

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

**The Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES**
Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Readers 'sound off'

Voted against the levy

There is a lot of waste in our school system, air conditioning the entire Heppner high school in the summer so a few office workers can be comfortable, keeping the huge boiler going at the new school in Boardman all summer so a few workers can have hot water. Our schools can be operated on a lot less money if the people we have elected and hired will only get realistic rather than starting their scare tactics propaganda like closing the schools or cutting off the transportation. I voted against the last three budgets and will do so again. I live in Heppner.

Because any board of directors that will approve a \$2,000 yr. raise in pay to a superintendent during negotiations with teacher contracts makes me cautious to agree with any financial decision they offer.

Because I think the public should petition a recall vote for Doyle McCaslin. He likes to fight and so does our board.

Because the budget committee did not prepare for a failure of the budget and was forced because of deadlines to resubmit the same budget again.

Because I think the lone high school should close down. We waste money on its operation and children graduating from such small schools are not as prepared for career development.

Feel that the lone high school should be closed.
Should hire a Superintendent with better public relations skills.
School board members should not be "yes men."
Should discontinue the Heppner-Lex. after school activity bus.
Should hire more competent legal counsel.

This letter is in response to the Morrow County School budget that was recently voted down for the third time. The school board, budget committee and school administrators claim they can not get along with any less money. If they will get rid of the sacred cows and the pork barrel items, a lot of money could be cut from the budget and not hurt our basic education. Sacred cows and pork barrel items are sports, music, drama, shop, needlepoint and many other non essentials to basic education. The teachers of course are the biggest expense. They should have taken a roll back in wages like everyone else has. Also the teachers have turned a part time job into full time pay, they put in approx. 6 hrs. per day in the classroom which is 1080 hrs. per year. Anyone else that works a 40 hr. week puts in 2080 hrs. per year.

When every business is down and you want to raise taxes my business is down 50 percent.

This is a farming community. Farming is in trouble. Anyone choosing to live here-teachers and superintendent-have to realize they have tied their livelihood to this economy and act accordingly, or move.

Lone high school is too costly to maintain for 28-30 students. Close it and give money to Riverside and Heppner high school. Keep grade school.
We're top heavy in administration.

Heppner is not getting their fair share of the budget. The money is not the issue, but I don't care to pay for lone and Boardman's top notch facilities.

Business everywhere have to limit spending, cut convenience and evaluate decisions. The school should do the same.

I feel the budget has been padded and some of the extras should be slashed. In my own business I have to do a lot of things I don't want to so I can please the bank.

What are the pro's and con's of keeping lone schools open? People would really like to know.

What justification is there for your expenditure of funds on a district calendar, birthday cards, etc? Are these some of the quality items you are trying to retain?

What effort are you making to retain quality teachers.
Too much waste such as lone school-no students.

Administration expense too high in whole district-overpaid inefficient principals.

Athletics are O.K. but too costly. Too many coaches and assistant coaches and ladies to assist dance teams and cheerleaders. "Vote for kids" (?) It is for everything but kids. Cut the frills. Teach the three R's properly. The weary taxpayers are constantly told to get out and vote. So we go out, we vote and reject three times.

Is anybody paying attention? Why was a third grade teacher at Heppner elementary hired from Idaho when several local and qualified teachers applied for the position? We do not need an assistant superintendent. So call the budget committee back and start cutting, don't purchase another bus, suspend all non-required programs. Don't serve us the same old budget for the fourth time and please discontinue the announcements of how soon the schools will close unless the public accepts the budget as is.

I voted against the levy because I feel we can provide more preparation for life for our students with the same amount of tax dollars by combining the high schools and possibly junior high schools in lone and Heppner. I believe our students could be given more vocational courses that are meaningful with the cooperation of Blue Mountain Community College; and also more college preparation courses while still in high school with their cooperation.

At present our students going to a four year university are behind their peers, notably in math. If they are vying with students from the Willamette Valley for entrance into professional schools, they are behind in both preparation, plus grade point averages in these same courses.

Students have too many pressures to succeed. I do not like to see them at a disadvantage that could be remedied.

We live on a tight budget, schools should be no different. Close lone High School. We voted no on this three times, quit jamming it down our throats. We don't get to vote until the candidate of our choice is elected-budgets should be no different.

Because I think the lone High School should be moved into Heppner and Irrigon High moved into Boardman. In fact I think there could be several cuts in sports, like golf, tennis etc.

I feel the budget is too high. Some more cuts need to be made such as closing lone High School. The staff and cost per student is entirely too high compared to the cost at other high schools in the county.

I believe a lot of thing could be cut out that are unnecessary.

Close lone High School, cut all non-league sports, cut all paid teachers aids. Let teachers be responsible for their own classes. Stop giving into the teachers high demands for wages and insurance. (Very few people can afford the insurance coverage they have.)

