

The Heppner

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More health care dollars go North

North Morrow County will receive a substantial increase in health care dollars in 1987, without raising taxes the Morrow County Court announced Tuesday.

Health care spending has been a volatile and divisive issue in the county since October when a petition was filed by North county residents, who felt they were not getting a fair share of health care taxes asking for two separate health care districts in the county. 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.

The ad hoc committee identified some immediate medical needs at the North Morrow Medical Clinic, such as a defibrillator and a solution warmer. Purchase of those items has already been authorized from revenue sharing funds in this year's budget, Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson said.

Health care money for next year will be allocated as follows: \$91,000

to the North Morrow Medical Clinic; \$75,000 to the North Morrow Ambulance; \$9,000 to the city of Irrigon for training and reimbursement for ambulance service from the City of Umatilla, and \$223,483 to Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

The hospital's tax-asking is cut \$135,000 from last year. Hospital Administrator John Hempel and the board agreed that the hospital could not operate with this drastic a cut for a number of years, but that they could "make do" for a year while some inequities in North Morrow County are corrected.

A new county-wide advisory board with equal north-south representation will replace the existing North Morrow Medical Clinic Board, Pioneer Memorial Hospital Board, and Boardman Ambulance Board July 1. Equal representation will allow no "swing vote" in the event of a tie, the Court said. The board will have to negotiate its differences and reach a compromise. A member of the Court will be appointed to attend all meetings.

All health care budgets in the county will be grouped together on one ballot to be voted on separately from the county tax levy, the court said.

In addition a technical advisory

team will begin work on a long range plan to include projected capital expenditures, separation of the nursing home and acute care at Pioneer Memorial Hospital, and to secure possible federal and state grants for capital improvements.

The technical team will include Morrow County Planner Deane Seeger, Boardman Planning Director Larry Dalrymple, Hospital Administrator John Hempel, and Dr. Steve Zielinski, physician at the North Morrow Medical Clinic.

Interest shown in rail purchase

Two short line rail operators—Kinzua Corp. and Willamette Valley Railroad Co.—expressed interest in purchasing the Heppner branch line at a public hearing last Thursday night at the Morrow County Courthouse in Heppner.

Union Pacific, current owner of the Heppner and Condon branch lines, announced in mid December that it was putting the lines up for sale with bridge rights on the main line joining them. UP is soliciting bids from 70 short line operators because it can no longer operate the line at a profit, Dick Jones, general sales manager at the UP's Portland office told shippers on both lines.

The UP is offering the lines for sale outright rather than for lease, he said. Union contract restrictions on wages and duties which make up specific jobs add cost for major carriers that short line operators do not have.

Kinzua Corp. has hired an economic consultant to help them collect data necessary to determine the feasibility of purchasing the line. "We want to see the formation of a shippers committee between the Heppner and Condon branches," Kent Goodyear, Kinzua sales manager and chairman of the Morrow County rail committee said. "We need to see what our next avenue is. We are spending Kinzua money to get the process started," he said, "because the railroad is so important to the mill."

The railroad is important to the mill, Harry Kennison, general manager said, because we cannot truck efficiently the long distances to New York, Georgia, or Texas. "Without rail shipment, the impact on our lumber business will be tremendous. I cannot even predict the impact, but we need the rail ship-

ment. We cannot truck long distances efficiently. We would have to build a re-load facility either at Boardman or Pasco which would add \$20 to every \$1000 of our cost," he said.

The mill operated a rail line from Kinzua to Condon until the line deteriorated to a point that it was too expensive to repair. It was cheaper to move the plant to the railroad at that point, Kennison continued. We have people on our staff now who know how to run a railroad and we're taking a good look at the branch line. "If Kinzua is able to purchase the line, we would have local control of our own destiny. If a short line operator should come in here and only stay five years and then abandon the line, we would be in worse shape than we are now, he concluded.

