

The Heppner Gazette-Times

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Heppner, Oregon 25

10 Pages



Weather

by the City of Heppner

March 25 - 31

	High	Low	Prec.
Tues	60	40	
Wed	65	39	
Thurs	69	45	
Fri	69	42	
Sat	69	40	Trace
Sun	56	28	.03
Mon	59	35	

Total Prec. for March 1.67;
Normal Prec for March 1.19.



Egg hunter

Brett Barber, 1-year-old daughter of Don and Judy Barber of Heppner, finds an egg during Elks egg hunt Saturday at city park.

School Board to resubmit \$6,180,808 levy

The \$6,180,808 school district levy proposal voters defeated March 25 will be resubmitted without changes at the May 20 primary election, the school board and budget committee decided Monday night.

The decision came after lengthy discussion of the possible reasons for failure of the levy at the last election, district superintendent Doyle McCaslin said. The district administrators also reported to the committee about the election results and contrasted this year's results with last year's results.

The administrators found, McCaslin said, that many "yes" voters compared with last year had stayed away from the polls. For Boardman, this year's results showed 53 fewer "yes" votes than last year and 70 fewer "no" votes. Similarly Irrigon and Ione had 43 and 28 fewer "yes" votes respectively with only one less "no" vote from each precinct. Results from Lexington and showed 24 fewer "yes" votes and 11 more "no" votes. Results from Heppner indicated 72 fewer "yes" votes and 83 more "no" votes. Countywide, McCaslin said, 224 "yes" voters stayed away from the polls this year which is a more significant number than the 22 additional "no" votes. Heppner-Hardman precinct, he said, seems to represent a turnaround which some committee members speculated may be "evidence of the upcoming turnaround at the Kinzua mill."

Other reasons the budget committee discussed which may have contributed to the budget's defeat included:

-the school board's hiring of a professional negotiator during contract negotiations with county teachers and the behavior of some of the teachers during the negotiation process which he described as adversarial and providing a negative environment for a budget vote.

-the area's economy is down - a large number of people in the community with fixed incomes may see any increase in budgets as an erosion of their livelihood.

-negative effects of publicity during the district's negotiations with the fair board over use of the grounds.

-the county budget levy on the same election ballot.

-an attitude from some people that the budget "should be voted down once."

Before approving the motion by a 9-4 vote, to return the same levy to voters in May, the committee had passed a motion to cut the levy, but not specified an amount to cut, failed motions to cut \$30,000, \$250,000 and one percent of the levy amount of \$61,808.

The budget committee appointed a committee of chairman Jerry McElliott and members Jack Struge,

Joe Stevens, Dwayne Carroll, Dick Nuttbrock, Sue Proudfoot, Tyler Hansell, and Jerry Healy to promote the proposed levy by getting necessary information to voters.

In a final business item, the budget committee recommended that the school board cancel the proposed tax base election for May 20 to "keep the issue pure." The district is required to have a tax base election this year either at the primary election or the general election in November. Following the budget meeting, the board convened just long enough to approve the budget committee's recommendation to postpone the tax base election until the November general election.

Nothing to rumors, Kinzua mgr. says

Rumors of reorganization at Kinzua Corp. may be just that, according to plant manager Harry Kennison. The mill has been trying to find ways to stabilize in the lumber industry because the economy has not been very good during the last five years. Kennison says that he doesn't see the economy picking up like some tell us it is. What he sees is more timber on the market from ranchers than at any time in recent years because they need the money.

A management consulting firm has been at the mill studying production and the operation of the plant. "We were trying to get them to offer suggestions of what we could do," he said, "we have their report, and will consider it carefully, but we may not use too much of it."

Railroad not moving to abandon Heppner line

The railroad has not taken any action toward abandonment nor have they announced any intention of abandoning the Heppner Branch line, George Skorney, public relations director for Union Pacific Railroad said last week.

All branch lines are under study each year for productivity and cost of operation, he continued. The 45-mile Union Pacific branch line from Heppner Junction to Heppner must be maintained in top condition because it is the law, and because it must meet the railroad's standards.

