

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

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

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Pool issue clarified

To the Editor:
Judging from the feedback I received, the article, "Pool not worth fixing", says Marks" (April 1), has created confusion as to the future of swimming pool facilities in the community. Given the great importance of having a pool, and the tremendous benefit it brings to the quality of life in Heppner, I want to be sure the public understands this issue.

Last summer the city experienced great difficulty dealing with a recurring water quality problem at the pool, forcing it to close 29 percent of its scheduled time. These closures happened despite the facts that new filter cartridges had been installed and the best chemical research lab in eastern Oregon could not successfully identify the problem.

These difficulties prompted the city to hire a Portland-based pool engineer to examine our pool. The engineer advised that the filter and all piping be replaced. However, due to past flooding and the resulting silting-in of the pipe gallery combined with extensive cracking and settling of the pool's concrete decking, reaching and replacing the piping would require the complete removal of most of the deck—an expense that (when added to other necessary repairs) makes refurbishing of the pool impractical.

The engineer also discovered a safety hazard with the pool's drain. According to the engineer, "there could possibly be a hold-down force on the main drain of approximately 200 pounds." In addition, city maintenance workers have discovered that the earth beneath the pool's foundation has been washed away and despite attempts to secure the situation with cinder blocks, is in possible danger of collapsing. Several other problems also exist with the pool. A video is available from city hall illustrating the condition of the pool.

In addition to structural problems, the city has also encountered financial difficulties with the pool. Funding for the swimming pool comes primarily from two sources—tickets/season passes and property tax money. Due to the increasing closures of the pool, ticket sales were down considerably last year requiring substantial increases in tax subsidies for a total of nearly \$17,000. These difficulties are made worse by the fact that the city's general property tax revenues have been cut by about 40 percent under Ballot Measure 5. This cut equates to a \$99,000 loss for the coming year. A reduction of that size is the reason the budget committee recently approved a new budget that eliminates funding not only for the pool, but also the library, one police officer position, and all equipment outlays for both police and fire.

Confronted with these daunting problems, the city council appointed a citizen's committee to develop a course of action for the pool. After numerous meetings, the collection of a considerable amount of data, and weighing several possible alternatives, the committee advised the council to make a formal request of the Willow Creek Park District to undertake a pool construction project. The park board was presented with this request. As a result, the board authorized the formation of an exploratory citizens commission to develop a plan for a pool project that would be designed as a regional facility serving the greater Heppner-Lexington-Ione community.

The city asked the park district to undertake a pool project primarily because the city does not have the bonded debt authority required to finance such a project. Some have questioned how the city can finance a fire and police equipment bond and not a pool bond. The answer is simple: the equipment bond is considerably less expensive and is within the city's bonded debt limit. By asking the park district to undertake a pool project, both the pool and equipment needs can be addressed for the community.

On A Basis Of Need



Health care issues have been good for a lot of printers ink in Morrow County this past year. Since the organization of the Morrow County Health Care Council, medical service has been on everyone's mind.

Remember? It was the health care council that convened the meeting in Boardman that voted to close the hospital in Heppner and then the very next week the meeting in Heppner voted to keep it open just the way it is.

The council is composed of a dozen or so members from a wide variety of age groups, occupational groups and geographic locations. Each member has, in turn, organized a focus group of folks who advise them on the several issues the council has and is continuing to address. Morrow County has hired Pam Sagely as the council's encourager and Mountain States Health Group from Boise provides technical and organizational guidance.

Altogether the health council reflects the intense work of a hundred or more Morrow County folks.

The idea is to collect the immediate impressions, goals, and attitudes of Morrow County folks, then study and examine them closely to develop a series of recommendations to the Morrow County Medical Board. The board created and appointed by the county court, has general authority over those medical facilities financed in whole or part by county tax money.

The Health Council is not a perpetual body, but rather is nearing the end of its 14 month life span.

The first of several recommendations formally adopted and passed on to the medical board, if adopted (and if accepted by most of the people) will go a long way toward settling much of the controversy surrounding medical services in Morrow County. That recommendation was that medical services be provided throughout the county based on need. If that recommendation becomes medical board policy, the ramifications are immense.

Long before there was a medical board, there were political pressures, which continue today, to distribute medical services (at least the portion financed by tax money) on the basis of population or in some instances on the basis of place of origin of tax revenues. Those pressures are what has led to the controversy over Pioneer Hospital and other issues involving medical care.

If we all accept the premise that need is the proper basis for allocation, all the talk about population and location of the big taxpayer will be irrelevant. That is a courageous position for the council to recommend and will be a courageous policy for the medical board to adopt. It will also go a long way toward resolving the issue of Pioneer Hospital.

The controversy over the hospital revolves more around a geographic allocation of tax money than it involves an appraisal of need. Once we adopt a policy of need, the hospital issues will very nearly disappear. But not content to hope that will happen, the council is now in the process of formulating a recommendation on the hospital issue itself.

Even before the council's recommendation is done, others in the system are talking about hospital alternatives. There are other reasons for looking at alternatives than the Boardman meeting's goal of closing the facility. Physician retention in Heppner is perhaps the most important of those other reasons.

The health care council has precipitated discussion and has reached decision on a number of medical care issues that will go a long way toward resolving much of the controversy in Morrow County that has brewed for many years. It could not have done so without a dedicated encourager, hard working members and their focus groups and most importantly, the courage to face some hard issues head on.

