

Gazette imes

35¢

VOL 110 NO. 27 6 Pages Wednesday, July 3, 1991 Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

Group proposes PMH management

The Morrow County Medical Board at their regular meeting Monday evening, July 1, in Ione, received a proposal from Western Health Resources (WHR) an affiliate of Adventist Health Systems/West, to provide management services to Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner. The board agreed to proceed with the next step in negotiating with WHR.

According to Stan Berry of WHR the Seventh-Day Adventist hospital management firm would provide, by means of management fee, a computer networking system, purchasing advantages, consulting and training. "It's like one-stop shopping versus buying retail," said Berry. He said that WHR could work with the present administration, commenting, "I'm being honest, I think Ernest (Wick, current PMH administrator) is doing a good job."

Berry said that one time costs for an IBM computer system, if the medical board decides to sign a contract with Western Health Resources, would be \$50,907, \$12,372 for a disk drive and two modems (long distance hook-up system) which would remain at the WHR headquarters in Roseville, CA

and \$38,535 for modems, communication line, terminals, printers, cabling and software at PMH. Maintenance for the system would come to \$2,658 a month.

Management fees above and beyond the computer system will be evaluated once the medical board decides what areas are included in the contract, if it does indeed decide to sign on with Western Health Resources.

Representatives of the organization were in Heppner June 18 and 19 and formulated recommendations concerning the hospital. "I think you're doing a good job (at the hospital)," said Berry, "your nursing home is very well run." However, he cited improvement recommended in the billing system, board education, communications, networking, public relations, and employee relations. Berry said that if the medical board agrees WHR would formulate an in-depth study whether or not a contract is signed. "Even if you reject the study we'll give you a good overview," he added. If the medical board agrees to a study, WHR is asking up to \$7,500 to formulate it.



Stan Berry

The organization has managed Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Prineville for the last 13 years and the Tillamook Hospital for the past 20 years.

The board agreed to send Wick and two board members to California to further conference with WHR representatives.

North spends more tax money in medical operations than South

According to figures released at the Morrow County Medical Board meeting Monday evening, July 1, North Morrow County receives more county taxes to support medical operations there than does Pioneer Memorial Hospital and clinic in Heppner.

Estimated tax monies absorbed by Boardman and Irrigon for medical operations, including the Boardman Clinic, Boardman ambulance and the Irrigon emergency vehicle, amount to \$188,229 in county taxes. Total revenues were \$35,725 and expenses were \$223,954.

Taxes absorbed by the south end clinic and hospital were \$177,752, \$10,477 less than the north end during the same 11-month period from July 1, 1990 to May 31, 1991, according to Ernest Wick, county health administrator and Pioneer Memorial Hospital CEO. Estimated revenue for the hospital and clinic was \$2,808,364 and expenses totaled \$2,968,803 for a deficit of \$160,439, although it received \$177,752 in tax monies.

The previous years ending June 30, 1990 figures uphold the trend, with Boardman and Irrigon medical operations receiving \$218,956, their deficit amount, in taxes and the hospital receiving \$173,901 in taxes. Although the hospital-clinic showed a loss of \$281,841. Boardman and Irrigon revenue was \$108,985 and expenses were \$327,941, compared to the south ends \$2,646,573 in revenue and \$2,928,414 in expenses.

In the fiscal year 1989, however, Boardman-Irrigon's tax offset amounted to \$127,863 less than half of the hospital and clinics \$267,179

in property taxes. That year north end operations brought in \$66,645 and expended \$194,508, compared Heppner's \$2,359,536 in revenue and \$2,549,158 in expenses for \$189,622 in losses.

According to Dr. Robert Boss, who operates the Boardman Clinic, the medical board pays him \$130,000 from the medical fund to run the clinic. With that \$130,000 Boss completely oversees the clinic and pays all costs resulting from the clinic's operation. Any revenues generated at the clinic, however, go to Boss. Boss said that the original agreement with the medical board specified that 20 percent of receipts over \$130,000, (not including the \$130,000 from the county medical fund) would go to the medical fund and he would retain 80 percent. But he said, the agreement has been rescinded and a new "agreement is in the offing."

Boss says that \$130,000 from the county medical fund is not enough, maintaining that it takes around \$180,000 to cover expenses which include salaries for a full time and

a part time receptionist, two nurses, supplies, utilities and bookkeeping and other costs.

