

HEPPNER



35¢

Gazette
Times

VOL. 113 NO. 30 6 Pages Wednesday, July 13, 1994 Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

All county cities opt in county-wide medical district

An ad hoc committee recommended, at a public hearing concerning medical districts July 6, that the Morrow County Court create a county-wide medical district by resolution. As of presstime Tuesday, all the cities of Morrow County, Boardman, Irrigon, Heppner, Lone and Lexington, have agreed to opt in the county-wide resolution medical district plan.

The July 6 hearing was a continuation of hearings on a Boardman medical district and a separate county-wide district, both of which were proposed by petition.

The Boardman district proposal was created to "redress" grievances on behalf of Boardman residents who say they are not getting their fair share of medical services. As proposed, the Boardman medical district would have included tax income from the PGE Coal Fired Plant, the proposed Coyote Springs Cog-Gen Plant and Port of Morrow.

A second petition was created by Heppner area petitioners to form a county-wide medical district in response to the Boardman medical district proposal. Heppner area petitioners for a county-wide district feared that the Boardman district would take funding away from south Morrow County medical services. But, cities were required to opt in the county-wide district and the city of Boardman took no action. The cities of Heppner, Lone, Lexington and Irrigon opted in the county-wide medical district proposed by petition.

However, as submitted, the boundaries of the two proposed districts overlap and, according to state regulations, districts offering the same services cannot overlap. If both the Boardman and the county-wide district proposals created by petition were approved by voters, the districts would be subject to lawsuit. A suggestion that both districts be withdrawn may also be illegal and open to litigation.

Therefore, the ad hoc committee, which consists of Ed Glenn and Art Kegler, Boardman, and Larry Mills and George Koffler, Heppner, recommended a third option. In the third option, the court would create a resolution to form a county-wide district and when that district is in place, the other two districts would be declared void. The resolution by the county commissioners to create a county-wide district would not require a vote of the people.

Mills said that the proposal for a district created by resolution is "workable for all citizens of the county. It is by far the best alternative," he added.

John Prag, rural Boardman, said, "I am very pleased to hear that we have an opportunity for a real county-wide health district."

Also at the hearing on July 6, the County Court revealed the established boundaries for the proposed Boardman District, which would include approximately the area from Bombing Range Road west along the boundary of Bombing Range to the county line, picking up the population of the Boardman community, but not including the PGE Coal Fired Plant as proposed by the Boardman District petitioners. Because the boundaries are not as proposed, this option may also leave the decision open to litigation.

The county court was to meet Wednesday, July 13, to decide whether to create a county-wide district by resolution. Hearings on the two petition-based districts were to proceed as planned unless the resolution passes.

If the resolution passes, the medical district is required to have a board, initially of five members. The ad hoc committee recommends that one board member be elected from the city limits of Boardman; one from the city limits of Irrigon; one comprised of precincts 1 and 2 from outside Boardman and 5 and 6 outside Irrigon; one including Lone and Lexington precincts and the area north and west of Heppner; and one from Heppner and the area south and east of Heppner. As per the ad hoc committee's recommendation, the directors must reside in and be elected from their respective district. Once established, the board may decide to create additional board positions and, using accurate current population data, redraw the zones. An at-large position is also a possibility at a later date.

Since the election for directors may not be held until November, and probably later to allow for establishment of districts, Mills said that there is a possibility that current medical board directors would serve until the new directors take office.

Another possibility is that the

court appoint board members to serve until the next election.

The ad hoc committee recommended that the county "transfer all assets now used in the county's health system including cash on hand and receivables" and that the district be formed with no tax base. According to Morrow County Counsel Val Doherty, a tax base can only be put before the voters in a primary or general election which is every other year. The new district would not be able to go for a tax base until the next primary in May of 1996. However, they can go out for a one-year operating levy or a serial levy before that. To obtain tax monies, the new medical district board must attend tax compression meetings in December because of Ballot Measure 5 and is required to turn maps of the new district into the state department of revenue by March 31. Medical services will continue to operate on the current budget until June 30, 1995.

The transfer of contracts, such as the agreements with the Drs. Berretta in Heppner and Dr. Robert Boss in Boardman, the Adventist Health Systems, which contracts for management of county medical services and ambulance services is still unclear. The contracts may have to be renegotiated because one entity, Morrow County Medical Board, will no longer be in existence, or may simply be transferred over.

Other recommendations from the ad hoc committee include:

- replacement of outdated and out-moded equipment, including modern x-ray services and consultation;
- modernization and enlargement of the Boardman clinic to include appropriate facilities;
- locally based Home Health care;
- assisted living facilities including care for Alzheimer's patients;
- adequate and appropriate health care facilities in Irrigon;
- assured continuity of existing services;
- the means, timing and advisability of expanding the board of directors from five to seven;
- adequate and stable funding for health care;
- advanced life support ambulance system; and
- improved occupational health and safety services.

Fair tab to be published Aug. 10

The Heppner Gazette-Times will publish a special Fair and Rodeo edition on Wednesday, August 10.

The deadline to submit news and advertising for the fair and rodeo tab is Wednesday, August 3.

Swanson, Brownfield, city of Lone receive award

The city of Lone has been presented an Oregon Tourism Division award for their work during Cycle Oregon.

Lone hosted 2,000 bicyclists and another 200-300 support people with Cycle Oregon VI. With local workers, the town of Lone swelled from a population of 250 to around 2,500 people.

Representatives from the Tourism Division said, in presenting the award, that hosting Cycle Oregon involved "every member" of the Lone Community, "from students and teachers to local ranchers and business people."

