

Health district advisory committee questions County Court

The special committee appointed by the Morrow County Court to investigate the formation of separate health districts within Morrow County met with County Commissioners Irv Rauch, G. W. "Jerry" Peck, and Morrow County Judge-elect Louis Carlson Monday, Dec. 29 at Lone City Hall to question the court regarding its policy currently governing health care.

Monday's meeting was the fifth time the committee has met since its appointment in early December. The seven-member committee comprised of representatives from the five cities within the county, has reviewed equipment and facilities at Heppner's Pioneer Memorial Hospital, Boardman's North Morrow Medical

Center, and the Boardman Ambulance. The cities of Lone and Irrigon currently have no equipment or facilities provided by the county for medical purposes.

Larry Mills, chairman of the committee told the court the committee has also reviewed financial statements and has met with the county's medical boards to hear opinions on current health care needs and future health care needs.

Committee member Chuck Starr, Lexington, questioned the court on the continuation of public hearings in Boardman and asked if more time could be granted to the committee before presenting a recommendation.

Commissioner Peck responded

that the continuation of the first hearing is set for January 6 and that the court expects the committee to present its recommendation at that time.

"Some kind of determination has to be made at the conclusion of the first hearing," he said.

Peck continued that a second and final hearing is possible but by law the court must allow 20 days for public response before holding the second hearing.

Peck said the committee could request more time but public notice would have to be given. "When I talk about more time, remember we're looking at a February 5 deadline in order to get it on the March ballot."

Committee members stressed that

they did not want to prolong the election process and would present a recommendation at the January 6 hearing.

Linda LaRue of Lone asked the court for clarification of the salary arrangement between the county and Drs. Koznek and Thiessen in Heppner.

The court explained that the Heppner physicians run a private practice and that the county does not pay them a salary. However, the county does guarantee Thiessen and Koznek yearly incomes of \$60,000 and \$70,000 respectively. If the physicians earn less than the guaranteed amount the county pays the difference. The county does not pay malpractice insurance for the doctors but Peck said it is marked off as an expense which is covered under the guarantee.

The commissioners said they did not know if the county has had to pay the physicians under the guarantee to date. Peck went on to say that the court is not authorized to look at the Heppner doctor's books. The hospital board authorizes payment to the doctors. Only the hospital board and an independent auditor have the authority to look at the doctors' books as a condition of their contracts with the county.

In the past Dr. Zielinski of the North Morrow Medical Clinic in Boardman has paid his own malpractice insurance. During this year's contract negotiations with Zielinski, the county agreed to pay for his malpractice insurance in addition to his salary. The county pays Zielinski an annual salary of \$46,000 as an employee of Morrow County. Malpractice insurance is provided for all county facilities used in the deliverance of health care by the county.

LaRue asked the court if it would be cheaper and more efficient to group malpractice insurance costs

together. "It seems like we have duplication," she said.

LaRue told the court that one of Lone's immediate needs is an ambulance. LaRue said she approached the court in 1979 as Mayor of Lone about putting an ambulance in Lone. Lone did get an ambulance, she continued, but it was very old and was not outfitted properly. The city paid insurance costs and training costs for volunteer personnel to operate the vehicle. The city eventually had to abandon operation of the ambulance because of a lack of people and money.

LaRue said she would like to see an ambulance placed in Lone as an extension of the Pioneer Memorial Hospital. "We have a fire department that's interested and two training to be EMT's," she said.

Dan Creamer raised the question of the county providing space at the Irrigon annex for Dr. Zielinski to see patients in Irrigon. Presently, the City of Irrigon donates space for Dr. Zielinski to see patients on Monday mornings. Irrigon also pays the City of Umatilla for use of its ambulance services while paying tax dollars into Morrow County's health care budgets.

Commissioner Irv Rauch said he could not see why a space could not be made available for Dr. Zielinski and the court would look into that possibility.

The court could not give a specific answer of how many patients were seen at the Heppner hospital, when asked by committee member Jerry Donovan, but did answer that the hospital had an average patient load of 1.5 patients per day.

Art Kegerler said he was surprised at the amount of administrative funds in the budget to maintain a hospital

status for one and one-half patients a day.

"We support sixty-five employees from lab support etcetera for one and a half patients a day," Kegerler stated. "That blows my mind. You buy computers and phone lines but won't buy a defibrillator for the north end. I can't believe you would let that happen," he said.