The county's 20 percent portion of the receipts has been waived up until now, so that Boss may use the funds for renovation of the clinic. He has added four new examining rooms and a testing area to the clinic.

Boss, who has been at the clinic full time for the past year, says that patient volume has increased three-to-four fold.

He says that he has moved to Boardman and likes the community and expects to stay.

The medical board's agreement with Drs. Ed and Jeanne Berretta, Heppner physicians for the past three years specifies that the Berrettas are salaried employees. The Berrettas receive no portion of the clinics receipts, nor do they pay for expenses incurred by the clinic. They receive a salary of \$75,000 each a year. Besides maintaining clinic hours the Berrettas are also on call at PMH 24 hours a day, including weekends, except when the hospital is covered by relief doctors.

Court rules in favor of school board during strike

Judge Olsen, Morrow County Circuit Court, has granted summary motions which were filed on behalf of Morrow County School district and individual school board members in a lawsuit arising from the teacher strike in 1989.

According to a district news release, Judge Olsen ruled that: ★ "The Morrow County School District and the individual board

members did not violate the strike breaker statute."

★ "The plaintiffs could not prevail on their claim that the defendants improperly failed to fill a vacant school board seat, because (a) the Morrow County School Board relied upon advice of legal counsel, and (b) violation of the statute does not give rise to a legal remedy."

City receives \$20,000 economic development grant

The City of Heppner and Vision 2000 group have learned that they will be the recipient of a \$20,000 economic opportunity grant funded by the Oregon Economic Development Department and administered through the County Initiatives Program.

Ten thousand dollars of the grant will go towards a Main street revitalization program, said Gary Marks, city administrator.

The Bank of Eastern Oregon originally agreed to set aside a \$250,000 revolving loan fund at six percent interest from which Main Street businesses may borrow to renovate their business facades. However, the bank has since upped the fund to \$300,000 and lowered the interest to five percent. They also upped the loan amount per business from \$10,000 to \$20,000. The \$10,000 in grant monies will be set aside to pay interest on the loans.

The remaining \$10,000 in grant monies will go toward paying Gary Marks' salary to administer both programs and serve as a consultant. Since the \$10,000 will offset Marks' salary, said Ann Spicer of Vision 2000, money that the city would have paid him will go toward a new computer system for the city, a system that Marks says is sorely needed.

Accounting ledgers now done by Marks by hand will be entered into

the computer which will "free up" Mark's time, allowing him to become more visible in the community, meet with business owners and work as a liaison between them and the bank. He said that a day's work now will be reduced to an hour's work with the help of a computer.

Spicer said that plans call for an architectural consultant for Main Street renovation, but "definitely not for a theme program." Spicer said that instead the program is designed to "enhance what we have."

She said that the program is expected to be in place and funds received by July 10.

B-52 Bomber added to Ione 4th festivities

By Anne Morter

A B-52 bomber fly-by has tentatively been added to the Ione Fourth of July celebration, according to event co-chairman, Marvin Padberg. The plane, with eight engines, is one of the largest on Spokane's Fairchild Air Base, and will be piloted by Captain Leland White. White is a graduate of Ione High School and the son of Tom and Carol White. Tom White is an agricultural pilot who does crop

spraying in the area.

The fly-by, although still tentative, promises to be a thrilling sight. Weather permitting, White is scheduled to do several passes demonstrating several different capabilities of the plane, starting around noon.

B-52 bombers were used to haul bombs in Vietnam and in Saudi Arabia and have long been considered one of the military's best planes.

Forest Service to oil 21 road

The Forest Service will be oiling the 21 road on Thursday, July 11 from Thompson Corral, west six miles.

Superintendents meeting set

A Morrow County Fair Superintendents' meeting has been scheduled for Monday, July 8 at 1:30 p.m. at the fair annex building. Fair workday is planned for Sunday, July 28.

South end list hospital as top priority

South Morrow County residents overwhelmingly favored keeping Pioneer Memorial Hospital open as their first priority at a health care meeting held Thursday, June 27, at the Morrow County Fairgrounds in Heppner.