"But most of all," continued the presenter, "they wove the spirit and warmth and enthusiasm of their tiny community into the hearts and memories of the cyclists during the year Oregon celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Oregon Trail."

Joe D'Nessandro, director of the Oregon Tourism Division, said "The Oregon Tourism Division

commends the Lone community residents, and in particular, Nancy Brownfield and Jim Swanson, for creating a warm, hospitable and memorable experience for the Cycle Oregon VI riders. Your enthusiasm, spirit and hard work are exactly what make Oregon a special place for our visitors. Thank you for doing such a fantastic job."

Paula Fasano of Galford Group, Inc., the producers of Cycle Oregon for the past three years, was the person who nominated Swanson and Brownfield. She also had nothing but praise for the individuals and the town. "In the three years that our company produced Cycle Oregon and the more than 45 communities through which we passed over those three years, I have been impressed with the level of organization and dedication that Oregonians have demonstrated to promote their community and welcome tourists. However, Nancy Brownfield and

Jim Swanson did so to such an outstanding degree, sharing their humor and their charisma with thousands of people."

"Many cyclists, and staff," continued Fasano, "will remember Lone and new-found friends and feel with pride that they have somehow become a part of Lone, if even for a day. Jim and Nancy embody the spirit of rural Oregon—the hospitality and warmth that make us proud of our state."

According to Swanson, they received notification that they had been nominated for the tourism award, but then heard nothing more about it. Neither Swanson or Brownfield were notified that they had won the award and were not present for the ceremony. Just by coincidence, John Edmundson of Heppner happened to be in attendance at the state banquet and stepped in to receive the award. The award was then presented to Swanson during the Lone Fourth of July celebration.

Heppner council approves health district

At the Heppner City Council meeting Monday night, July 11, council members approved a request from the ad hoc medical districting committee to endorse the formation of a county-wide medical district by means of a county court resolution.

According to ad hoc committee members, George Koffler, Heppner, and Art Kegler, Boardman, who addressed the council, all the petitioners of the two proposed medical district petitions have signed this proposal. In order for the county court to take action, all five Morrow County towns must also approve that plan.

"There's no foot dragging that we know of," Kegler said. Boardman and Lone have already agreed. Lexington and Irrigon city council meetings, held this week, are also expected to add their approval. Providing there is no opposition, the county court plans to take action this week. Formation of a county-wide medical district by county court resolution is anticipated to preempt the two medical district petitions that have already been filed which would otherwise be placed on the November ballot.

Funding for medical services under the current medical levy, about \$500,000 will continue through July, 1995. If the medical district is formed, Koffler said a levy for the following fiscal year would probably be voted on in March, 1995. A tax base cannot be put before the voters except during a general election.

In other business: -Marsha DeBo was seated as a new council member by appointment to fill a vacancy on the city council

-Rose Moe was presented a plaque as the winner of the "name the park" contest. The mini-park at the confluence of Hinton and Willow Creek, now under development, will be



Rose Moe (r) receives plaque from Mayor Bob Jepsen

known as the "1903 Memorial Park."

-Skip Mathews, chairman of the exploratory swimming pool commission, requested that the city explore options for use of the city's former pool site. Mathews, council member Dave Pranger and city manager Gary Marks volunteered study proposals and remodeling costs to renovate the site. Because grant money was used for the former city pool, that site must be used for some type of recreation such as a ball court.

The city granted a request for an easement permitting First Interstate Bank to install an underground flow meter to monitor seepage content. According to First Interstate, the basement of the bank building is receiving petroleum infiltration in seepage water presumed to be caused by the rupture of an underground gasoline tank during the construction of the Forest Service building that is directly across the street.

-City street repaving is underway this week. Contractors for the wastewater system are in the



Marsha DeBo

process of repairing sewer lines. Sections of Main Street will be temporarily blocked off during construction, which will cause some inconvenience, engineer Don Olsen said.

Olsen also reported that the sewer system project is on track and should be finished next month. Repairs at the plant are underway. The golf course is now being irrigated with fresh water that has been pumped into the effluent holding tank near the golf course.

SWCD seeking director nominations

The Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District will have four director positions opening this year. "The district is looking for directors who are conservation minded and committed to conserving and protecting the natural resources of Morrow County for the economic and environmental benefit of the citizens of the county," said a spokesperson. The Morrow County SWCD Board also acts as the County Weed Control Board.

Directors must live in the district and zone for which they are elected. The zones up for election this year are zone 1-Boardman area; Zone 3-Lone area south and west to Gilliam County line; Zone 4-Lexington area south to Hardman; and Zone

5-Heppner area east to Umatilla County line.

The duties of the board members include the identification of local conservation needs, the supervising of paid staff of the district, and cooperation with state and federal agencies at monthly meetings.

"If you are concerned with the wise use of our renewable natural resources and are interested in being involved with a grass roots organization that can influence state and federal laws affecting those resources," said the spokesperson, "please contact the district office at 676-5452." Directors are elected on a nonpartisan ballot at the general election to be held Tuesday, November 8.

Regional strategies to meet

South Morrow County project leaders will meet on Monday, July 18, at 7 p.m. in the Columbia Basin Conference Room to discuss the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS) program.

The meeting will be for the purpose of explaining the timelines, procedures, funds, priorities and key industries for round four of the REDS program.

The public is welcome to attend.

HARVEST HOURS

Lexington	Wasco Parts Outlet
Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-6 p.m.	Mon.-Fr. 7 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sat. 7 a.m.-5 p.m.	Sat. 8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Morrow County Grain Growers	
Lexington 989-8221 1-800-824-7185	