The expense of the lone High School. The waste in our schools. For example the Art Dept. in Heppner. I personally have seen a whole shelf of coffee cans full of dried up paint brushes. That could be cleaned up. Keep the grade school but not the high school.

Property owners are the only ones who pay taxes. Everyone should share equally in supporting our county and schools, cemetery, etc. People who used the schools and lives in our county and don't own property gets off "scott free". The rest of us pay for them. I'll vote every levy down until we all share alike. Renters even get their refund for rent. We property owners don't get tax refund.

I resent spending twice the amount to keep lone High School open. Close it. If they want to keep it open, let them pay the bills. Cut all non-league games-all sports-all schools. More money does not mean quality education.

I think it's a waste of our money to keep the lone High School open and pay more teachers for 25 (?) students. Also the administration could take a cut in pay and the administration putting all the school closure threats isn't hurting anyone but the kids. They really care about them don't they?

Editorial

Measure legalizing marijuana needs to be defeated

A measure to legalize the cultivation of marijuana in Oregon will be on the ballot in November, and it should be soundly defeated.

People can argue back and forth forever over the relative effects and harm of marijuana. They can, and have, said it is less harmful than either alcohol, tobacco or prescription tranquilizers (which are also drugs). They can say what people do in the privacy of their homes is no one else's business.

But what the whole ballot measure addresses is: do we want to introduce yet another drug into wide-spread and legalized use in our society. I say not.

We are already contending with the effects of alcohol, tobacco and prescription drugs abuse in our society. Do we wish to add another to the list?

True, many people already smoke marijuana (just look at the number who signed the petition for its legalization), but if the marijuana initiative passes in November, the availability of the drug will skyrocket, and become even more widespread.

We don't need more ways to get high in our society, abuse of the available methods is causing enough problems. Vote no on the legalization of marijuana.

David Sykes

Readers 'sound off' on budget

Two weeks ago we asked our readers to fillout a coupon with the reasons they voted for or against the school budget during the last election.

We promised to print the responses which were not libelous or personal attacks in the September 3 issue of the Gazette-Times and the September 4 issue of the Boardman Enterprise.

We received many responses with reasons voters favored or disliked the school budget. All are printed below.

Voted for the levy

Our schools have been doing an excellent job. Our graduates are doing well at the colleges they attend.

Locked schoolhouse doors do not educate the children.

I am extremely disappointed in the Budget committees lack of preparedness on August 13 after the second failure. The levy is not passed until all votes are counted. Your job isn't done until after a levy passes.

For children of Morrow County to continue to receive good education.

Because I have kids in school. But I think the levy is too high-close lone schools (grades 7-12); reduce number of long distance trips to games.

I voted for the levy because it provides for continued quality in education for Morrow County kids without raising taxes above the inflation rate.

Morrow County has a very fine school system, but as with any large organization, there is always room for improvement. Voting no is not the way to deal with any concerns. The budget has been cut and is realistic.

I voted yes the last time. Really not satisfied with the schools. There is not enough discipline and the board is turning their backs on the drug problem that is not insignificant. We have a lot of good teachers but there are some very poor ones and the board will not weed them out.

Morrow Co. has excellent schools at one of the cheapest costs in the state. It's our responsibility to provide the best education for our kids. I can't understand people voting "no" when neighboring districts costs 1 1/2 times as much.

Where else can we better spend our money than in schools, for the future of our children which are our future? a high priority.

We have an excellent school system and I want to keep it that way. The \$600,000 already cut from the original budget has already hurt our kids.

In talking with various people of all ages they lacked objectivity about the needs of schools today. Their comments were irrelevant to the current needs in education in this county.

Because I know that the state does not come in any clear up our problems during a closure.

Because kids and employees suffer a loss they can never regain from a closure. It's worse than any strike because we hurt our children or our neighbors children.

Because I want this community to have a generation of better educated individuals living here.

Because spending in extra curricular studies and sports teaches the mind and body to be aware and prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

Because I've seen what sports cost the district per child and it's very small when you think about what someone might pay for dancing lessons or drawing lessons, or music lessons, or etc.

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Money "aint" when it "aint".
Cattle down-wheat down interest down. Why not economy in our schools?
town

When farmers are getting less money for their crops and where many businesses employees took a cut in wages to stay employed I feel the school district could cut expenses, wages, and extra-curricular.
Lexington

Money spent in the lone High School could be better spent in a combined lone-Heppner High. I hope valuable programs are not cut at other county schools in order to keep an "empty" lone high school open.
Heppner

Money spent on the lone high school could be better spent in a combined lone-Heppner High. Three to five graduates a year doesn't warrant keeping lone High open.
Heppner

Schools should stick to educational subjects; In sports-cut out a lot of non-league games. Close lone School-bring students to Heppner. Many wage earners are getting less pay. The school system will have to function on less.
Heppner

Because of unnecessary cost to maintaining lone High School. Students should be bussed to nearest school. (4-voters)
Rural

Citizens are not receiving full value for tax dollars spent. Priorities must be made. Number one priority is teaching each student to communicate. Then math and science, then vocational, then sports, and extra-curricular activities. The school has failed if one student graduates unable to read, spell, write a sentence or composition and speak before an audience properly.

