

The Heppner

Morrow County's Home-Owned Newspaper

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## Remodeling Heppner Hotel considered viable investment

By Avon Melby

The board of directors of Bank of Eastern Oregon is convinced remodeling of Heppner Hotel into a Senior Citizen housing unit is a viable investment. But some councilmen for the city of Heppner still have reservations.

Gerald Pierson of the bank told a special meeting of the council last week the board had approved a \$388,000 20-year loan at six percent interest, contingent on certain requirements being met.

First of these requires that it be a municipal loan, with the city taking out the loan. "It has to be a city project for those rates to apply," Pierson said. Also the city must comply with requirements set up by a tax attorney.

A Portland attorney is researching to see if a vote is required by the people before the city can ask for the loan. County Clerk Barbara Bloodworth said it would be 34 days after the city sets the date before a vote could be held.

Heppner Mayor Cara Costa reminded the council members that the council had signed to receive the \$500,000 grant which has been approved, last spring.

Three council members expressed concern about their liability, and the possible later effects if population goes down and the units are left empty, at the regular council meeting January 5. They were in attendance at the special meeting. Also taking part were representatives of Columbia Basin Electric Co-op, Senior Citizens, Heppner Chamber, and Heppner Economic Development Corporation, which has been a prime sponsor of the project. Members of the public participated in the meeting.

The idea of using the historic hotel for a retirement center came up several years ago when a survey of the town showed older people were leaving because they could no longer keep up their homes, and there is no place for them to stay locally said city attorney Bill Kuhn. Heppner Economic Development made a study and found a grant was available. This is when the city signed to be sponsor. It takes a governmental agency to apply for such a grant, individuals are not eligible, Kuhn said in answer to a question of why interested business men had not sponsored the project.

When remodeled, the building will be virtually a new building, Cliff

Green, president of HEDC noted. The type of people who have paid \$100 deposits will keep it from becoming a "revolving door," he said. They are people who want to stay, it will not be like a typical apartment house.

Three different inspectors have looked over the hotel in the past few years, said Arnie Hedman, who with his wife Rita, are owners of the building. "All three said it was as solid as the day it was built," he added. The building's downtown location on the main corner in town, is ideal for Seniors, close to the drug store, post office, groceries and restaurants, said several seniors.

To put minds at rest on viability of going ahead with the reconstruction, Pierson said the reserve fund will build up rapidly and the city will have money left over after paying all expenses each year. It has to be considered an income producing thing. He also said if fears of some should come true and 10 to 15 years from now, the hotel were in trouble, "It isn't going to be something the city will lose money on. It could be taken over by a private investor, the balance against it would be smaller, and the city could sell its equity."

Several spoke of the advantages to the city of having the historic building returned to an attractive one on Main street, and the need for drawing people here, and keeping them here.

"I feel we're closer to doing something good for the community than we've ever been," said Fred Toombs, manager of Columbia Basin Electric. He said there was a need for places for people to stay.

"I think the hotel project may just be the key to keeping our hospital," said Green. "It will bring people in to Heppner. When there are more dollars there are more jobs, and everybody benefits."

The Port of Morrow took a chance 12 years ago, Judge Louis Carlson noted. A long-time member of the Port commission, Carlson said the work of the commission had resulted in doubling the value of the county, going from \$4 million to \$8 million, "because we took a chance." He said the county had good government, and recreation. There is a need for a retirement center. "We're on the verge of some wonderful things," he predicted, "and all we have to do is have the guts to go with it."

"The figures show this is a viable project," said Green. "We feel this is one of many steps the community needs to take to maintain and develop the area. It may be crucial to the continued operation of Pioneer Memorial Hospital."

## Chamber names outstanding citizens

Larry Mills and Jane Rawlins were named Heppner's first citizens last week during the annual Chamber of Commerce banquet.

Mills was picked for the honor because of his long-time support of 4-H and FFA activities, extension programs, agricultural education and other youth activities.

Mills has also served as a member of the Pioneer Hospital Foundation, and most recently was chairman of an ad hoc committee studying health care in Morrow County.

Mills has been manager of the Morrow County Grain Growers for the past 17 years, and he and his wife Betty live in Heppner.

Mills, who was master of ceremonies for the Chamber banquet, was presented the outstanding citizen by Awards Chairman Dr. Wallace Wolff.

Jane Rawlins was chosen as first citizen because of her involvement in the garden club, work with community drama, and service to 4-H and the fair.

## Marine Board may provide boat for county law enforcement

Morrow County has a good chance of getting a boat, motor, and trailer for law enforcement on the Columbia River and Willow Creek Lake. Sheriff Roy Drago told the county court last Friday.