The meeting drew over 100 participants, mainly from south county, who listed their priorities with regard to health care as: first, with 112 votes-keeping the hospital and nursing home open; second, with 51 votes-establishing a county-wide health district; third, 48 votes-obtaining more doctors for relief and retention and keeping the current doctors and clinic services; fourth, 26 votes-making changes in the bookkeeping and billing system; and fifth, 21 votes-providing more elder care.

The result of this meeting was a reversal of a similar meeting held in Boardman June 20 in which participants there listed closing Pioneer Memorial Hospital as their second priority. First priority at that meeting was to spend health care dollars equally throughout the county; third was to open a 24-hour clinic with full time paramedics, physician assistants, locally administered for Boardman and Irrigon; fourth was to have bilingual personnel in medical services at all times; and fifth was to have no increase in health care tax dollars.

At the Heppner meeting participants were divided into groups representing industry, religion, retail business, education, agriculture, and the health care field. The groups brainstormed, listed concerns and then prioritized them. Group leaders presented their goals and then the goals were consolidated and placed on a bulletin board. Each person attending had five votes and could place his votes wherever he wished.

The process was moderated by Morrow County Encourager Pam Sagely, and project director Paul McGinnis, Salem, of Mountain States Health Corporation of Boise,

Idaho. The community encourager program is funded through a private grant from the Northwest Area Foundation. Sagely's part time salary is funded through the Morrow County Medical fund and her office space is donated by Columbia Basin Electric. The project is expected to last 18 months.

In the next step of the process, the health care council, comprised of Dick Allen, Judy Brown, Stan Hoobing, Grace Drake, Cheryl Tallman, Meg Murray, Roger Scharen, Carleena Britt, Chris Garcia, Jack Strege, Donna Moeller, Ray Michael, Ann Murray, Dave

Zachary and Diane Kilkenny will examine and research the goals, determine what information is needed and share the information with the focus group and members of the community. McGinnis said that eventually the results will be included in a plan and presented to the medical board, including costs and implications, a county-wide economic impact study. In other words, said McGinnis, "This is what you want. This is what it would mean."

Although the atmosphere in South Morrow County was tense following the Boardman meeting, the mood at the June 27 meeting was positive and procedure orderly. Heppner physi-

cian Dr. Jeanne Berretta, who attended the meeting commented, "It was really positive, and a real show of support." Morrow County Medical Administrator and Pioneer Memorial Hospital Chief Executive Officer Ernest Wick said later that the medical board funded the program because the board really wanted to find out how the people of Morrow County felt about their existing health care services and what they wanted in services.

McGinnis said that Curry County, the Grand Ronde Indians, and the cities of Reedsport and Newburg are also involved in the same process.

Smith voices concern over preservationist movement



Congressman Bob Smith speaks to R-L Frank Pearson, Merlyn Robinson and Ruth Nutting.

Concerns over a nation-wide preservationist movement was the main topic of discussion when Congressman Bob Smith paid a visit to Heppner Monday.

Speaking at a coffee held at the Senior Center, Smith said much of the efforts by what he called "preservationists" is aimed at locking up public lands in the west, and stopping all commercial uses of the lands.

Smith said the endangered species act is now being used in ways congress never intended, when the laws were passed. "The Sockeye Salmon may very well be ruled endangered," he said. "And the real purpose of all of this is to tear down the dams (on the Columbia and Snake Rivers), and I don't have to tell you what that will do to our part of the world."

Smith said the salmon and the spotted owl were being used as "surrogates" by the preservationists to stop all commercial uses of public lands and rivers.

He pointed to a current effort in

the government to raise grazing fees on public land from \$1.96 per animal per month to \$8.50, as another example. This was nothing more than an effort by preservationists to force cattlemen off the public lands, Smith said.

Although the bill to raise the fees lost by a close margin in the House of Representatives, he expected it to be defeated when it reached the Senate.

"BLM land is in good condition," he said. "Elk, Antelope and other wildlife has actually increased on public lands."

On other subjects, Smith said he didn't know at this time if the Umatilla Army Depot will remain open, and the chemical weapons destroyed there, or whether the base will be closed, and the chemicals transported elsewhere for destruction.

He also said the federal budget deficit is dangerous, and that the country should adopt a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget.

Computerized Bookkeeping
Saving the farmer and rancher time and money
BEO's Agridata
See your branch loan officer for details

BANK OF Eastern Oregon Member F.D.I.C.
Arlington • Heppner • Ione
"Your Independent Home Owned Bank"