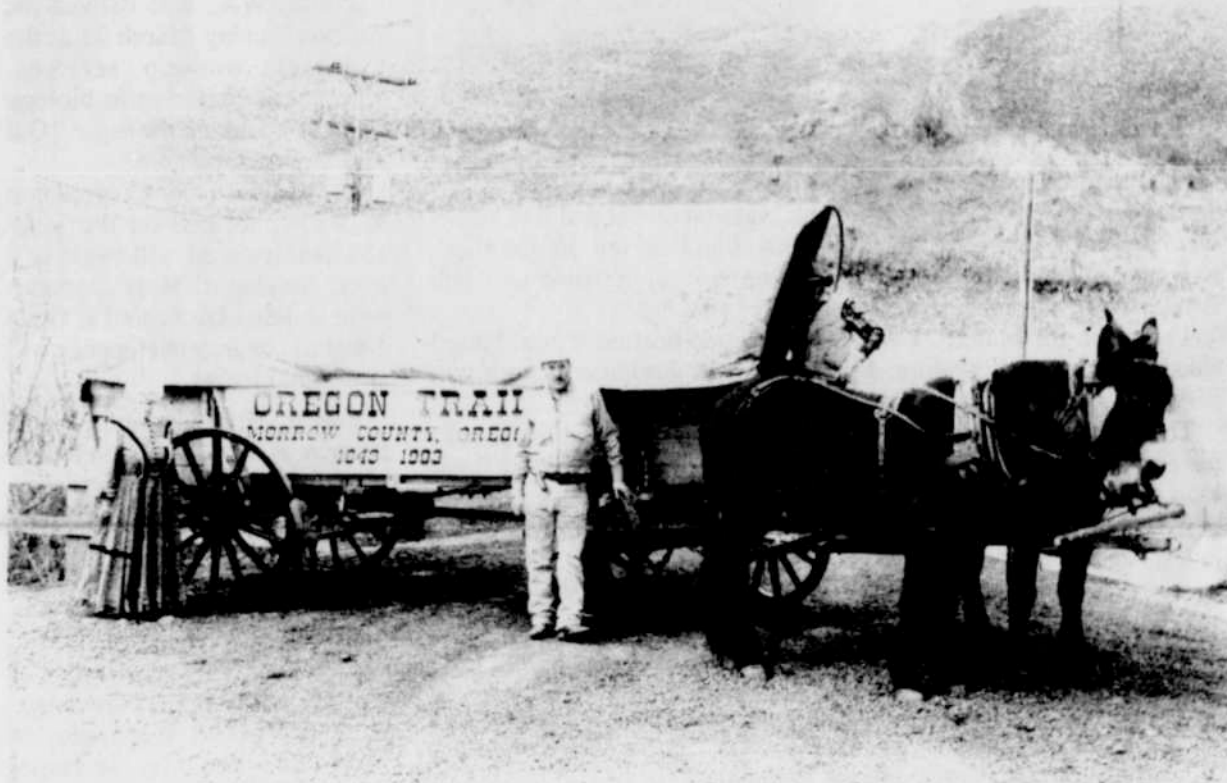


HEPPNER



VOL. 112 NO. 11 10 Pages Wednesday, March 17, 1993 Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

## Local pioneer wagon to be in Oregon Trail



Jean Nelson (r), Bob Harrison and Joe Yocom show off the Oregon Trail wagon all ready to go on the trail ride.

The pioneer wagon that will be representing Morrow County in the official Oregon Trail Wagon Train made its debut in the Heppner St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 13.

The Morrow County wagon was restored by Bob Harrison and Everett Keithley for the Oregon Bicentennial and was driven by Bob Harrison across Morrow County with the official Wagon Train in 1975. The wagon is owned by Bob and is on loan to the Shorty's Museum at the Morrow County Fair Grounds. Joe Yocom has secured a team to pull the wagon at the many events.

Renovation of the wagon for

the 1993 Sesquicentennial of the Oregon Trail celebration was done by Bob and Everett Keithley. John Edmundson of the Morrow County Tourism Committee took the wheels to Bill Twigg, wheel-wright at the Moscow Carriage Co. of Moscow, Idaho, to have them redone. The pickup for transportation was furnished by Jean Nelson.

The wagon will be appearing at various events during the year such as the Lone Fourth of July parade, the Irrigon Watermelon Festival, the Boardman Oregon Trail-Pioneer Days and the Morrow County Rodeo parade.

The most momentous event

will be when the wagon accompanies the official Oregon Trail Wagon Train through Morrow County, stopping to camp at Well Springs at Ella on August 17 and Cecil on August 18 and 19. Bob Harrison and Joe Yocom will be the teamsters and Everett Keithley will be brakeman for this trip.

