

Tourism.....heartbeat of the county

By Robin Baker

People are the heart of any town, but industry is the heartbeat. Agriculture has long been the heartbeat of Morrow County, but the time has come for a pacemaker. Tourism generated \$135 million in Washington state last year. By 1992, tourism will be the number 1 industry in the United States.

We have many people in Morrow County involved in creating this new industry, but it will take all of us to make an organized and meaningful impact. To learn the skills needed takes education, and cooperation. We are doing this on the federal,

state and local levels. We attend meetings and beneficial seminars given by highly trained instructors. How do you responsibly turn a town around to enter the age of a new industry? Communication. Tourism is the best way for Morrow County to grow economically and also complement its seasonal counterpart, agriculture. The towns in Morrow County must learn to compliment each other, not compete. Tourism will only work as a cooperative effort. What benefits one community will benefit us all. Heartbeat...people pumping new ideas into the

county to stimulate growth.

Desirability. We need to have visible assets to meet the needs of tourists; housing, food, gas, recreation and most importantly a style. We need unique visibility that says, "this is a place we want to stay for a while." We need to clean house if company's coming. We all need a new look. Lone needs a western look to blend with the promotion of the Oregon Trail. Heppner might use an Irish theme to promote the mountains and Willow Creek Dam. It takes time...and it will take a lot of volunteer work and money. But we

are investing in the economic futures of our towns and Lexington, Boardman, Irrigon and even the little settlements will need to get on the bandwagon to make tourism work for everyone. All of these towns are currently involved in the push for tourism...and now we need involvement of everyone.

We're active now, but we need to do much more in the way of

development. We need to keep creating new businesses. Lone now has Oregon Trail Souvenirs and

Tours and the Woolery House Bed and Breakfast. These will be vital in the new industry, and hope to be joined soon by other businesses that also compliment tourism.

The Morrow County Tourism Committee will be meeting Friday, May 20 at 8:30 a.m. at the Extension office in Heppner. We hope to see a lot of people there, and especially you.

Please bring your ideas and let's brainstorm the future of our county and our state.

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