UP Sales Manager Dick Jones reported that should the railroad receive a bid for just one of the branches such as the one Condon Mayor Larry Lear reported the Condon Grain Growers has submitted for the Condon branch, it would be assessed on its individual merits although both branch lines had been offered as a package.

Ed Immels from the Oregon Dept. of Transportation pointed out that the cost to maintain the line must be considered apart from the emotional issue of losing a railroad in the area. If only 300 carloads were shipped annually, he said, the community would need to subsidize the railroad at a cost of one-half million dollars. A cost analysis is necessary, he said.

"If the public invests a dollar in a railroad, they should get a dollar's value from the purchase."

The impact to county roads and state highways would be a concern, Immels continued, if the railroad did not sell and UP filed for abandonment of the line. We had a case where the Dept. of Transportation could have spent \$300,000 to buy a railroad, but Oregon laws for spending gasoline taxes strictly prohibit using the money for any purpose other than roads. Rebuilding the road cost \$1 million, he said.

Representatives from the East Central Oregon Association of Counties, the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture, and the Public Utilities Commission Rail Program all indicated support for shippers on both lines.

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Load limit placed on county roads

Eight ton load limits have been posted on all county roads, Road Supervisor Don Ball announced Tuesday. Weather conditions have made the load limit necessary, Ball said. Load limits will be effective until further notice. They will be enforced in an attempt to keep repair bills down.

HEDC, Chamber to merge

The Heppner Economic Development Corporation voted last week to merge with the Heppner Chamber of Commerce on a one-year trial basis.

HEDC was formed in 1983 to promote economic development in the area, and has been separate from the Chamber of Commerce.

HEDC president Cliff Green, owner of the Coast to Coast store in Heppner, gave three reasons for the merger: We are duplicating our efforts with the chamber, we have clerical work that needs to be done that can be handled by the chamber's part-time paid manager, and the HEDC is running out of money, Green said.

When HEDC was formed a one-time fee of \$100 was paid by members. There have been no dues and no additional money coming in to the corporation since that time, Green pointed out.

"It will be a rough alliance and will be on a trial basis for one year," Green told the gathered members of HEDC at its annual meeting last Wednesday at the Elks. "We expect to function pretty much the way we have in the past," he said.

As part of the program Green went over what HEDC has accomplished during 1986, including lobbying the county court to keep the justice court in south Morrow County; helping for the Willow Creek Park District; working with the Chamber of Commerce tourism committee to put out a brochure; working on the health district and ac-



Cliff Green

companying problems with health care in the county, and beautifying a vacant lot in downtown Heppner.

"What we have had to spend most of our time on during the past year is not bringing something in, but keeping what we have," Green said.

He said projects still ahead for HEDC include work on the St. Patrick's Hotel renovation project, working to secure another attorney for Heppner and continued work on assuring adequate health care in south Morrow County.

Rep. French explains governor's criminal justice plan

There seems to be growing concern about lack of detention of criminals and its effect on the safety of Oregon citizens. Oregon is currently rated as having the fifth highest crime rate in the nation said Rep. Ray French (R-Dist 59).

A recognized state problem is with juvenile offenders who after repeat arrests on drug-related charges continue to commit the same crime again. Certainly alcohol and drug prevention and rehabilitation programs are needed to help the young people, but repeat offenders must be detained, and for these reasons I support the Governor's program to relieve overcrowding.

Governor Goldschmidt's plan to overhaul the criminal justice system calls for creation of additional bed space to handle the immediate problem of overcrowding, creating a new Department of Corrections

(prison facilities and corrections programs are now managed as a division of the Department of Human Resources) and developing a classification system for offenders which will help the Department of Corrections make incarceration decisions and assign inmates, both juveniles and adults to appropriate institutions.

To facilitate the immediate problem of overcrowding, 1,661 medium and minimum security beds will be added statewide over the next two years. Some of these will be in Eastern Oregon.