A section crew at Ione was eliminated last November and the maintenance work was assigned to a crew at Heppner Junction, Skorney said, to save money. The section crew travels the entire branch at least once each week, and a recent track inspection by the track evaluation car indicated that the Heppner branch is in good condition.

The track is being maintained, said a spokesperson from Morrow County Grain Growers, who reported a problem with the switching at the sidings in Lexington on Tuesday, and said that they were repaired on Wednesday.

The Grain Growers considers the railroad a good marketing option and would not like to see the line abandoned, although much of the wheat sold through the Grain Growers is trucked to the river and barged downriver because of lower cost, and ranchers get more money for their wheat. If the railroad were seriously considering abandonment, he said, they would just pull out

rather than repairing the line and encouraging shippers to increase their use of the railroad.

One private crossing, and several places where the railroad crosses county roads, are in disrepair. Morrow County Judge Don McElliott reported, and at least one railroad culvert needs attention. We have requested that the crossings be repaired and we will continue to request that they be repaired, he said.

Judge McElliott says that the Union Pacific foreman at Hinkle to whom he has reported the problems says that the company has no crew or money available to repair crossings. No maintenance on the branch line this past winter is an indication that the branch is in danger, he said. The county has been informed by the state Public Utilities Commissioner that the branch is endangered.

Problems at railroad crossings have no relation to filing for abandonment, the railroad's public relations director said. Crossings are repaired according to how bad they are and the railroad doesn't always agree with the user on how bad they are. Crews don't usually work in the winter, he continued because of the freezing weather.

Dave Astle, rail program supervisor of the Public Utilities Commission says that the status of the Heppner branch line has not changed since the railroad announced that the branch, along with three or four others in Oregon, is under study. Kinzua, he said, is the biggest, and only major shipper and "they are keeping rail traffic at a level to keep

the line in service, but at borderline usage because now they can truck cheaper. It's a dangerous situation. If Kinzua doesn't support the line, it will not be there, the line's future depends on the long distance hauling which Kinzua provides. Grain is usually a short distance haul."

That the line is "under study," Astle says, means that the railroad is looking into the economics of the line. If a company can prove that it is losing money, abandonment is usually approved unless there is no alternative shipper available. Union Pacific, he continued, has been "best of all about not abandoning a line if there is any business left at all."

Should the railroad decide to abandon the line, they would have to apply to the Interstate Commerce Commission. The state has no say in the matter, Astle concluded, but would know of the proceedings and notify all users.

Kinzua's use of the rail line has fallen off dramatically in the last five years. Kent Goodyear says, because rail rates were not competitive with those of other shippers. With deregulation, rail rates have dropped dramatically within the last six to eight months and now are more competitive.

Kinzua, he said used 479 railroad cars during 1980. The company's use of the rail line dropped to about 320 cars during the economic recession, but last year used 420 cars and he expects that this year's use will be close to that of 1980. The railroad has changed and is now willing to ship shorter distances, within a 200 mile radius, trucks are still used.

The railroad is important for them, Goodyear said, for awhile, it was cheaper to truck everything, but user fees on trucks and road and gasoline tax have increased as well as liability insurance rates.

If the railroad should be abandoned, Goodyear said, barge and truck rates would probably increase which would adversely affect the county. "They say they are not abandoning the line, but their actions show that they must be considering it strongly," he said of the company's failure to make repairs at crossings, pulling the section crew from Ione, and indication that money for improvements is not available.

Both Goodyear and Judge McElliott have been informed by Claudia Howells, an assistant to the public utility commissioner that it is easier to build a case to maintain a line before formal abandonment is filed than afterwards.

Howells will be in Morrow County May 12 for a meeting with the railroad shippers, the county court, Ione Community and Agri-Business Organization, and the Heppner Economic Development Corporation. Should Union Pacific decide to abandon the line, Skorney said, they would have to have to fine their intent with the Interstate Commerce Commission and if no protests from shippers (not private individuals who do not use the line) were filed, they could then be ready to abandon the line in three months. If protests are filed, the procedure would then take 10 months, if the abandonment received approval.

