

HEPPNER



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Gazette
Times

VOL. 113 NO. 49 6 Pages Wednesday, December 7, 1994 Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

Santa makes annual visit to Heppner



Linsey Hodges visits with Santa during the Artifactory last Saturday, Dec. 3 in Heppner. The annual Artifactory, sponsored by the Soroptimist International Club of Heppner is held at the Morrow County Fairgrounds the first Saturday in December.

Passing school bus when lights are flashing is against the law

Motorists are reminded to take extra caution when approaching school buses. Drivers who pass school buses on a yellow light are endangering children, and are advised to slow down and be prepared to stop. Drivers who run red lights on school buses can be heavily fined. Failure to stop for the bus safety lights is a class A traffic infraction and can result in \$630 in bail, warns

Oregon State Police Senior Trooper Tim Cundell.

Morrow County School District transportation supervisor Burke O'Brien says that failure to stop for school buses has become a problem.

Trooper Cundell notes that the law applies to drivers approaching school buses from either direction. Motorists must stop before reaching the bus

and remain stopped until the bus safety lights are no longer operating.

Cundell says that bus drivers and private citizens may file complaints with law enforcement personnel against motorists disobeying the bus safety laws. "Don't run the yellow lights," cautions Cundell, "as red are soon to follow."

Irrigon man arrested by narcotics team

Victor Angel Olivas-Lopez, 1800 N.E. 10th, Space 67, Hermiston, was arrested Nov. 30 by the Blue Mountain Enforcement Narcotics Team and officers from the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office and the Oregon State Police.

Olivas-Lopez was charged with three counts of delivery of

a controlled substance, methamphetamine; four counts of possession of a controlled substance, methamphetamine; and one count of theft by receiving. He was lodged at the Umatilla County jail.

According to the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, a small quantity of methamphetamine was seized from the residence as well as approximately \$5,000

worth of stolen property. The property included a motorcycle reported stolen from The Dalles, as well as miscellaneous tools and equipment from regional burglaries investigated by the Morrow and Umatilla counties' sheriff's offices.

Morrow and Umatilla counties' sheriff's deputies are continuing the investigation regarding the stolen property.

City dedicates wastewater facility



Photo by Joyce Hughes

Cutting the ribbon at the wastewater treatment facility dedication Friday were L-R: past mayors Cara Osmin, Kay Robinson and present mayor Bob Jepsen.

A dedication ceremony Friday, Dec. 2 capped the city of Heppner's long and sometimes frustrating effort to upgrade the city wastewater treatment facility.

On hand for the 11 a.m. dedication were the current mayor of Heppner, Bob Jepsen; two former mayors, Cara Osmin and Kay Robinson, who had been involved in the process; city manager, Gary Marks; city clerk, Rene Devin; DEQ representative, Don Caldwell; city foreman, Dave Winters; council member, Marcia DeBo; and Allen Rieke, Anderson Perry Associates engineering firm, among others.

The plant had been in the planning stages since 1987 when Department of Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency and federal Clean Water Act mandated the city to come up with an alternative way to dispose of the treated effluent which had been dumped in Willow Creek. The city would no longer be able to pipe the effluent into the creek during the summer months of low stream flow. The city now has a contract with Willow Creek Country Club to spray the effluent on the golf course during the summer months.

A series of problems, involv-

ing engineering, siting, landowners, the DEQ, funding, and most recently, leaks in the newly constructed sludge tank, plagued the project over the years, exasperating city officials and causing delays.

The \$2 million project was funded through a \$625,000 city sewer bond, \$250,000 in grant monies and a \$220,000 loan through the Oregon Economic Development Department's Special Public Works Fund; \$800,000 in EPA grant monies; and around \$115,000 in accrued interest.

The wastewater treatment facility includes a chlorine contact basin, a sludge storage tank, a 460,000 gallon effluent reservoir, an irrigation pump station and a modern control system. The sewer plant control building, clarifiers and sewer filters were refurbished and the sewer pipelines repaired.

Jepsen said that the treatment facility has the capacity to serve a community of over two thousand people. Since Heppner now has around 1,400 residents, the facility will accommodate for growth.

"We all feel real good about the whole thing," said Mayor Bob Jepsen. "Our contractor did a real good job for us. We have a first class plant."

In his dedication speech, Jepsen took note of the mayor

and city council members who were commemorated on a plaque when the first sewer plant was built in 1953. One councilman was Jack VanWinkle, who is now living in Sun City Arizona for the winter. According to Jepsen, who spoke with VanWinkle last week, VanWinkle said that "The sewer plant was the best thing that ever happened to Heppner." Before that, the town was on septic systems. Problems often occurred with the septic tanks and drain fields. Oddly, some areas on the outskirts of Portland are still on septic tank systems.

According to VanWinkle, said Jepsen, the 1953 project was not without its problems either. The city had to dig deep trenches to lay the sewer pipe and they didn't get filled in when it was time for rodeo. Apparently city officials were concerned at that time that cowboys coming out of the bars after an evening of celebrating would fall into the trenches.

The mayor at the time of completion of the 1953 sewer system was J.O. Turner, attorney. Council members, in addition to VanWinkle, were Ed Gonty, who owned the shoe store; Bill Collins, who had a dry cleaning business; W.C. Rosewall, who had the Ford-Mercury dealership; Bob Grabeel, who had a Caterpillar and John Deere dealership; and Dr. L.D. Tibbles.

1994 marks a busy year for the city of Heppner, with the culmination of the city sewer project, the fire hall addition and remodeling, and the street renovation project, in addition to the building of the Sperry Street Bridge.

Jepsen says that keeping up city water service has also been a challenge this year.

The 25 year-old monitoring system in city hall has not been operating correctly, at one point showing much more water in a well than was actually there; lightning hit one well twice and burned the motor out; and a tree fell and knocked out the power to another well.

Both Dave Winters and Marks have said that replacement parts for the aging monitoring system are no longer available and repairs no longer possible. So, the city plans to install a new \$30,000 electronic telemetry system to monitor the city's water. The project will be funded through a reserve account created in 1982 through a water system bond, which has since been paid off.

Neighborhood Center receives donation from Lutherans

The Neighborhood of South Morrow County was recently selected as the recipient of \$200 through Lutheran Brotherhood's "Care and Share" program.

Linda Shaw, fraternal communicator for Hope Lutheran Church and Tim Klipfel, Lutheran Brotherhood branch representative from Walla Walla, WA, coordinated the donation. Janice Skaggs, director of the Neighborhood Center said she welcomed the donation at a time that funds were needed for the purchase of items for the Thanksgiving baskets for needy families in the local area.

Lutheran Brotherhood, an aid association for Lutherans, provides a wide range of financial services, such as life insurance, for members. It also provides educational assistance and matching funds to congregations, support for projects for disaster relief and orphans, and scholarships for higher education. Lutheran Brotherhood's mission is "to work together to provide financial security for members and to serve Lutherans, their congregations, institutions and communities, said Shaw. The "Care and Share" donation was the first one awarded in South Morrow County.

Burkenbine steps down as fire chief

Heppner Volunteer Fire Chief Forrest Burkenbine has announced that he will step down as fire chief as of Dec. 31.

According to city manager Gary Marks, Burkenbine was

asked to take over as "temporary" fire chief 28 years ago.

A new chief is to be named at the regular city council meeting Monday, Dec. 12.

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