

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

ONPA

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

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Letters to the Editor

Approval of tax base may not guarantee funds

To the Editor:

Here we go again. The voters of Morrow County are being asked to up-date the current tax base for the county schools. The school district thinks the big tax base will assure a bigger piece of the state's "replacement funds" under Measure Number 5, but that is not a sure thing.

What about the districts that currently have an outdated tax base like Morrow County and don't vote to up-date or are operating under the safety net? Will these kids be penalized as opposed to some

wealthier districts? I don't think the legislators will take that inequitable or politically suicidal approach.

What is a sure thing is that if the voters approve this up-dated tax base it's going to take more than an extra half million dollars out of the taxpayers' already depleted pockets. Morrow County already spends about twice as much per student than the state average to educate its kids.

(s) Ronald W. Leff
Rt. 2, Box 454, #21
Irrigon, OR 97844
922-4614

Preserve wetlands, protect landowners rights

To the Editor:

Landowners and local governments, as well as farmers and ranchers in your area, are being adversely affected by confusing federal wetland regulations enforced by four separate agencies of the U.S. government.

The lack of a coordinated approach has resulted in severe problems for many farmers. Certain parcels of land that have been farmed for many years cannot now be used for crops because of new and very confusing wetlands definitions. In addition, other landowners who were trying to improve their property and even local governments wanting to make better use of questionable areas have had federal agencies "manage" their property by applying new wetland definitions.

In one instance, a homeowner was prevented from planting his garden. In another, a farmer in a southern state maintained his grove of hardwood trees for nearly 50 years-always intending to use the revenue for himself and his wife at retirement. However, it has been deemed

a wetland, the value has plummeted, and there are no prospective buyers.

Conserving true wetlands areas while protecting private property rights of farmers and other landowners will be best accomplished by changes in our federal laws. Farm Bureau has been working with members of Congress to write legislation that provides a consistent and realistic definition of wetlands. This legislation provides just compensation to property owners if their land is "taken" by regulatory action.

Most significantly, the legislation will actually provide stricter regulation of true wetlands than current law while at the same time freeing up land that is not truly a wetland. It is legislation that protects the environment while simultaneously protecting private property rights.

More than 100 members of Congress have become co-sponsors of the wetlands bill, but much more support from many sectors will be necessary if we are to have a common-sense approach to defining wetlands. We need a law that protects landowners from having the use of their land arbitrarily and unfairly controlled by agencies of our federal government.

We support the protection of bona fide wetlands-true swamps, marshes, and bogs. Let's make sure the federal government preserves the wetlands while protecting the rights of all landowners.

Sincerely,
(s) Douglas H. Breese, President
Oregon Farm Bureau

Boy Scouts earning way to camp

To the Editor:

When our boys joined the Boy Scouting program their aim was to have fun, adventure, and excitement. We are hoping that they are doing this, but in reality this is not the aim of Scouting. The Scouting aims are (1) developing a good character; (2) teaching the benefits of participating citizenship; and (3) promoting personal fitness: physical, mental, and spiritual.

The Boy Scouts of America has also developed a list of five unacceptable in today's society, and has added additional program features to help. Scouting is working to eliminate: hunger, illiteracy, unemployment, substance abuse, and child abuse.

We believe that our young men can make a difference in tomorrow's society by reaching for and participating in the full Scouting program. Part of this program is to attend a week-long summer camp with activities to help reinforce the goals mentioned. One or two boys need to attend camp for two weeks for extra leadership training. Our young troop consists of eight 12-year-old boys. For all boys to attend the week of summer camp they need to earn \$1300. They have earned \$300 toward this goal. During this time these boys have been encouraged to keep up their school obligations and

to engage in other activities, such as colt basketball and now little league and major league baseball.

If you know of work projects to help earn the monies needed please let us know. (We can wash windows, clean yards, etc.) These boys can work in teams of two or more and we will have adult supervision. They have been working on community service projects on their own and as a group, such as cutting, splitting and stacking wood for an elderly lady, cleaning the streets and emptying lots of debris last fall and again before the St. Patrick's Day activities, and shoveling snow for the elderly. These boys have also had money making activities to purchase tents, camping gear and needed supplies. They have had bake sales and a car wash for camp funds. Our parents have been actively working with the boys and are contributing monies and assistance for the boys to reach this goal.

If you or your organization care to help these boys we would appreciate your contributions.

The boys' summer camp will be in July. Thank you in advance for your consideration, time and contributions.