Replace the elementary art teacher with a speech teacher. Keep students in class so teachers have chance. After April 1st they spend all time at sporting events, camps, band meetings, etc.
Boardman

The ridiculous cost of the lone schools; poor management of teachers and finances at the administration level; teachers salary increase too much for our economy at this time; scare tactics used by administration and teachers to influence voters.
Heppner

Our children are our hope for the future and need good education. If lone high and junior high schools were closed, thousands of dollars would be available for Heppner and Riverside schools. The students would benefit from more competition, scholastically and otherwise.
Heppner

My reason for voting no on the school budget is because of teachers benefits and salaries and the Supt. raise when the rest of the economy is so poor. Also there are too many extra-curricular activities.

Economic conditions are bad. The problem is inflated prices. The answer to the problem isn't higher wages and prices. The County Superintendent got his big raise. It is time to hold the line.

I think it is time we got a new elementary school principal, one that is interested in better schools, the children.

How McCaslin and school board acted-McCaslin \$3,000 raise before teacher contracts were settled. McCaslin's idea the voter lacks understanding of the budget.
Heppner

I feel Heppner and lone should consolidate. Economics dictates this decision not personal feelings. It's painful but necessary. If parents handle it with mature attitude the children will benefit the most.
Heppner

Our wages dropped around 2000.00 last year. Why does everything else go up. Can't they cut cost like everyone else? Why can't Heppner and lone take care of their schools & the North end theirs. Do we need McCaslin? He doesn't get along well with the county people and is not worth his wages.
Heppner

Teachers raises and benefits at this time. Makes me furious to say school will close when there are to many ball games busses, field trips, hiring of extra coaches and instructors. lone High School.
Town

The cost of education per student at the lone High school is ridiculous.
Private school status of lone High Students and expense to operate same. Lack of teacher supervision. Teacher aids assuming teachers' responsibilities. Students from same family forced to go to school in different towns. Poor example set by teachers tacky dress and manners.
Heppner

The whole government system is full of greed and they aren't getting any more of my money until they learn to spend what they have.
Heppner

I voted against the levy for several reasons including: economics (I simply can't afford a tax increase), operation of lone school (it should be closed) and poor representation on the board.
Heppner

Let's get back to basic education. Not so much emphasis on sports. There are too many coaches, dance instructors, cheer leader advisors, etc. etc. etc. There are just too many activities not connected with the three R's that could cut education costs.
Boardman

I feel that as few pupils as there are in lone High School it would be much less expensive to bus them to Heppner school, also the pupil would have more advantages.
Heppner

Teachers wage increase at this time of economic hardship. Cost of keeping lone High School open where there are too few students to make it economically feasible.
Heppner

Lumber employees are taking a cut, agriculture is the lowest it has been in years, 15 major airlines have gone out of business but our schools seem to think the well is bottomless.
Heppner

I don't think that tennis, golf, and bowling is necessary students can do those things on their own time also lone high school has too few students, they could come to Heppner high school.
Heppner

Lone high school costs too much-transport kids to Heppner. Principals and Supt. got too much raise. Have intramural athletics for grade and Jr. Hi-cut out the transportation. Have teachers teach and cut out a lot of teachers aid.
lone

I'm an ignorant tightwad who has forgotten that somebody paid for my education. Besides, I need that little extra cash to buy beer. I know my "no" vote tells teachers that we're a quality area that demands the best.
Heppner

I do not want to pay for: A superintendent and an assistant superintendent for our small school district. A laundry person. A woman to advise the lone cheerleaders. A woman to advise the Heppner dance team. Men to advise the students how to play ball. An academically talented coordinator. Teachers assistants. One year of wages for 8 months work. How come the "educators" don't get the message after three defeats? McCaslin says "We don't believe people want extra curricular activities cut." Try us.
Heppner

I am writing in regard to the school budget and questionnaire.
My husband and I both voted "No" although we have children in the system. We will continue to vote "No" as long as the lone school is kept open. It's ridiculous to support a school that graduates 5 seniors and where it costs 2 to 1 to educate a child as compared to Heppner. Also it is our feeling that there are only a handful of teachers, mostly in the lower grades, who are actually earning their grade. Most are teaching for a monthly paycheck and aren't interested in the education of any child. Drug and alcohol usage in the high school is a "free for all" with the majority of athletes using both.
Heppner

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