

The Official Newspaper of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

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The Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES
Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Letters to the Editor

Just say 'No' to SAIF

To the Editor:

Oregon small business should just say no. No to supporting the State Accident Insurance Fund (SAIF) corporation with our premium dollars, and no to SAIF's business practices.

I oversee a private non-profit corporation with payroll less than 400,000 dollars a year and like so many other businesses we were cancelled from coverage with SAIF on December 31, 1989. This cancellation came despite the fact that we have an excellent safety record and have paid thousands of dollars in premiums to SAIF without a single time-loss claim. The reason SAIF gave for terminating our coverage was that we had been operating less than three years. Upon being notified of this termination, our board of directors agreed that we should not do business with SAIF Corporation again and directed our insurance agent to place us with one of the three other available workers compensation carriers in the state.

On January 31, we were notified that we had once again been placed with SAIF at a rate 35 percent higher than before. We objected and filed complaints with our insurance agent, the carrier, and the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) the private company which has the contract with the state of Oregon to place companies from the "assigned risk pool" with worker compensation carriers. After a barrage of letter writing and phone calls, including a complaint filed with the fraud division of the state

attorney general's office, we have been placed with WAUSAU insurance company.

My personal belief is that any business which finds themselves in the same situation as our corporation should exercise their "consumer rights" and drop SAIF. SAIF was originally established to keep our workers compensation rates low; they have failed in this mission. Their failure has created a worker's compensation market where any small company with a reasonable time-loss record can purchase insurance from a company other than SAIF for the same rate. Small businesses which must constantly struggle to remain competitive have been forced into an unfair situation of bailing out SAIF. Let's just say no. SAIF is a failed business, it is time government let it fail. Drop SAIF today. It is time that small business give SAIF the same consideration they showed us on December 31, 1989. Oregonians need worker compensation reform. SAIF has proven not to be a suitable vehicle for this change.

(s) Stan Foster
P.O. Box 23
Weston, Oregon 97886

NOTE: Stan Foster is the Director of the Community Action Program of East Central Oregon in Pendleton, Oregon. While the board of directors has supported changing worker's compensation carriers on behalf of the corporation, the opinions expressed herein are those of Mr. Foster and not an official position of the corporation.

Straight talk about center

To the Editor:

Regarding Stan Foster's letter of March 21, lets have some straight talk, indeed.

First of all, the Neighborhood Center never "threatened" to close. They were merely giving the courtesy of letting people know what was going to happen. The board meetings are open to the public and if Mr. Foster ever bothered to come to one he would certainly realize what financial straits the center was in.

Mr. Foster gives the impression that CAPECO and county funding is all the center gets. If this were true they would have closed long ago. Financial reports are sent to

CAPECO and the county every month but perhaps no one is bothering to read them.

As for Ed Glenn's remarks, maybe he should attend a board meeting himself and get his information first-hand instead of writing a story from other stories. The "whole story" has been told and re-told by the center's board of directors, but evidently certain people don't like what they are hearing. If anyone wants to know anything about what's going on at the Neighborhood Center I suggest they go down there and ask, or go to a board meeting. A snow job, my left foot.

(s) Sherry Vejraska
Heppner

Sheriff's Report

The Sheriff's office at the courthouse in Heppner report dispatching the following business during the past week:

April 3: Morrow County deputy assisted Oregon State Police with a one motor vehicle accident on I-84 mile post 151. There were no injuries;

Morrow County deputy responded to lone cemetery and began investigation of vandalism;

Morrow County deputy responded to Skyview Drive just outside Boardman and began investigation of a burglary. The victim was Diane Garcia and value was unknown at press time;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Condon fire department to a grass fire on the highway from Condon to Wasco just at the city limits;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Condon fire department to a controlled burn that had gotten out of control seven miles south of Condon;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Arlington fire department to I-84 east bound, milepost 122 for a motor home on fire.

April 4: Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Heppner Fire Chief to St. Patrick's Hotel. Turned out to be a false alarm;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Fossil ambulance for a male with unknown injuries. One transport was made to Asher Clinic;

Morrow County deputy responded to the Irrigon area for a report of neighbor problems;

Morrow County deputy responded to Boardman for a complaint of reckless burning. Investigations are continuing;

Morrow County deputy responded to the Lexington area for a report of theft. Complainant was unable to be contacted, investigations are continuing;

Morrow County deputy responded to the Irrigon area for a report of a missing horse. Horse was located.

April 5: Morrow County deputy investigated a complaint of loud motorcycles in the Boardman area.

April 6: Morrow County deputy responded to the Boardman area for an animal problem;

Morrow County deputy responded to the Irrigon area to investigate a juvenile problem. Juvenile was cited for theft;

Morrow County deputy responded to the Irrigon area to investigate a juvenile problem;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Heppner ambulance to a train/car accident in lone. One female was transported to Pioneer Memorial Hospital with unknown injuries.

April 7: Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Boardman fire department to a structure fire on East Wilson Road, Boardman;

Morrow County Sheriff's office responded to a call at Rhea Creek, Rugs to investigate a water problem. Investigation is continuing;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Condon EMT's to the clinic for an ATV accident. Injuries were unknown;

Morrow County Sheriff's office responded to investigate a report of a prowler in the Boardman area. Prowler was unable to be found;

Morrow County deputy responded to Irrigon for a disturbance. Citations were issued to Tina Keglner, 29, Irrigon for reckless driving.

