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County Court close to decision on short term health care plan

The County Court is coming close to an agreement on a short-term plan to meet the immediate health care needs of the county, Judge Louis Carlson told members of the county Planning Commission Monday night.

The court has been dealing with the problem of unequal distribution of health care funds between north and south county since October, when a petition was filed by North county residents asking for two separate health care districts.

The issue was complicated by a second petition filed by South county residents asking for a single district.

In response, the county appointed an ad hoc committee composed of citizens from each of the county's five cities to study the problem. The Court scheduled public hearings to gather public opinion. During the hearings a third option, to leave health care as it is, under the jurisdiction of the county, was voiced.

Carlson said that he and commissioners Irv Rauch and Jerry Peck were close to agreement (but not yet ready to announce) short term actions. "Our philosophy is based on the ad hoc committee's recommendations and the three needs (voiced at the public hearings) which must be met," he said. "We have heard that there must be no increase in the tax load, no additional layers of bureaucracy, and that there must be equality of care based on need."

Our goal was to have a plan this week, but additional information is needed for a plan which will meet the long term needs of the county, he said. The judge asked the Planning Commission to make one of its goals the formulation of a five-year plan to provide for total health care in the county.

Health care is our top priority now, Carlson said. There are so many phases of it that it's mind bog-

gling. Many areas have been neglected for a long time. It's time to get on with our long range planning. Roads are a second priority because areas have been neglected there also.

County Planner Deane Seeger advised the commission that it is charged with identifying all future needs and not just those related to roads. He explained that the commission is further charged with advising the county court.

Commission Chairman John Bristow said that the commission would await direction on structure of the district or districts and work with Seeger on a plan.

In other business, the Commission:

-approved changing the county's Comprehensive Plan to include the limited use overlay zone granted Boeing for its development of a radar antenna test range near Boardman. Seeger said the County Court will need to ratify the change.

-heard that Bonneville Power Administration has agreed to the site approved by the Planning Commission and the County Court for location of its proposed fish hatchery at Irrigon. The next step, Seeger said, is to relate the choice back to its impact on county roads and schools and to resolve any conflicting land uses such as hunting, fishing, trucks carrying pellets to feed fingerlings, and trucks loaded with fish.

-heard that the county will place traffic counters on some of its roads for an E.C.O.A.C. traffic study.

-heard progress in preparing an evacuation plan required by the State of Oregon.

-heard no further progress had been made by city planning commissions determining possible extensions of streets to the urban growth boundaries.

-reviewed a proposed plan by Boeing for public and private roads

across the Bombing Range and Boeing property. The plan scheduled construction of a public road through the Bombing Range during 1995. Commissioners preferred an alternate site for a road from the Charles Doherty Ranch at Ella to connect with Tower Road. No action was taken.



Settling In

Judge Charlotte Gray was fairly well settled in her new office Tuesday at the Courthouse Annex on Rock St. in Heppner.

Justice Court, Juvenile Services and Morrow County Mental Health have moved their offices to the old dental clinic building across the parking lot from the Heppner Medical Clinic.

The County recently signed a lease-option for the building with the Pioneer Hospital Foundation. Remodeling at the annex has taken about a month and will cost the county close to \$10,000.

Fate of Morrow County health care still up in air after public hearing

Little was added to the testimony of two previous sessions at a Tuesday, Jan. 20 public hearing on health care held at Heppner Elementary School.

Speakers from both North and South Morrow County reiterated that the county has neglected North end health care needs when distributing tax monies to the North Morrow Medical Clinic, Pioneer Memorial Hospital, and the ambulance services, all of which provide health care for county residents. As at previous hearings, opinions were voiced supporting one district, no district but a plan for equitable funding, and two districts.

The situation exploded last October when a petition was presented to the County Court asking them to form two separate health care districts within the county. A second petition compounded the problem by

asking the Court to form one county-wide district. (See related story).

The Court responded by scheduling a series of three public hearings and by appointing an ad hoc committee to study the health care problems within the county.

Larry Mills, chairman of the ad hoc committee, reported the committee's findings that the county should form one county-wide health care district administered by one board of directors with representatives from all areas of the county. The committee also listed specific health care needs for each city and possible solutions to them.

