pay back of a \$600,000 loan from the Elderly Housing Finance Program.

The pre-application forms request routine responses, Murray continues, but also require financial information necessary to determine low-income rental status. The state considers those with income less than \$28,500 as a candidate for low-income rentals, and they are eligible for rental assistance. Those with income over \$28,500 will pay the market rate for rent which currently in the tri-county area averages \$267 per month for a one-bedroom apartment.

The Umatilla County Housing Authority has the necessary expertise and will manage the proposed facility, says Murray. The Housing Authority already has a housing assistance program in effect in Morrow County.

Pre-applicants are an expression of intent only and not a guarantee of an apartment. The forms should be filed at Heppner City Hall.

Availability of the loan and completion of the rehabilitation project will depend on how many wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to live in a community with the necessary support services in place during their retirement, concludes Murray.



Clowning around

One young carnival-goer is turned into a clown at the makeup booth during the school carnival held last Friday at Heppner Elementary school. Organizers said the carnival was a success, with money raised to be used for a school project.

## Proposed county budget down, but tax levy would go up 6.6%

The Morrow County Budget Committee met February 4, 5, 6, 7, and 12 and approved an \$8,244,878 total budget which is 0.48 percent or \$40,076 below last year's total adopted budget. Although the total budget is down, the county's total tax value is also down. County revenues are below expected amounts, therefore the total tax levy is up 6.61 percent, says county Budget Officer LoRayne Bowman. Last year's budget was figured with as little excess as possible, so there is also less carryover for the current fiscal year than at the beginning of last year.

The county will need \$3,290,629 in taxes to balance the proposed budget. The total levy which the county will ask, however, is \$3,500,568 which includes a six percent allowance for taxes which are not expected to be collected. Because the county's tax base is \$533,000, no election is required to approve that portion of the tax. To balance the proposed budget, the county will ask voters to approve a special levy of \$2,568,731 and a one-year hospital levy of \$381,694.

The two levies will be presented on separate ballots in the March 25 election. The hospital levy is \$36,010 less than last year's hospital levy, or an 8.62 percent decrease. The serial levy for the county is up 6.61 percent or \$169,875 from last year.

This year's estimated tax rate for the total budget levy is estimated at \$4.38 per \$1,000 of assessed property value based on the best information available from the County Assessor at the time of the estimate, continued Bowman. The tax rate for the hospital levy is 48 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. The total rate for all other funds, except Lifeguard, is \$3.86 per \$1,000.

The Lifeguard serial levy was approved last year as a three year special levy, so no election is needed this year to collect the tax. The rate for the Lifeguard Levy is four cents per \$1,000 valuation.

During the budget workshops, the committee cut \$76,454 from the proposed budget before arriving at the final proposal. The cut is reflected in a reduction of \$212,746 in the proposed levy keeping that amount below the current tax rate limitation.

### Hospital fund levy

Hospital Administrator John Hempel reported to the county's budget committee that this year's levy request would be down from last year's request in spite of the fact that employees are receiving raises, the hospital was offering better quality care, and a computer system and other equipment were included

in this year's purchases. Collections are better, revenues from patient and nursing home services are better and are expected to continue to increase, he said.

Donations to the auxiliary and the hospital have increased and should continue to increase as the hospital's image is upgraded, he said. The increased donations should help offset any increases in expenses for the hospital. During December, 2.2 acute care beds were used per day and 3.42 per day during January. The nursing home is generally providing better care and increased revenues reflect increased usage. There has been a 24-25 patient average during the past year for an 80-85 percent use rate.

A dramatic difference can be seen between last year's budget and this year's, he said because the administrator's salary is not paid by the county but by St. Anthony Hospital. The county pays an administrative fee to St. Anthony. Last year that fee was just for the administrator's salary, but beginning in May of this year, St. Anthony will charge a fee of \$1,000 per month for services it provides to Pioneer.

A decrease in the amount spent for public relations can be seen largely because St. Anthony has made services available in that area.

