

Board hears support for Irrigon High School

A delegation of around 35 people voiced their support for establishing a high school in Irrigon at the Morrow County School Board meeting held Tuesday, Feb. 22 in Lexington.

Members of the delegation, headed up by LaVelle Partlow, said that students would spend less time on the bus if a high school was built in Irrigon and would have more supervision by their parents and community members. They also said that a smaller school would be better for the students educationally.

If a school is established in Irrigon, both Riverside and Irrigon high schools would drop back down to a 2A sports district. As a result, students would not have to travel as far to games as they currently do, which many at the meeting said would be an advantage. Irrigon Mayor Don Eppembach cited increased dropout figures for larger schools.

Several people also spoke against establishing a high school at Irrigon.

Gladys Hobbs, a retired school teacher, took issue with the claim that Irrigon was using the proposed high school to rejuvenate the city of Irrigon. "Education and the community go hand in hand," said Hobbs.

Hobbs added, "We want to pass the bond issue, but if we don't get a school in Irrigon, they're not going to get the vote in Irrigon." The \$15,585,000 bond issue for additions and remodeling of county schools will go up for a vote March 22, and ballots are scheduled to be mailed March 3.

According to District Superintendent Chuck Starr, one of the board members may decide to change his mind on the vote against establishing a high school in Irrigon and call for another vote on the issue at the next school board meeting. The board, however, will not meet until March 14. According to Morrow County Clerk Barbara Bloodsworth, between 60 and 70 percent

of the people who are going to vote will turn their ballots in within two days of receiving them.

In an initial vote of the school board Dec. 20, Dwayne Carroll, Irrigon, Scott Bauska and Gary Frederickson, both Boardman all voted against establishing a high school at Irrigon. Marcia Kemp, Bill Doherty and John Rietmann voted in favor of an Irrigon high school. In a second vote Dec. 20, Rietmann changed sides. Molly Rill was out of town and unable to cast a vote in absentia.

As it stands, additions and remodeling will be made to Riverside High school which accommodates both Irrigon and Boardman high school students and to Columbia Junior High which accommodates the junior high students of both towns. Starr said that plans could be adapted so that seventh through 12th grades could be taught at both schools. He also said that costs would be comparable.

In other business, the board: -heard a report by Mike Lewis, vice president and manager of Seattle Northwest, bond underwriters, concerning the bond levy.

The capital bond issue is estimated at \$1.60 per thousand assessed valuation. Lewis said that the Hermiston school district's bond rate is \$1.47 per thousand, Hood River's, \$1.72; Pendleton's \$1.81; Dallas', \$2.06; and Redmond's, \$2.05.

Lewis said the combined capital bond levy and the operating levy will be \$9.10 for 1995 and will drop down to \$6.60 for 1996 through 2009 because of Ballot Measure 5 tax limitations.

-heard a report from assistant superintendent Roger Helmer concerning the dropout rate in Morrow County. Helmer said that statistics show that the county's dropout rate is higher than the state average in the first year a child is in the district. Between one and five years, the district and state rates are similar. But,

he said, once a child is in the district more than five years, the dropout rate is only five percent, compared to a 20 percent state average.

Heppner High School's dropout rate was 2.61 for 1992 and 1.99 for 1993. Ione had a 1992 dropout rate of 3.64 and a 1993 rate of 3.39. Riverside's rate was 6.38 for '92 and 8.33 for '93. The state average was 5.75 for '92 and 5.69 for '93.

-discussed implementing a four-day week in Morrow County schools. Student days would be 30 to 45 minutes longer. According to Starr, if such a change were made, the district would see a savings of around \$125,000 a year, mostly in substitute teacher costs, but also in transportation, utilities and heating.

-approved plans for the Ione High School senior trip to Lincoln City and Newport May 30 to June 2.

-accepted resignations for Roger Helmer, assistant superintendent; Arletha Brannon, special education bus driver and Richard Wright, Boardman-Irrigon advisory committee position 4.

-approved termination of Krysta Schoen Marlow, educational assistant at Columbia Junior High School; transfer of Dora Wallace from educational assistant at Sam Boardman Elementary to Columbia Junior High; employment of Tonya Martin and Benn Houk, assistant track coaches at CJH; John Larson, head track coach at CJH; Donna Roy, special education assistant at Heppner Middle School; and Ron Jones, counselor at CJH.

-reviewed four possible calendars for the 1994-95 school year. Two would start school before Labor Day, one with a two-week Christmas break and one with a one-week plus two days break. Two would start after Labor Day, one with a two-week Christmas break and one with a one-week plus one day break.

HEPPNER



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Ballots to be mailed Thurs. March 3

The ballots for the Morrow County operating levy and the Morrow County School District bond levy will be mailed this Thursday, March 3, according to County Clerk Barbara Bloodsworth.