"We have to remember that changes cannot happen immediately," he said, "because health care is highly regulated. We need to remember, whether we like it or not, that Pioneer Memorial Hospital

operates under the same regulations as St. Vincent's in Portland. The committee was only seven people. We spent quite a lot of time studying the issue, and came up with a possible solution, but we don't pretend to speak for everyone in the county."

Marilee Trotter, a former Heppner resident, asked the Court to remember that health care is layered, and different types of cases are referred to different facilities. Pioneer is a small, primary level facility which stabilizes and transfers patients requiring more sophisticated services. Statistics such as 1.8 patients per day distorts the actual service of the hospital for outpatient and nursing home care, she said. The county does not currently have a health care district, she emphasized, and now is the time to form one.

As a Chamber of Commerce, we need to reassure businesses which are considering locating in the area that good health care is available, George Koffler, president of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce said. "It's apparent that the current method has not worked. Formation of one district would stabilize health care without fragmenting the county or leaving medical care up to the County Court," he said.

"We have talked about a single health care district as if it were the only alternative to two districts," Ed Glenn of Boardman said. "A health care district would be just another layer of government and we already have all the government we can handle. We don't want anymore."

"A district will probably not reduce the total amount of taxes paid by county residents," he continued, "it comes to a point where we want to say no more tax dollars will be spent on this particular item. Nobody wants to close Pioneer Memorial Hospital or take away the Heppner ambulance. All we want is a little rationality. If we shift a little tax money spent in the South to the North, wouldn't that be better than creating a new board and going through this whole process again?"

Kinzua General Manager Harry Kennison said that his major concern was providing good emergency medical care for the 250 Kinzua employees in the area. "No one would disagree with the county's phasing down and cutting back on spending for the hospital when all hospitals in the county are having trouble. But Kinzua adds \$800,000 to the county's tax base, and I'll fight like a tiger to keep good emergency care and the nursing home available. I intend to keep close tabs on the situation because our employees are valuable," he said. "We see nothing wrong with realigning the hospital board and trying to do the right thing. We think the administration could be spread out to the entire county. Kinzua will

Krebs hired to Port position

Port of Morrow General Manager Bob Miller announced that the newly created position of Maintenance Planner/Lab Technician will be filled by Dorothy Krebs, a resident of Boardman for the past two years. Krebs was selected from 32 highly qualified applicants and is currently employed by Boardman Farms as a payroll clerk. She brings to the job a M.S. Degree in both analytical and inorganic chemistry from Oregon State University followed by work on soils and forages analysis; she had done research in biochemistry and animal nutrition as well.

Krebs has held the following positions: Morrow County Commissioner (1978-1982); chairperson, East Central Oregon Association of Counties, chairperson, Regional Services Institute, Eastern Oregon

State College Vice-Chairperson, among many other public service positions.

In her job at the Port she will be in charge of the sampling, reporting, and scheduling of the effluent water disposal of on Port land in accordance with a Department of Environmental Quality permit. Reporting to Jerald Rea, farm & Utility Supervisor, Krebs will also assist in the planning and scheduling of maintenance and inventory control using computerized records.

Increase in both the size and complexity of the D.E.Q. required sampling program and need for a computerized maintenance and inventory program required creation of this position. Krebs' addition brings the current permanent employment at the Port to 11 employees. She will begin her duties on February 2.



Dorothy Krebs

Heppner to vote on hotel project

By Avon Melby

It will be necessary to change the charter of the City of Heppner so a loan may be obtained to remodel Heppner Hotel. This will necessitate a vote of the people.

Tax Counsel Harvey Rogers, of the Portland firm of Lindsay and Hart, notified City Attorney Bill Kuhn of the decision recently. He had been hired by the city to find out what would be required.

A grant of \$500,000 has been obtained by the city, but an additional \$380,000 is considered necessary. The state has offered the money, but it would be on a 40-year loan, and at 10.9 percent interest. Both local banks are being consulted on loaning the money, Kuhn said Tuesday. The Bank of Eastern Oregon has indicated a 20-year loan at six percent interest may be available.

Heppner city council will be asked to make a decision at its Monday meeting. If an election is to be held the county clerk has to have a 34-day notification before the election.

Rogers also said the city will have to obtain certification that its indebtedness does not exceed \$10 million, and to obtain certification on development bonds before the loan can be made.

When these steps have been car-

ried out by the city a written opinion by the tax counselor will be given the city, which can be used to obtain the loan from banks or other lending

institutions.