I for one applaud their work.

Letters to the Editor

Get behind Fosters

To the Editor:
I would like to know why the police officers and city council are harassing the Fosters (the people running the bowling alley). I for one feel it should be stopped.

Having that motorhome parked back there is not hurting anyone and it certainly looks a whole lot better than the way it was before.

The city of Heppner is not so

big that it can't give a little on its ordinances.

The Fosters are working hard to make a go of the bowling lanes and have done so much for the kids and the rest of us bowlers.

I would like to talk to the ones who objected to them parking the motorhome there.

Come on all you bowlers and people who feel like I do. Let's get behind the Fosters and give them our support.

(s) Maude Hughes

Parents enable children to use alcohol or drugs

To the Editor:
In the January-February 1991 issue of The Chemical People Newsletter there appeared an article "How Parents Enable Their Children to Use Alcohol/Drugs."

Allow me to share the substance of the article with you.

1. Denying. 'He's not an alcoholic or chemically dependent.' As a result expecting the chemically dependent to be rational; or expecting the alcoholic to control his or her drinking; or accepting blame.
2. Drinking or using with a chemically dependent person.
3. Allowing your young adult to use at home. At least he's safe.
4. Keeping your feelings inside.
5. Avoiding problems. Keeping peace, believing lack of conflict makes things better.
6. Minimizing. It's not so bad. Things will get better when...
7. Protecting the image of the alcoholic or chemically dependent person. Protecting this person from pain, myself from

pain; emotional distancing from the chemically dependent person.

8. Avoiding the situation by tranquilizing with alcohol, pills, food or work.
9. Blaming, criticizing, lecturing.
10. Taking over the young person's responsibilities.
11. Controlling. If I keep him away from his friends he'll stop.
12. Enduring. She will grow out of it. It's only a stage.
13. Waiting. He will stop when he gets older.
14. Maintaining a high tolerance for inappropriate behavior.
15. Standing between your young adult and his or her crisis. Bailing him or her out of trouble with the school, court system or police.

We hope as friends, relatives and interested adults that you take the above suggestions to heart and do your best to work with the youth of our county and see that they do not turn to alcohol and drugs for support and friendship.

Sincerely,
(s) Rev Stan Hoobing

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(s) Maude Hughes

Vote 'yes' for library district

To the Editor:
I am writing in support of the Oregon Trail Library District proposed for the cities of Boardman and Heppner. These communities stand to lose their libraries unless the voters agree to establish the library district and a tax base to support it.

My brothers and sister and I began using the Heppner Library as soon as we could read, and visited almost every weekend until we graduated from high school and moved out of town. My parents still use the library every week. Many people in this town enjoy reading and the Heppner library does a good job of providing the newest books on a wide variety of topics with the limited budget it now has. If the library in Heppner were closed, the ability of many townspeople to find new reading material would be severely restricted.

In addition, the school libraries have very little to offer students in the way of enjoyable reading materials. If we are to teach children to enjoy reading for reading's sake, we need a good source of materials for them to choose from. Closing the city libraries will only limit students' choices of interesting and fun reading.

Sincerely,
(s) Gary B. Marks
City administrator

Disheartened, but not down

To the Editor:
Letter to the Heppner community.

We wish to express our thanks to all of you who signed the petition ordinance #493-92 against Transient Room Tax.

We are saddened that your voice, the voice of the people, wasn't heard by the city council, the council who is elected by the people, for the people, but yet the wishes of the people fell on deaf ears. The council felt there were no business owners that signed the petition and that your signatures were the signatures of "uninformed folks who didn't know what they were signing." Well we know better. We are disheartened but we are not down. The voice of the people will be heard.

Thank you,
Darlene Scroggins

Tsongas for President

To the Editor:
For those interested in the candidacy of Paul Tsongas for Presi-

dent, they should be aware that his candidacy is still viable. As soon as the suspension of his candidacy was announced, due to a lack of available funds, a citizen's committee was formed and is going forward to elect Paul Tsongas for President. The T'citizens for Tsongas Committee may be contacted by calling 1-800-881-TEAM or by writing to the T'citizens for Tsongas Committee, 17 Shattuck Street, Lowell, MA 01852.

Paul Tsongas' name remains on the Oregon ballot for the May primary, as well as other states awaiting their primary elections.

(s) Bruce C. Campbell
503 276-0879
Box 1373
Pendleton, OR 97801

Jeff Wallace for district judge

To the Editor:
I am writing to urge everyone to vote for Jeff Wallace for Umatilla-Morrow County District Court Judge. As many people are aware, Jeff has been the Morrow County DA for the past five years. He has handled all types of criminal cases, from child abuse and drunk driving to homicide cases.

Jeff has also been in private law practice for four years and is familiar with civil legal matters such as divorce, real estate and business law.

A district court judge handles a wide variety of legal matters. He

also needs to have "judicial temperament". I believe that Jeff is the type of person who has common sense and good judgment—qualities which we need in a judge.

Jeff will apply the law as it is written and not try to make new laws. I urge you to vote for Jeff because he is fair, honest and calm in his approach to the law. He will make an excellent district court judge.

Sincerely,
(s) Norma French
Heppner

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CLOSED EASTER SUNDAY