Sincerely
(s) Gene Hall
Heppner Boy Scout Troop #661

Thanks from Ireland

To the Editor:

Dear Claudia,
On behalf of the St. Patrick's Traditional Group, I would like to thank you most sincerely for your invitation to celebrate the St. Patrick's week 1991 with you. Also I would like to thank the host families for the wonderful hospitality and kindness extended to the group.

We enjoyed the concerts and the visit to the schools which was a

wonderful experience for all. Please extend our thanks to the bus driver for our safe journey to and from Heppner.

Wishing you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely,
(s) Joe Mannix
St. Patrick's Traditional Group
Tour organizer
Coorycullane, Dunmanway
Co. Cork 023 45599

Five-county consolidation would save tax money

To the Editor:

It occurs to me during the past several months that there may be possible large property tax savings in the consolidation of Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler and Grant Counties into one large county which would be the ninth largest in Oregon on a basis of population.

This thought has been prompted by the fact that the small population counties to the west and south of Umatilla County are burdened with complete county administrations and small assessed valuations. Ballot Measure 5 has impacted all units of government, including counties, to seek all alternatives to saving property taxes wherever possible. It would appear this consolidation bears a really close look.

One of the major drawbacks to a larger county would be the public access to the county administrators. People in Fossil or John Day, for example, may resent having to go long distances to the central county office. The average individual's trips to the county courthouse in a year are not very frequent, however, and with the proper set up, most of the public business would still be taken care of at the present county courthouse.

Access to county administrators has been greatly minimized over the years with modern communications such as telephones, computers, fax machines and the latest innovation, video conferencing. The latter set-up enables people to see each other and converse through the use of a TV screen and telephone lines while they are many miles apart. Such video conferencing could be used both by the public and by county employees to save travel and expense.

One of the major problems in the combining of several counties is the tax assessment and collection. A study of the vaeous county tax mileage rates would be necessary, together with the various county budgets, in order to determine where savings could be made and if there would be any large discrepancies in mileage rates if a uniform rater were established for the large county.

In the case of departments which are partially or completely state funded, the large county would receive the monies now handed to five units. Surely the larger combined fund with one administrator could be better used to service the needs of the larger area wherever that need exists. I am thinking about departments such as Public Health, Men-

tal Health, Juvenile and other social services. The present youth facilities in Pendleton are probably adequate to serve the entire five county areas. One or more mobile health units could be developed to serve the area without duplication of facilities.

The sheriff's department could be set up with regional employees stationed in each of the present counties and each reporting to the head office similar to the present state police. The jail facilities in Pendleton are probably adequate to serve the entire five county area. Some of the smaller counties do not have a jail and are forced to board prisoners outside the county.

County courts are at present administered by the state and it would appear no major problems would be incurred to realign the courts, judges and jurisdictions to serve the larger county.

There will be some individuals who will say such a consolidation of counties is unrealistic and unworkable. However, any change does not come easily and such a consolidation would only be feasible after extensive study by people informed about county government.

This short proposal is not intended to cover all the problems involved in such a consolidation. It is more of an attempt to start the public, as well as county administrators, thinking about how such a consolidation could be brought about, and in the case of administrators, what organizational procedures would be practicable and cost saving.

I would be pleased to hear from the commissioners, department heads or others in the five-county area as to their thoughts regarding such a consolidation and how an in-depth study might be financed if such a plan is thought to be feasible.

(s) Joe B. Green
811 N.W. 11th
Pendleton, OR 97801
(Joe B. Green is a retired CPA and is a member of the Umatilla County Budget Committee.)

Compromise

You know what a compromise is? Of course, a compromise is a solution that is not wholly satisfactory to anyone.

We're headed for a compromise on the salmon issue.

One side, the salmon preservationists want a free flowing Columbia to assure both down stream migrate of salmon smolt and up stream migration of adult salmon. Often that desire is expressed only in quiet, private conversation. On the public platform the demand is softened somewhat to demand only significant pool reduction behind the many Columbia and Snake River dams.

We should listen to the private conversation. There the salmon advocates make a strong case for free flowing rivers to save the salmon. They point to the steady decline in salmon numbers beginning with the very first, Bonneville Dam. That decline has been so steady and unwavering that one cannot escape the conclusion that so long as the dams exist, the salmon will swim directly into extinction.