Council meeting will be at 8 p.m. Monday at city hall for those who might wish to attend.

Conklin to visit China

Heppner High School Athletic Director Dale Conklin has been selected as a coach/chaperone for a high school track team which will go to China this summer and participate in a track meet at Hong Kong. This is the same tour which Heppner's Wayne Wilgers and Ione's Deena Hams took last summer.

Conklin and Norm Oylear of West Lynn high school were selected as the two coaches to accompany a Class A and Class B team of high school tracksters. The two coaches will decide soon to which athletes they will extend invitations, Conklin said.

Two track teams will leave Portland on June 21, Conklin says for a 10-day trip to Hong Kong, Canton and Macao. During their tour, athletes will participate in a track meet at Hong Kong but will spend the majority of their time sightseeing and learning about Chinese culture.

Conklin who has been head track coach at Heppner High School for 11 years has also been active in the Oregon High School coaches Assoc. He says his selection as a coach for the tour is, in part, recognition by other track coaches in the state for his experience.



Dale Conklin

He has been a coach at Heppner High School for 19 years. He and his wife, Linda, have four children: Ashley, Jill, Sheryl, and Mark.

Although there is much work involved getting organized, checking to see that everyone has a passport, etc., Conklin is extremely excited about the opportunity. "I'm counting the days already," he said.

Hospital will ask \$80,000 less tax money than last year

By Avon Melby

Pioneer Memorial Hospital cut its request for tax funds by approximately \$80,000 last week. A proposed budget of \$273,483 was presented the county.

Hospital Manager John Hempel said the trimming of expenses had just about gone as far as it could and still leave adequate funds for operation. "It is a realistic budget," he said. The biggest expense which cannot be cut is in stand-by-keeping adequate personnel on hand on a 24-hour basis. This is something the hospital cannot change.

Judge Louis Carlson met with the board to discuss its budget and to explain the information the court is asking for. It is needed to arrive at a decision on how to meet the medical needs of the whole county.

The hospital board approved purchase of a new machine which Hempel said it would be used to regulate blood pressure and monitoring the effect of medication on patients who have been sent home after heart attacks or heart surgery. He said it was a necessity, and the present piece of equipment is no longer dependable. Cost will be between

\$3,200 and \$3,600. The money is available in the capital fund.

Attempted murder charged

Jo Jesus Gonzalez, 36, Irrigon, was arraigned Monday morning in Justice Court at Heppner on charges of Attempted Murder, Attempted Rape, Kidnapping I, Possession of a Controlled Substance, and Coercion. Bail was set at \$85,000.

Gonzalez was arrested Thursday afternoon by the Morrow County Sheriff's Dept. following a domestic incident just outside of Irrigon. He was lodged at the Umatilla City Jail prior to his arraignment.

Following the arraignment, Gonzalez was transported to Hermiston City Jail where a warrant from Municipal Court charged him with Contempt-Indirect.

A sheriff's Dept. spokesperson said no minors were involved in the incident and other possible charges are pending. Irrigon police assisted in the arrest.

A preliminary hearing is set for February 5.

funding were divided in half, it would mean an increase in spending in the North end which would almost meet our needs. "We're confident that we can go home and create a North end district to make up the balance which we are short," he said. The hospital says they are cutting their budget, but "I don't know if they can cut that much. We feel that we have support for a local district where our own needs will not be voted down."

"We were elected to make decisions and we keep hearing people say they want us to do that, so now that the public input portion of the hearing process is concluded, please give us an opportunity to make our decision and to implement it," Judge Louis Carlson said at the conclusion of the meeting.

Weather Report

By City of Heppner

January 21 - January 27
High Low Rain Snow

Wed	42	13	fog	
Thurs	21	14	fog	
Fri	21	15	fog	1 1/2"
Sat	43	18	03	2"
Sun	43	23	32	1"
Mon	44	22	13	spotty
Tues	40	31	fog	

Market Report

Complements of the Morrow County Grain Growers

Tuesday, Jan 27
Soft White

Jan		\$3.03
Feb		\$3.04
March		\$3.05
May (last half)		\$2.94
New Crop		\$2.75
	Barley	
Jan-March		\$86
New crop		\$66
	Hard Red Winter Ordinaries	
Jan		\$3.03
	PIK	
Cash paid Fri.		106%
On Account		108%