Peck told Kegerler that in the last election the hospital budget was voted on separately from the county budget. Voters approved it on the first election. The north end budget for medical care was in the county's general fund, which was defeated and cuts had to be made.

The committee told the court that they were not quite certain how the nursing home tied into the Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

"I'd like to see the nursing home be able to pay for itself but the administrator (John Hempel) keeps telling us it can't," Peck said.

The committee said it recognized the nursing home as a valuable part of south county.

An inquiry was made to the court as to its intentions once a recommendation was presented. Chuck Starr asked if the recommendation would automatically go before the voters or if the county would use its power to exercise some other options.

Louis Carlson responded that the County Court would be hard-pressed to follow a recommendation if the committee could come up with a viable recommendation.

"We're talking about compromise," Carlson said. "I'm convinced the people are smart enough to know a reasonable compromise when they see one. I don't think anybody expects to be satisfied one hundred percent and will buy a good compromise," Carlson said.



Linda LaRue (left) Commissioner Irv Rauch, and Chuck Starr.



County Agent's Corner

By County Ag Agent Fred Lundin

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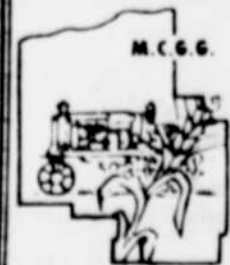
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Good Thru
Jan. 17, 1987

A two day short course on developing profitable resource based recreation on private land will be held at the Red Lion Indian Hills Motel in Pendleton, according to Tom Bedell, Extension Rangeland Resources Specialist at Oregon State University. The short course will begin Tuesday, January 20 at 1 p.m. and conclude at noon Thursday, January 22. This topic currently receives a great deal of interest since recreational endeavors such as fee hunting are becoming one additional source of income for some enterprising landowners.

The short course is oriented toward Oregon, Washington, and Idaho landowners, sportsmen, and management agency people who are interested in the potential for resource based recreation. A wide range of topics will be addressed. The keynote will be given by Gregg Symonds on the successes that the Desert Ranch in Utah is having with various forms of recreation in addition to their ongoing cattle and sheep operations. Speakers from several geographic areas with a broad base of experience will cover a range of topics.

Examples include: Identifying opportunities for recreation on private land, some of the possible constraints imposed by regulations or by one's own preferences or personal-

traits, legal liability, and biological and physical management practices to enhance the quality of the environment for wildlife, fisheries, camping and other forms of outdoor recreation. The topic of marketing recreational opportunities will receive attention as will discussion of several forms of different recreational enterprises. The program will be topped off Thursday morning with a panel of landowners and management consultants who will discuss their various recreation operations and how they were developed.

A fee of \$45 per person will apply until January 9, after which the fee will be \$55. Pre-registration for the \$45 fee is desirable but not mandatory. To register, write to the Department of Rangeland Resources, Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331 or call Tom Bedell at (503) 754-3341. For more information, call Bill Broderick at the Extension Office, 676-9642. This is the annual Pacific Northwest Range Management Short Course sponsored this year by Oregon State University Extension Service and supported by the Washington State University and University of Idaho Extension Services.



Jewelry Fashions, Facts, Fiction

SILVER LININGS

Silver lines the necks, the wrists, the ears of many fashionable women this year. Some women are choosing silver because it suits their skin tones. Others chose silver because it complements the fashionable grays, black, and burgundy. As a metal which is readily adapted to bold, big designs, silver is a pleasing alternative setting for some popular gemstones.

An amethyst centered on a bracelet of silver is intriguing and delightful. An antique look may be achieved by combining silver with pearls and onyx. Though gold continues to be the first choice of many fine jewelry designers, silver offers a cool sheen with its own appeal.

Because of the per ounce price of silver, you'll find you may be interested in a complete silver ensemble including earrings, necklace, rings, and bracelet.

With a modicum of care, silver need not tarnish. Tarnishing is caused by sulfur in the air interacting with the copper alloy in silver. If the silver piece is kept wrapped up when not worn, tarnishing is greatly diminished. When dressing for the morning, simply wash your silver with soap and hot water, rub on a little tooth paste to break up the sulfur, and wipe with a soft cloth. If your silver jewelry piece includes a gemstone, another method of care may be needed. Please stop by to discuss the care of your fine jewelry with one of our staff.



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