The economic development folks, on the other hand, are hearing the public talk of just reducing the pool levels behind the dams and are pointing out the adverse economic consequences of that action. BPA has already told us how that will reduce the amount of water available for power generation, which in turn will push the cost of power in the Pacific Northwest up about 25%. The Port districts on the river warn of the impediment to barge traffic the lowering of pools would cause. Irrigators, municipalities and others warn of the cost they will incur in rebuilding their pumping stations.

The question really is: Are we going to save the salmon or not? There is no one to make that decision.

The Salmon Summit failed to head off listing of the Salmon as endangered. The Northwest Power Planning Council has recently taken on some rule making power but they still can't make the ultimate decision. The federal agency charged under the Endangered Species Act can't take economic considerations into consideration. BPA and the Corps of Army Engineers are only minor decision makers. Congress will be no help.

What will happen is that some of the pools will be lowered. Enough to create economic disaster, but not enough to really help the salmon. Power will go up, probably this summer. Barge traffic will be hampered, lose total volume, some shippers will fold. Irrigation will not only be more expensive, but for some will just not be available. Some farmers will go bankrupt and their land revert to desert.

But the dams will not be dynamited. Fish ladders will not be installed on the upper Snake River dams. Locks will not be lowered, just closed.

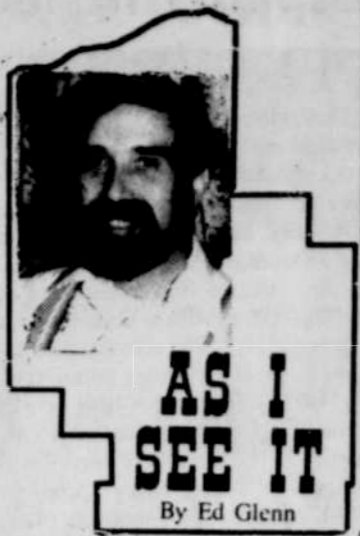
And what about fish numbers? They will go down again. So then there will be another round of pool lowering. More increases in power costs, more lock closures, more lands not irrigated. And then, the fish numbers will go down some more.

Because, you see, the private conversations of the salmon preservationists are right. The salmon simply cannot survive without a free flowing river.

So 10 or 20 years from now, after depriving ourselves of the economic benefits of the Columbia/Snake River system, it occurs to all of us that we must blow the dams to save the salmon. But somebody does a count, and guess what? The salmon are all gone. None. Extinct. Well, at least we didn't have to blow the dams after all. Now we can get started on rebuilding the economy of the Pacific Northwest.

And so you have it, that's a compromise. Nobody wins. The salmon swims right on to extinction and their champions cry all the way into the next cause. The barge shippers, irrigated farmers and electrical power users have long since packed up and moved to Southern California where everyone else lives.

We need a decision maker who won't compromise on this issue. Someone who will either blow the dams or throw the mother of all salmon fry. We shouldn't have a compromise on this issue.



By Ed Glenn

Births

Raquel Esther Hernandez-a daughter Raquel Esther was born to Daniel Hernandez and Barbara Jeppen of Boardman on May 1, 1991 at Good Shepherd Community Hospital in Hermiston. The baby weighed 8 lbs. 3 oz.

Angela Dawn Dodge-a daughter Angela Dawn was born to Michael and Nicole Dodge of Irrigon on May 1, 1991 at Good Shepherd Hospital in Hermiston. The baby weighed 7 lbs. 4 oz.

Ryan Martin Joy-a son Ryan Martin was born to Dovie and Michael Joy, Truckee, CA. on May 1, 1991 at Tahoe Forest Hospital, Truckee. The baby weighed 6 lbs. 3 oz.

Grandparents are Archie and Gladys Alderman, Heppner and June Joy, Reedsport.

Elizabeth Rose Newport-a daughter Elizabeth Rose was born to John and Brenda Newport of Irrigon on May 6, 1991. The baby weighed 5 lbs. 10 oz.

Market Report

Compliments of the Morrow County Grain Growers

Tues. May 14	
Soft	
May-June	\$3.46
July	\$3.45
Aug.	\$3.44
Barley	
May-July	\$99
Aug.	\$100
PIK	97 1/2%

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The future funding of the Morrow
County Schools is at stake.
Ballot Measure 5 changed the rules.
Vote "YES" in MAY on the MORROW
COUNTY SCHOOLS TAX BASE.

Paid for by: "Yes for Kids", 318 Willowfork Dr., Boardman, OR.