Funds for renovating the wagon were secured through the Morrow County Historical Society from the Oregon Trail Coordinating Council and Morrow County matching grant. Organizers hope that some private money can be secured to finance the trip expenses.

## Contract awarded for county emergency center renovations

The Morrow County Court has awarded a contract for renovating the county's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Heppner. Knerr Construction of Hermiston submitted the low bid of \$205,785. Lynch, Fitzgerald and Associates of Portland will provide architectural services.

Signing of construction contracts is scheduled for March 17. Work will begin shortly thereafter with expected completion in 120

days. Funding for the project was provided by the Department of Defense through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Oregon Emergency Management (OEM) as part of the Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP). With OEM and FEMA's assistance, additional funds were recently secured allowing structural upgrades bringing the building up to current codes and into com-

pliance with the American's With Disabilities Act.

When complete, the EOC will house the Sheriff's Department, 911 Dispatch Center and recently-created Emergency Management Department. The new facility will allow the county to upgrade its 911 Center, provide the Sheriff's Department improved facilities and enable Morrow County to better respond to emergencies including an incident at the Umatilla Army Depot Activity.

The CSEPP program is currently procuring alerting sirens, reader board signs, radios and automation equipment which will be controlled from the EOC.

To further improve the county's emergency response capability, officials are exploring options for establishing an Advanced Communications Center in Boardman linked to the Heppner EOC.

## Sheriff's Dept. arrests Don Ford in burglary cases

Morrow County Sheriff's Dept. arrested Donald E. Ford, Irrigon and three juveniles in connection with the March 6 burglary of A.C. Houghton Elementary school and the Columbia Junior High School, both

located in Irrigon. Morrow County District Attorney Earl R. Woods said that the stolen property has been recovered and that charges have been filed against all four individuals.

## Suit filed against Morrow County

A suit against Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson, former budget officer LoRayne Bowman and Morrow County Tax Collector Margo Sherer has been filed in Morrow County Circuit Court by former county accountant Jackie Bergstrom.

In the suit, Bergstrom alleges wrongful termination of her employment, civil rights violations, interference with business relationships, negligence, intentional infliction of mental distress, breach of contract, and violation of a "whistle blower's law."

Bergstrom is asking for \$625,482 in general damages, \$2,582 for special damages, costs and disbursements and \$50,000 for punitive damages and attorney's fees.

Bergstrom, Ione, was accounting clerk at the Morrow County Courthouse from Oct. 1989 to Jan. 1992 and county accountant from January to November 1992, when she alleges that she was asked to resign or she would be fired, according to court documents.

According to the suit Bergstrom was prevented from exercising her right to report

misconduct by county officials during the election process to an attorney and physician and from exercising her right to discuss employment rights with an attorney and physician.

The suite alleges that the defendants were in violation of Bergstrom's constitutional and contract rights and failed to provide her with a due process hearing before she was terminated. The suit further alleges that the defendants caused Bergstrom to suffer anxiety and emotional distress, impairment of her reputation and loss of future earnings and benefits. Bergstrom alleges negligence in that she received no evaluation of her job performance during her probationary period.

She alleges that the defendants caused her mental distress by commenting on her age, and the inappropriateness of her clothing. Bergstrom maintains that the defendants instructed her not to do certain things, then reported her to Carlson and other courthouse staff for not doing her job. She says, in court documents, that the defendants talked to her physician about her without her

consent and verbally reprimanded her because she obtained the services of an attorney who opposed Carlson in the election for Morrow County Judge. She says the county refused to follow personnel policy in relation to her.

Bergstrom alleges that her termination was in violation of the Whistle Blower's law when she contacted an attorney to discuss disclosure of information relating to mismanagement, gross waste of funds and abuse of authority.

Bergstrom estimates \$625,482 in loss of earnings until retirement, \$1,779 in lost wages, \$718 in loss of a pre-scheduled vacation and \$85 for the loss of one day's administrative pay, in addition to the \$50,000 punitive damages.

Bergstrom is represented by Heppner attorney Ann Spicer. Spicer opposed Carlson in the November election.

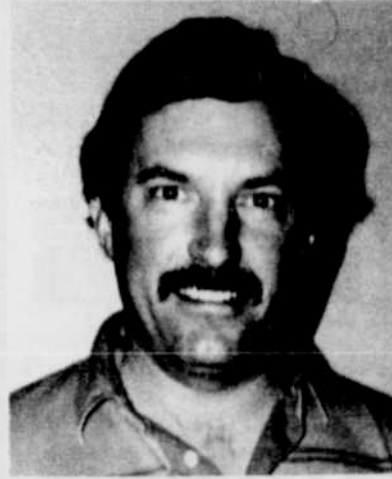
The county is represented by James P. Martin of Hoffman, Hart and Wagner, Portland. A jury trial, requested by Bergstrom is scheduled for Sept. 22.