April 8: Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Arlington ambulance to a one vehicle rollover on I-84 east bound at milepost 136. One male was transported to Good Shepherd Hospital with unknown injuries;

Morrow County deputy responded to the Irrigon area for a report of vandalism to a vehicle. Investigations are continuing;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Boardman ambulance to a motor vehicle accident on Wilson Road. Two individuals were transported to Good Shepherd Hospital with unknown injuries;

Morrow County Sheriff's office dispatched the Spray Ambulance to a residence in Spray. One female was transported to Prineville with an unknown illness.

Chamber Chatter

By Claudia Hughes, Chamber Manager

* Everyday should be Earth Day. This message came home to me when someone shared an astronaut's concept. He said something to the effect that when you are out there in the black of space and all that is visible is a tiny ball called earth, it becomes quite clear that as long as we're alive you should take care of it because it's home for you, your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Responsible people need to take care of their land, no matter how large or small. Plant a tree, clean up your ranch, your yard, pick up trash on public lands, respect this earth, it's all we have.

* Along these lines, Chamber heard from Jerry Anderson and Cindy Doherty, Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District, as they presented the plans for a walking path from the park up to the dam. The Oregon Youth Conservation Corps under the supervision of Vern Keithley will be working on this in June. Another idea was a trail proposal along Willow Creek from park to park. This has been done successfully in Jackson County and enhances communities. It would, of course, depend on approval of property owners. Everyone would benefit and some weed problems would be solved in the process.

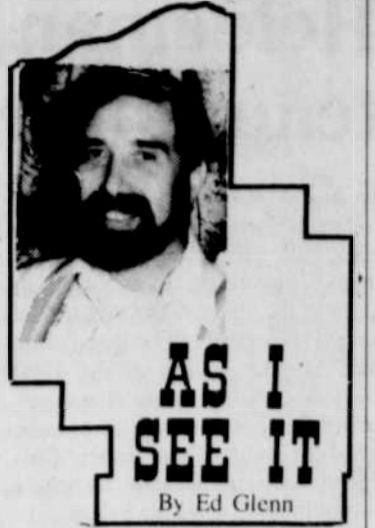
* Morrow County Tourism Committee met Tuesday with lively discussion on the Scenic Byway dedication, May 12; plans for the Morrow County booth at the Oregon State Fair; Cycle Oregon; and reprinting of placemats. Businesses interested in having an ad on the next placement should contact Doug Rathbun. Morrow County Tourism sells the placemats to finance the organization.

* As you read this, many of you will be enjoying long-stemmed roses. Heppner Chamber appreciates the opportunity to provide roses and thanks all those who purchased them. It helps the organization to realize their goals for 1990, all aimed toward the well-being of our community.

* Next week Nancy Brownfield will be sharing her experiences in Washington D.C. with Heppner Chamber.

Thought for the week: "Nothing would ever be attempted if all possible objections could be overcome first."

A New Look



It's nice to step back and take a new look once in a while. If you see the same old thing, at least it's comforting to know somebody didn't steal it while you looked away.

That's the way it is with the group of folks working up the Morrow County economic development plan. A couple of years ago a lot of the same folks went through the same process to come up with the county's position on a regional economic development strategy.

That strategy was to look to agricultural industries for economic growth. But in getting there there was talk about tourism, forest products,

government centers and a whole host of different ways to broaden our economic base. Because the strategy was limited to one and only one industry, some folks got the impression that it was intended to be the exclusive pursuit toward economic growth. Others got diverted chasing the prison and yet others got all teary-eyed fighting the prison.

The new look now, looks a whole lot like the old look. Same old problems, same opportunities, same groups grinding the same axes. Not a lot has changed. Except added agricultural development has gone on in spite of organized community effort.

Unlike the regional strategy, which has a very narrow focus and quite a bit of money, it looks like the Morrow County economic development plan will be a scatter-gun blast with no aim, all things to all people and totally unfunded. Hard decisions are not made until we are forced to make them and no one appears to be forcing a focus on the Morrow County plan.

Instead, it will advocate tourist development at the same time as it urges preservation of the forest products industry. It will bless development of a retirement atmosphere while it advocates growth in governmental services such as schools, roads and medical services. It will support energy development and a road through the Boeing property.

The inconsistencies will be apparent to everyone but no one will dare challenge someone else's pet project.

If the plan is to have any value at all, it must quickly garner some professional advice on what it is that makes a community grow. What kind of resources are required, which ones are only desirable and which ones can be made out of whole cloth.

Then the planners must learn what it is that attracts industry to a community. It may well be that our opinions about the great livability in Morrow County mean very little to the fellows who decide just where the next factory will be built.

Finally, the plan must include some choices. If it is true that the more retirees there are in a community the harder it is to pass a school budget, then we must choose between a retirement community and a high quality school system. If it is true that a large percentage of our present population does not want economic growth, then we must choose between no-growth and growth that is internal, not relying on public support.

If the planners make careful, generally supported choices, and give the plan some kind of focus, it will be a valuable thing. If it is broad enough to suit most of us, yet narrow enough that we don't wander astray, it may make a little bit of difference.

A well focused plan can muster some financial backing. The current effort has some sanction from the Port of Morrow and it may also have its financial support. But to just throw a little money at a new marketing man and send him out to develop tourism, energy, agriculture, retirement homes and whatever else some one happens to think of, is like tossing leaves to the wind.

There's more work to be done, let it be good work.

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