"I've been trying for four years now, and this is the closest we've come," the Sheriff said. In addition to the boat, the Oregon State Marine Board also would give the county \$6,000 annually to help fund a law-enforcement program. They would "expect the county to kick in 20% cash or \$1500 and to hire someone qualified to operate the boat and to enforce boating regulations," he said.

The boat could also be used to aid Search and Rescue teams, but the funding is for enforcement, he emphasized. The county needs to get a program started.

The Court inspected the new addition at the North Morrow Annex in Irrigon and listed items still needing to be brought up to specifications. Total cost of the 792 sq. ft. addition and remodeling in the existing building was \$41,214.

Courthouse Annex is the name chosen by the Court for the old dental clinic building in Heppner which will be the new Justice Court, Juvenile Services, and Mental Health offices.

In other business, the Court accepted Marnie Anderson's resignation from the North Morrow Medical Clinic Board. The Court will accept applications from those

interested in being appointed to the board.

discussed the committee appointment each commissioner would request in the Assoc. of Oregon Counties.

set February 11 for a public hearing of comments concerning the Fair Board's wish to request lottery funds to build a new exhibit hall at the fairgrounds.

approved advertising for someone to fill a fulltime job in the Clerk's office.

approved claims.

approved advertising for a Public Works Director, a position which has been vacant for over a year.

held an executive session regarding personnel.

discussed plans for work on Wilson Road in Boardman with Road Supervisor Don Ball and County Planner Deane Seeger.

signed an agreement approved at the January 7 meeting for \$1000 emergency funding to the Morrow County Neighborhood Council board for public use. The Court decided to wait until the Council's non-profit corporation certification is received before approving additional funds.

approved purchase of the following furniture items for the new Justice Courtroom at the Courthouse Annex in Heppner. Construction of a five inch platform for the Judge's bench, high back executive chair-\$256, U.S. and Oregon State flags with stands \$60 each, easel

board and a clock.

approved sending the road supervisor to a bridge inspection workshop and to a fleet administration and management seminar.

heard from the county planner that a final decision will be made on the siting of a proposed fish hatchery in Irrigon at a February 11-12 meeting in Boise, Idaho.

received copies of a document prepared by Boeing as a guideline for a proposed lone-Boardman road.

authorized Deane Seeger to continue negotiating with the Corps of Engineers for Quesnel Park, a primitive park with access to the Columbia River.

approved the following items for the No. Morrow Annex: solid wood judge's bench-\$1196, three mini blinds, steam cleaning and stretching carpet in the planner's office.

approved a Slater Wheeler alarm system for the Courthouse Annex. The one-time cost of the system is less than \$500.

## Irrigon man pleads not guilty to theft

Denis Buffham, 40, of Irrigon pleaded not guilty to charges of first-degree theft in Circuit Court January 12.

Buffham was indicted by a Morrow County Grand Jury last month on charges of Theft I, a Class C felony, in which he allegedly collected more than \$100,000 dollars from Western Alfalfa Inc., for hay that was never delivered.

The thefts allegedly took place between May 1983 and December 1986 while he was under contract to deliver hay to the company.

Buffham was first arrested by Oregon State Police after a month long investigation. He is accused of collecting over \$100,000 over a 31 month period by falsifying the weight for hay that was never delivered. Buffham was rearrested two weeks later after a Grand Jury indicted him in connection with the case.

A trial date has been set for February 10 according to Morrow County District Attorney Jeff Wallace.

Under Oregon Law, a conviction carries a maximum of five years in the state penitentiary and a fine up to \$100,000 dollars.



Larry Mills

Heppner was also recognized by the Chamber of Commerce. Farley has been in business in Heppner for the past 40 years, first as a Shell Oil agent then a Pontiac dealer, a Willy's Jeep dealer and also a dealer for Buick, GMC and Ford Motor Co.

Former Heppner pastor advises

## Don't lose sight of objectives

John Maas, the colorful, former minister of the Lutheran Church in Heppner, came back to town last Tuesday night, as featured speaker at the annual Heppner Chamber of Commerce banquet.

"It's hard to remember you came to drain the swamp, when you are up to your bottom in alligators," Maas told the gathered crowd of chamber members and guests.

Maas, who moved from Heppner to be pastor of a church in Prineville, said the situation with agriculture in the past several years is that many farmers and ranchers "have forgotten that you came to drain the



John Maas

swamp." Maas urged local people not to lose sight of their objectives, to stick together for the betterment of the community, and to help out those who have had hard luck.