Judge Carlson declined to comment since the case is in litigation.

## Frederickson appointed to school board

Gary Frederickson of Boardman was appointed to Morrow County School Board position number one at the regular board meeting held Monday, March 15 at the district offices. Frederickson is the only candidate running for the position in the March 23 election. He replaces board chairman Alan Holmes who resigned in the midst of the district-teacher contract negotiations.

Frederickson, 38, is a former Heppner-area resident, attending



Gary Frederickson

Heppner schools for seven years. His family then moved to Boardman and he graduated from Riverside High School. He has lived in Morrow County all of his life. His parents are Clarence and Virginia Frederickson.

Frederickson said that he sees the budget, with measure 5 cuts, as the biggest challenge facing the board.

Frederickson and his wife, Casey, have a daughter 10 and a son, five months.

## Teachers sign contract with district

Morrow County School Board Chairman Marcia Kemp and Morrow County Education Association President Cara Osmin signed the two-year agreement between the district and the teachers at the district board meeting on Monday, March 15.

The contract calls for wage increases for certified staff to bring 1992-93 salaries up to \$20,400 for a teacher with a bachelor's degree at step zero to \$36,917 for a teacher with a master's degree plus 30 credits or a bachelor's degree plus 95 credits at step 17. 1993-94 salaries range from \$20,767 to \$37,582.

The contract specifies that the district pay \$400 per month per

certified employee for insurance costs for the 1992-93 year and \$425 per month per employee for the 1993-94 year.

Also agreed upon was an early retirement option for teachers reaching the age of 58. The teacher selecting this option must have completed 20 years of teaching, 10 of which were for the Morrow County School District. The district will pay the monthly premiums for the teacher's present insurance program at the time of retirement until the teacher reaches 65 or qualifies for the federal Social Security Medicare coverage, whichever is earlier.

In the event of the teacher's

death before the age of 65 and prior to coverage under Medicare, the district will pay monthly premiums to the teacher's spouse if the spouse is not covered by Medicare until the teacher would have become 65 or until the spouse is eligible for Medicare.

The district also agreed to pay bargaining unit members who serve on building site committees \$30 each time the site committee meets to conduct business outside of the workday. The cost is not to exceed \$240 per year for the bargaining unit members, nor is it to exceed \$1,200 per site committee per year. Site committees for schools were mandated by 1991 Oregon State law.

## Voters to decide county levies

This is the last in a series of three articles designed to inform Morrow County citizens about the 1993-94 tax levy.

While mail-in ballots continue to be received at the county clerk's office, voters are reminded that March 23 is the final date for ballots to be received at the Courthouse in Heppner, said Judge Louis Carlson.

Voters will decide whether to approve the \$3,388,550 county's one-year operation levy and the \$526,316 one-year medical levy.

This year's levy is \$19,305 more than last year and represents a growth of slightly less than one percent, said Carlson.

Included in the one-year county operating levy are requests for tax dollars that fund programs that Morrow County citizens have indicated that they would like to receive, said Carlson. These programs include: road fund; cities portion of the road fund; Fair and Rodeo fund; general fund which includes the extension services and 4-H Club

programs; weed control district; soil and water conservation district; Boardman/Irrigon emergency assistance program; Morrow County Neighborhood Council; museum; justice court; juvenile director; soil erosion control; and watermaster as well as all the mandated service provided by Oregon Law.

The road fund constitutes 40.35 percent of the total levy. This is a decrease of \$16,042 from last year's levy, Carlson said. Part of this decrease is due to increased revenue anticipated from the gas tax (\$407,774) that was enacted by the state legislature. There has also been a slight increase in the revenue from the forest revenue which amounted to \$282,751.

The general fund is the largest fund which represents all of the non-mandated services provided to the county. It also provides funding for all of the services mandated by law. This fund is 45.91 percent of the total levy.

This fund is up \$92,323 over last year which reflects increased cost of living wages.

## Pedestrian injured in auto accident

A pedestrian was injured by an automobile in the parking lot at Miller's Mini Mart in Heppner at 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 13.

Pedestrian Kathy Martin, formerly of Heppner, now of Terrebone, was transported by ambulance to Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner where she

was treated and released the same evening. PMH nursing supervisor Sheridan Tarnasky said that Martin was not seriously injured.

Driver of the vehicle was Travis Greenup, 19, Heppner. Heppner Police Chief Doug Rathbun said that the accident was under investigation.

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