Salaries generally are expected to reflect a 4.1 percent increase although in a couple of cases salaries appear to have raised more than that, he said. Contract negotiations are not yet finalized, and the increase is shown in the salary contingency fund rather than the salary line item. That is because the salaries have been changed to more accurately reflect the work done by some people whose jobs included more than what they were being paid for. Workman's Comp and Blue Cross rates have increased for all county and hospital employees of 12 and 10 percent respectively.

"We're very satisfied with the people we have now, we don't accept mediocrity as a norm. The way to remedy mediocre performance is to train the people we have, not bring in new people." The inservice training budget shows a 50 percent increase from \$2,500 to \$5,000 this year.

In some areas, although services are expected to increase, supplies should cost less, Hempel said, because in some cases a better buying arrangement has been implemented, and in others an inventory system is slowly becoming systematic, and supplies are being more intelligently bought and more intelligently used.

A computer, a typewriter, and a transport cart are the major expend-

itures which are budgeted for next year. The computer will be linked with the computer at the county courthouse. Should hospital use increase, some other areas will need to be upgraded sooner than they are budgeted for. The electrical system and the physical plant are outmoded, but are serving the current patient load.

Recruitment costs for D. Thiessen will be paid from the current year's budget. There is an expected decrease in this line item next year because the hospital is not expected to be recruiting again soon.

Physician's Assistance is the doctor's salary. The agreement with Thiessen is that the county guarantees him \$5,000 per month during the first two years. Should his actual income be lower, the hospital would pay the balance. Dr. Thiessen has been budgeted both as an asset and as a liability. This measure ensures that the hospital could support him, and that any monies made shall be carried to 1987 as a beginning fund balance, Hempel explained.

Food service used for the nursing home has been listed where it is actually used. With the computer which the hospital hopes to purchase this year, some of the food service and laundry expenses may be more accurately placed in the budget according to where they are actually used.

More volunteer staffing is used for ambulance service. Maintenance staff at the hospital do make ambulance runs during the day because volunteers generally are unable to leave their jobs at that time.

### Special levy General fund

Salaries and benefits for employees covered in the General Fund are budgeted at the same as last year or at the same increase as negotiated with employees in the road department. Elected officials did not receive raises last year, so are expected to be included for raises this year calculated on the same rate of increase. Negotiations are not yet complete, so anticipated amounts are included in the contingency fund.

The Assessor's office is requesting the addition of a data analyst because 180 states appraised industrial accounts have reverted back to the county and the additional help is needed. The Accounting Dept. is requesting the addition of a full time accounting clerk. The Public Works Dept. has requested promoting the bookkeeper to Public Works Office manager and hiring a half-time secretary. Although there is currently no County Counsel the position

has been included in the budget with the salary listed at a slight reduction from that offered last year.

The building inspection budget has been reduced to reflect the current downward trend in building activities during the year. The budget reflects a continuation of the existing service and revenues and are predicted on conversations with port officials, mobile home placement business and recent activities by BPA and the U.S. Corps of Engineers regarding a second fish hatchery, says county Planner Dean Seeger. Four alternatives are offered for handling the vacancy in the position of building inspector. The County Court will choose how to fill the position: 1) hire a building inspector, 2) contract services for five years and add electrical inspections, 3) contract with the state for services, 4) hire a part time inspector on an hourly basis which will work only if a properly certified individual is available.

Requests for capital outlay include: personal computer viewer and printer for the Clerk's office; room divider, desk and computer typewriter stand to make "usable office space" and a better working environment for the non-support officer; a new office chair for the juvenile department; two office chairs, a microfilm reader printer, and copy machine for the Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Dept. vehicles are purchased from non-departmental funds); two four-drawer file cabinets for the museum; folding chairs for public meetings; desk, chair, typewriter and computer desk for the Public Works Dept., a non-departmental copy machine for the Extension Service and \$48,000 for non-departmental vehicles.