\$15 million is being requested to add 900 minimum security beds in facilities around the state. These new spaces would house chronic, low-risk offenders, now held in maximum security facilities of forced out

Claudia Hughes (left), Sue Evans and Judy Barber add finishing touch to dish before judging.

Winning recipes selected

Five recipes were chosen Saturday to compete at the statewide CowBelle beef cook-off February 21.

Local CowBelles prepared 20 recipes selected from over 175 entries in the contest. Each of the five winners will be notified and given the opportunity to prepare his recipe for judges February 21 at the "Now you're cooking Show" at the

Memorial Coliseum in Portland.

There were no Morrow County entries in the contest, CowBelle publicity chairman Marlene Currin said. Most of the entries came from the Portland and Willamette Valley area, but "they were wonderful. There was so much flavor added to the thin strips of meat with spicy sauces. It's not like we, in Eastern

Oregon, cook beef," Currin said. "The recipes were great."

Recipes were judged on ease of preparation, appearance, originality, and taste, by Liz Curtis of Heppner; Dianne Byrne, the home economist for the Oregon Beef Council; Kathy Hendrix of Athena; Joann Kock of Moro; and Betty Ehlers, food editor for the East Oregonian.

Development expert addresses HEDC



Jerry Reid

Heppner needs to find its economic niche and get into it, says an economic development expert with the state of Oregon.

Speaking to the HEDC annual banquet last Wednesday, Jerry Reid with the State of Oregon Economic Development Department, said Heppner as with any town in Oregon, needs to take a look at its assets and liabilities and find a niche quickly.

Reid urged the town to put together a marketing plan to attract new business to the area.

He said a full blown marketing plan could cost up to \$100,000, but said it could be done for \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Reid said the state of Oregon had recently done a mass mailing into California looking for prospective businesses that may want to move to Oregon, "and we got some hot leads."

Reid also urged the town to keep looking for prospective new businesses, even when "the going gets rough."

It only takes one new business to really turn things around, he pointed out.

In addition Reid said established businesses should not be ignored, and he suggested an, appreciated day, for instance, could be held to show local support for those who are operating here and contributing to the community.

Boardman lends support

The Boardman-North Morrow Chamber of Commerce voted unanimously to send a letter to the state in support of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce's efforts to help secure funds for the development of Willow Creek Lake Park on the outskirts of Heppner. A Willow Creek Park District has been formed but as yet has no tax base or operating funds.

The district is asking for a \$208,000 federal grant from the State Department of Transportation, Parks and Recreation Division.

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St. Patrick's Day plans take shape

The Heppner St. Patrick's Day committee met Monday to make plans for the upcoming event.

Members of the bed race committee were present, and reported that there are 12-14 teams already expressing interest in entering. Ray Banka at Cal's restaurant in Heppner is chairman of the committee. Anyone interested in entering the race may contact him for more details.

William Rill announced that in addition to the annual sheep dog trials, there will be a spinning and weaving demonstration at the fairgrounds by the Spinners and Weaver Guild.

Main Street will be blocked to traffic and parking this year to make Main street activities easier to see from the sidewalk.

Buttons for St. Patrick's day should be ready for sale by next week, reported Diana Ball.

Any individual or group interested in participating in St. Patrick's Day with booths or money making activities is urged to contact the Gazette-Times immediately to have the activity included on the St. Patrick's Day poster.

Weather Report

by City of Heppner

January 28 - February 3		
	High	Low
Wed.	40	30
Thurs.	50	38
Fri.	52	39
Sat.	49	31
Sun.	53	43
Mon.	48	35
Tues.	39	32

Market Report

Companiments of the Morrow County Grain Growers

Tuesday, February 3	
Soft White	
Feb	\$3.11
March	\$3.13
April	\$3.14/\$3.11
May	\$3.02/\$2.97
June	\$2.85/\$2.83
New Crop	\$2.75
Barley	
March	\$86
New crop	\$66
Hard Red Winter Ordinaries	
Jan	\$3.00
PIK	
Cash paid Fri.	106 1/2%