According to Bloodsworth, the ballots must be returned to the courthouse by Tuesday, March 22, at 8 p.m.

The ballots may be mailed or brought in, but, stresses Bloodsworth, a postmark of March 22 does not count. The ballots must be in the clerk's office by the 8 p.m. deadline.

The county asks approval of a \$3,708,449 operating levy. The levy is down \$58,402, one fourth of one percent under last year's. Estimated tax rate for county operations, including the medical fund, is \$574 per thousand assessed valuation, up one cent over last year. The medical fund portion of the tax rate is 61 cents per thousand assessed valuation.

Estimated cost to a taxpayer with a \$40,000 home is \$229.60. A taxpayer with a \$400,000 business will pay \$2,296 and the owner of a \$1 million farm will pay \$5,740.

The total county budget is \$18,235,732, which is over \$2 million more than last year's total county budget of \$15,776,478.

Total county taxes required, which include the six percent increase allowed by law without a vote of the people are \$4,540,435. Total county taxes required last year were \$4,551,743.

The Morrow County School District seeks approval of a \$15,585,000 15-year capital bond levy to finance additions and improvements to Morrow County Schools. Additions are primarily to accommodate for growth in the schools in the north end of the county.

Construction in the south end of the county would see consolidation of the Heppner Elementary School gym, cafeteria, art and music rooms into one facility and expansion of

the Heppner High School gym. Heppner students in seventh through 12th grades would then attend classes at Heppner High School and Heppner fifth and sixth graders would move to the elementary school building. The Heppner Middle School/Junior High building would be demolished.

The tax rate for the school bond issue is estimated at \$1.60 per thousand assessed valuation. A person with a \$40,000 home

would pay \$64 a year; a person with a \$400,000 business would pay \$640; and a person with a \$1 million farm would pay \$1,600 a year. This would be combined with a \$7.50 per thousand school operating levy for 1995 for a total of \$9.10 per thousand. Because of Ballot Measure 5, the operating levy tax rate would drop to \$5 per thousand in 1996 and remain at that rate until 2009, for a combined rate of around \$6.60 per thousand.

Mustangs claim District title



Heppner Mustangs with their district championship bracket

Photo by Joyce Hughes



The Fillies received second place at the district tournament in Pendleton last weekend. The Fillies must win this game to gain a state playoff spot.

Photo by Joyce Hughes

The Heppner Mustangs claimed their second district championship in the last four years with back to back victories over the Sherman County Huskies and Weston-McEwen TigerScots Friday and Saturday, Feb. 25 and 26 at the Pendleton Convention Center.

The wins put the Mustangs into the Regional Tournament at the Convention Center in Pendleton where they face the Enterprise

Savages and veteran coach Dick Quinn at 8:45 p.m. Friday, March 4, for a trip to the Class 2A State Tournament in Pendleton March 9-12.

The Fillies beat the Pilot Rock Rockets in overtime Friday, but lost to the Weston-McEwen TigerScots Saturday, to take the second place Regional playoff spot.

The Fillies will play the Imbler Panthers Friday, March 4 at 1 p.m. at the Convention Center.

Find The Hidden Shamrock Win Silver Medallions

The St. Patrick's Day treasure hunt is back again. Each week until March 16 a clue for the treasure hunt will be printed in the Gazette-Times. If followed these clues will guide treasure hunters to green plastic shamrock hidden somewhere in the city limits of Heppner.

The first person to find the hidden shamrock will win a set of pure silver Oregon Trail commemorative medallions, worth nearly \$90. The coins are donated by the Bank of Eastern Oregon and are on display at the bank.



Find This Shamrock... and win These Silver Coins

RULES:

1. A new set of clues to guide you to the hidden shamrock will appear in each edition of the Heppner Gazette-Times.
2. A total of five clues will be given up to March 16.
3. The hidden shamrock is not on private property and no digging or moving of objects, dirt or other material is necessary to find the shamrock.
4. The first person to find the shamrock should bring it to the Heppner Gazette-Times office to claim the commemorative silver medallions.

Clue Number Three

A child's stop, a scrambled road
Last week's clue told where to go
Left you are with lea below
A girl's best friend near water's flow
You won't get wet on this Irish quest
Moving homes now on your left

Follow the clues and may the luck of the Irish be with you. This contest is sponsored by the Bank of Eastern Oregon and the Heppner Gazette-Times.

Family math night at HES

Family math night will be held Thursday, March 10 for grades Kindergarten through fourth from 7 to 8 p.m. in the multipurpose room at the Heppner Elementary school.

Each child attending should bring a parent or an adult for a fun night of games and problem solving.

Good Luck Heppner & Ione
at the
Basketball playoffs
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington, OR