The Justice Court budget was approved as submitted. Although, at the final review, a motion was made and seconded to eliminate Justice Court from the county budget, the motion failed by a four to one vote. Health Department and non-departmental Extension Service budgeted rent increases resulting from moving the respective offices to the new Pettyjohn Office Building. Rent increase for the Health Dept. is from \$600 to \$6,000 per year. For the Extension Service, from \$10,769 to \$16,587.

Other non-departmental costs in the general fund are for predator animal control, weed control, soil and water conservation, extension service, and the watermaster.

### Road fund

The road department has operated without a public works director since budget time last year. The amount budgeted for a director's salary last year \$23,400, said Judge

Don McElligott, was inadequate. The salary range for public works directors, is \$35,000-\$60,000. "A good public works director, can make money for the county, if he's willing to go out and do some engineering," he said. "We will be looking for a director again after the budget election."

Road department revenues are down a net 4.2 percent from last year: forest fees are down 10 percent, public land sales down 30 percent, equipment rental down 83 percent, and sale of surplus equipment and supplies down 16 percent; motor vehicle license fees are up 3.4 percent, and sale of surplus equipment and material is expected to be up 50 percent.

This is the second year of a two-year contract for road department salaries. The agreed salary raise for those effected is 4.96 percent. "The overtime has been cut in half, said, road supervisor Don Ball, in the hopes that next winter will be mild. "The department has also saved some money by exercising its option to change the place where employees report for work with three months advance written notice. While county employees are working at the north end of the county, they report directly there at starting time rather than reporting to the shop in Lexington and traveling on county time using county vehicles.

At the budget workshop, commissioners pointed out that they hear criticism of the county for moving equipment from the job site to the shop daily with one employee per rig and suggested that money could be saved by leaving the equipment at the site and using a van or other vehicle to transport all employees in one vehicle. Ball pointed out that the concept seems to make sense, but at some sites there is danger of vandalism to the equipment and the cost for replacing even one windshield in a truck would be considerably more than the would-be savings from

leaving the equipment at the site. When a secure location is near the worksite, he said, they do leave the equipment there and use other transportation.

The cost for cold patching is listed at \$75,000, the same as last year which should provide a good patching program. Spraying services on all county roads will be up an expected 33 percent while costs incurred for renting equipment are expected to be down 25 percent.

Materials and services include a \$12,000 paint and painting item which was cut from last year's budget. The amount will fund the county's share of a state project to stripe 100 miles of roads.

Expected costs for the rock crusher are down slightly from last year.

Last year, the budget committee challenged the crusher to produce a "reasonable amount" (50,000) yards of crushed rock during the year or the budget committee would recommend selling the crusher and acquiring crushed rock by other means. The crusher has produced 44,192 yards of crushed rock so far and with four months to go before the end of the fiscal year, is expected to meet the challenge. The amount budgeted for purchasing rock is down 80 percent from last year (\$25,000) which reduced from \$73,107 in 1984. "We're getting crushed rock as cheap as any way we could at this time," said Judge McElligott. The county is, nevertheless, looking into a possible alternative agreement for crusher operation.

Capital outlay lists purchasing three S-10 pickups at a cost of \$7,200 each, a 708 yard Insert Sander at a cost of \$6,500, and air conditioners for two blades at a cost of \$3,000. Last year \$104,500 was budgeted for equipment purchase, the total this year is \$31,100.

Please turn to page 2

## Heppner teams head for playoffs

The Heppner Mustangs and Fillies basketball teams will journey to the district playoffs at the Pendleton Armory Thursday, Feb. 27. The Fillies will play the Sherman County Huskies at 7 p.m. At 8:30 p.m., the Mustangs will play the Riverside High School Pirates.

Both Heppner teams have earned first place in the eastern division of

the Columbia Basin Conference so the teams that win the Thursday games will automatically advance to the regional playoffs the following weekend. The teams that lose the first place contest play the winner of the contest between second place teams for a shot at the district second place shot.