Voter turnout 41%

A total of 1,740 or 41 percent of all registered voters in Morrow County cast ballots in the Tuesday, March 25 election. The greatest percentage of turnout was at Ione with 65 percent or 254 registered voters casting ballots. Forty-eight percent of registered voters at Lexington and Heppner cast ballots. Thirty-four percent of Boardman voters and 30 percent of Irrigon voters marked their opinions in the special election.

County to ask for \$3,472,425 tax base

Morrow County will ask voters to approve a \$3,472,425 tax base at the May 20 primary election. The county is required to ask for a new tax base every two years. The existing tax base, \$522,000, does not provide enough money for the county to operate for one year, said Budget Officer LoRayne Bowman, so the county has had to ask for special one-year levies in order to balance the budget.

The \$3,472,425 being asked for the new base is the exact amount - including the current tax base, the one year special levy amount, and

the hospital levy - required to balance the budget, she continued. This does not mean a double tax in the case of the hospital, she emphasized. Although the hospital levy has already been approved.

Should a new tax base be approved, the county would not have to go out for a one-year special levy each year because the new base would provide enough money for county operations. Because the county is asking for a new tax base, Bowman said, does not mean that the entire amount will be levied.

The Morrow County Budget committee was scheduled to meet with the Morrow County Court Wednesday morning to decide what needs to be done following the March 25 defeat of the \$2,568,731 special one-year operating levy.

Baker man arraigned for murder of newspaper woman



Beth Williams

Friday morning "We believe she was killed pretty close to the time of her disappearance," Hadley said. Williams, a Baker native, was reported missing March 22 by her mother Ellen Williams when she failed to return from a local nightclub the night before.

She had been a resident of Boardman about 1 1/2 years where she worked as advertising manager for the Boardman Enterprise newspaper. Until her duties changed a few weeks ago, she had been the newspaper's editor, said owner-publisher David E. Sykes of Heppner.

"She was a lively woman, and she enjoyed life," Sykes said Friday. "She was involved with things around the community, too."

Williams had organized a fund raising auction and dinner for a child in Irrigon who had cancer and helped form a local chapter of Soroptimist International, Sykes said.

Williams was visiting relatives in Baker when she was reported missing, police said.

Wilson was arrested without incident Thursday after the discovery of the body, the district attorney said. The suspect and victim were not believed to have been acquainted before March 22, he said.

"We had been looking for someone who had been seen with her...and we believe this is the same person," Hadley said.

Williams is survived by her son, Jason Pierce, 11, of Boardman. Sykes said a trust fund was established Friday for the child by an employee of the Boardman Enterprise.

Any Inland Empire Bank branch will accept donations, he said.

\$512 raised for ambulance equipment



Left to right- Carl Lauritsen, EMTIII, Betty Curnutt, EMT III, Penny Miller, EMT I, and Faith Healy, EMT I show new equipment for ambulance.

New equipment for the ambulance at Pioneer Memorial Hospital was purchased recently with funds raised at a November 23 pool calcutta at Bucknum's Tavern. A total of \$512 was raised which has been used to purchase an oxygen carrier, a soft trauma pack, and a radio headset. Similar equipment has been available for use in the ambulance, said an EMT spokesperson, but the new equipment is more portable and with the headset, it is now possible for an EMT at a patient's side to have both hands free to take care of the patient and

still communicate over the radio. The new more portable equipment makes it possible for one person to handle all of the equipment and the patient, continued the spokesperson.

Eight EMT's are available in Heppner and one accompanies each ambulance run. It is important that anyone calling for the ambulance inform the hospital if there is more than one person needing care, or if the person needing the ambulance is in need of special type care. Specially trained EMT's are available, the spokesperson emphasizes, but are not routinely sent on ambulance runs. "We have to know they are needed."

EMT's must complete a minimum of 121 hours of classroom education, 10 hours of clinical training and must pass a written and practical exam for state certification. The original certification is good for two years, 20 hours of additional training are required for renewal.

The EMT's next goal is a portable cardiac monitor defibrillator costing \$6,000 - \$9,000. There are two monitors at the hospital, and they can take one for the ambulance, but the more portable unit would stay with the ambulance and be much easier to use, they said. All of their fund-raising efforts in the immediate future will be toward this goal.