"You are a good town," Maas said, "and if you remember those three things, you're going to be all right."

## Weather Report

by City of Heppner

January 14 - January 20  
High Low Rain Snow

Wed	43	30	.04	1/4"
Thurs	33	5	.06	1" new
Fri	29	7	.0	3/4" old
Sat	33	13	.0	3/4" old
Sun	33	20	.07	1 1/2"
Mon	38	17	.17	1 1/2"
Tues	36	13	.0	1 1/2"

## Market Report

Compliments of the Morrow County Grain Growers

Tuesday, Jan 20  
Soft White

Jan	53.00
Feb	53.02
March	53.03
New Crop	52.75

Jan	Barley	585.50
Feb		586.
New Crop		568

Jan	Hard Red Winter Ordinaries	53.04
	PIK	

Cash	108%
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Dr. Wallace Wolff (left) congratulates Jim Farley

## Grade School discipline policy challenged

A Boardman parent and principal came to an agreement following much discussion at Monday night's School Board meeting about the discipline of a student.

School Supt. Doyle McCaslin explained that Ron Bray was contesting the discipline policy at Sam Boardman Elementary School as it related to his third grade son.

Bray said he had been notified that as a result of his son's behavior, the boy, would serve a half-day in-school suspension. Bray did not question his son's guilt and said that he had disciplined him at home. "I told the school he also should be disciplined at school. I'm not saying, 'don't discipline him.' I am saying that if you put him in a room, give him some homework or something to do," he said. "I think it's my parental right to point out that the same discipline doesn't work for all kids and that it's not fair for this boy to be put in a room with nothing to do. Doyle McCaslin told me that he was not sure I have rights as a parent as far as discipline of kids at school is concerned."

Bray's son has been diagnosed borderline hyperactive and his parents have elected not to treat the condition with medication, the long term effects of which are unknown.

The school's policy for in-school suspension, Principal Susan Tolar explained, is to put the child in a room next to her office, alone, with nothing to do. She and her secretary

supervise the child. Discipline must be consistent, she said, the same for all children, and cannot be negotiated individually with each parent. We have a discipline policy, and if we don't follow it, there's no need to have one.

The school's current policy, Tolar explained, is a revision of previous similar plans that she and her staff have worked out. "As a staff we struggled with the idea of being consistent. We try not to treat one child differently than another for the same offense."

Previously, a child serving in-school suspension were given work to do, she said, and that didn't work out too well because he would finish before his time was up and he would sit there doing nothing anyway. Under the current plan we can give the child work to do or not give him work. "We decided not to because the results are not pleasant, not something a child would enjoy. Yet it is not considered cruel and unusual punishment, she said.

"It was not my understanding that the Board needed to approve the discipline policy for each school. I understood that as part of my job to develop a policy and maintain discipline at my school," Tolar noted.

Boardmember Mary Lou Carlson, Boardman, asked Supt. McCaslin why he had told Bray that his parental rights did not enter into the situation.

## EMT's prepare for state exam

Emergency Medical Technicians have been meeting for classes at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner two nights each week since October 14 to prepare for the second level EMT exams to be given in Portland during March. EMTs will pay the cost of the exams.

Course Co-ordinator Carl Lauritsen, an EMT III, and Physician Advisor Dr. Curtis Thiessen have worked together with course instructors Sandi Hanna, Dr. Clare Koznek, Sheridan Tarnasky, Marge Kenny, and Vicky Birkby. All have donated their time to teach the class. The hospital has donated a place for

the class to meet and the use of its equipment.

EMT IIs must complete 82 class hours beyond EMT I training and must pass a state exam to qualify to use a heart monitor defibrillator to care for people with cardiac arrest.

Four EMT IIs from the Ukiah Quick Response team, Clinton Barber, Norma Barber, Helen Franklin, and Karen Collar, Pendleton volunteer firefighter Dana Long Botham, and the following local EMTs took the class: Vickie Turrel, Faith Healy, Delores McLachlan, Bill Sheirbon, Pennie Miller, and Louie Anne DeSpain.

Figures on Heppner Hotel	
Expected Gross Income (figuring a 5% vacancy rate)	\$70,632
Annual Operating Expense (includes \$4,560 for maintenance reserve which will accumulate)	-36,012
Net Operating Income Debt service - figured at 8% (bank loan will be 6% if the project qualifies)	\$34,620
	-34,182
Cash return first year to sponsor (Will be larger if loan is 6%)	\$438

Figures are based on architect's projection. Actual costs will not be determined until a contractor agrees to build it for the price anticipated.