

## Chuck Starr answers questions concerning 7-12 configuration

The following article was submitted by Morrow County School District Superintendent Chuck Starr.

As one more effort to improve communication between the Morrow County School District and the citizens of Morrow County, I am going to write this weekly column for questions and answers about school district operations and decisions related to them. To help be sure that I am responding to your questions about our school district, I am asking that you send them in writing to the following address: Chuck Starr, Superintendent, PO Box 368, Lexington, 97839, phone (503) 989-8202.

I guarantee that every question will receive a response, either in this column or person-to-person.

To help get us started, I am responding to two questions

that have been bouncing around the area the past few weeks.

**Why is the district planning to move grades seven and eight to Heppner High School?**

After public hearings and considerable discussion last December, both the Heppner-Lexington Advisory Committee and the Morrow County School Board voted to move to a seven through 12 grade configuration at Heppner High School in 1995-96. The major reason for this decision was to provide more efficient use of our subject area teachers without hurting our curriculum for students. This move will allow us to reduce our teaching staff by approximately five teachers. It will save the district about \$150,000. It will also provide an excellent opportunity for cross grade implementation of the

changes in our educational program. We are now holding meetings with parents to help answer questions about this change. We plan to have our staffing plan ready by the end of February.

**Why is the district planning to contract out transportation and cost all these local people their jobs?**

Well first of all, no decision has been made to contract out any services. We are studying the possibilities to see if such a move can provide the same service at lower cost. Secondly, if the district does decide to contract out our transportation program, we will make every effort to ensure that all our current transportation employees have the opportunity for a job. We are currently scheduling meetings with administrators, bus drivers, and the public to help us make this decision.

HEPPNER



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## City resolution paves way for county-wide park & rec district

Heppner City Council members unanimously approved a resolution for the Morrow County Court to initiate the formation of a county-wide park and recreation district. According to presenter, George Koffler, if approved by voters, a proposed levy of around \$350,000 to \$400,000 would fund co-curricular school activities such as sports, outdoor schools and field trips.

Koffler said that according to advice of Portland-based attorneys who specialize in this field, the formation of this county-wide recreation district for school-related activities is lawful since it would not compete with existing park and recreation district activities.

If formed, five directors would be elected to serve on a board and an intergovernmental agreement would allow the money to be turned over to the schools for administration.

All Morrow County towns are being asked to support this resolution. In order for the issue to be placed on the May ballot, 2,000 registered voter signatures would have to be certified by March 16.

While this plan would finance school activities that may be cut due to diminishing education dollars, the downside is that the formation of this district would cause further compression, or more division of county tax dollars. This in turn could cause a loss of approximately \$4,500 in tax dollars to the city of Heppner. "It could compound the city's budget problems," said city manager Gary Marks, who said his only position was to make the council aware of ramifications. Koffler responded that "the flip side is that without these programs, the youth would have nothing to do after 3 p.m."

Councilman Chuck Holtz said that sports programs have an impact on communities by creating inter-city business commerce. Council agreed that this district formation ultimately lies with the voters.

The city council also issued its support in favor of a bond issue and operating levy for a proposed swimming pool to be built in Hager Park on city owned property as presented by councilman Skip Mathews.

In other business: The mayor and recently elected council members took the oath of office and were sworn in for current terms. New council members, not having previously served on the council are Tim Van Cleave and Skip Mathews. A plaque was also presented to Jerry Hollomon for over 10 years of service on the city planning commission.

A presentation written by John Edmundson related to the need for pedestrian safety improvements on the Water Street hill road that leads to the high school. Edmundson is also promoting a six mile Volks-walking event during St. Patrick's celebration. According to the proposal, shamrock symbols would be painted to designate the course.

Rita Heath was present to protest the charges levied for city crew clean-up of her property at 280 East Hill Street. Heath said she thought the action was vindictive, a \$923 bill was exorbitant and that the city hauled off her personal property that was not garbage. The council and Police Chief Doug Rathbun pointed out that Heath has received certified letters and

that over a year had passed since the clean-up of her property was mandated.

City council repealed a former resolution which would have allowed city employees to put PERS payments in to IRA's in accordance with the wishes of employees. PERS payments by the city for employees was dropped prior to the passage of measure eight.

A resolution was adopted establishing membership terms for the Fire Department Advisory Committee.

Resolutions were also adopted for transfer of appropriations within the 1994-95 budget. A resolution accepted revised loan amortization schedules for the city's deferred \$70,000 and \$150,000 special public works fund sewer improvement loans.

The Willow Creek Country Club reportedly approved final golf course reconstruction work in cooperation with the city's waste water treatment system management agreement. According to city foreman David Winters, some minor details remain to be finished before the waste water treatment facility can be concluded.

## Longtime county teacher retires



Jerry Martin

Jerry Martin, a social studies teacher at Columbia Junior High School in Irrigon has retired after 39 and a half years as a teacher ending his career working for Morrow County School District. He officially retired the end of December, but will teach until the end of the first semester, Jan. 20.

Martin spent six years in the US Air Force before getting his bachelor's degree from Iowa University. For the next 10 years, he coached and taught social studies in Iowa. In 1965, he and his family move to Lone where he taught social studies and coached for the next 11 years. In 1976, Martin transferred to Riverside High School in Boardman, and when Columbia Junior High was built in 1978, he transferred to the new junior high in Irrigon, where he has taught ever since.

Martin received his masters degree from Black Hills State College in Spearfish, South Dakota, in 1970. In 1993, one of Martin's former students recommended him for the "Who's Who In Education" award and Martin was honored by being listed. He and his wife, Ione, live in Hermiston, where she teaches grade school. They plan to stay there after his retirement.

## Third physician to assist at clinic

Dr. Kenneth Wenberg will be joining Drs. Edward and Jeanne Berretta at Pioneer Memorial Clinic to ease the heavy patient caseload, said a press release from the clinic. Dr. Wenberg will be on a "as available" basis until a third permanent primary care provider can be hired.

Dr. Wenberg will see patients on Thursday, Jan. 12 and Friday, Jan. 13. He will also see patients on Thursday Jan. 26 and Friday, Jan. 27. Patients wishing to see Dr. Wenberg should schedule accordingly if possible said a clinic spokesperson.

## Hoop shoot contest planned

The annual Elks Hoop Shoot will be held for Lone and Heppner youth this Friday, Jan. 13 beginning at 12:30 p.m. in the lone school gym and at Heppner High School gym on Sun-

day, Jan. 15 at 4:30 p.m. Those participating must be between the age of 8 and 13 as of April 1. For more information contact Dave Gunderson, Heppner or Dick Allen in Lone.

## Two file for school board positions

Morrow County School District superintendent Chuck Starr informed the board Monday night Jan. 9, that two people have filed for school board positions which will be up for a vote March 28.

Incumbent John Rietmann, lone, has filed for zone three which represents the western portion of the county. Scott Johnson, Irrigon, has filed for zone 5, which is the northeast corner of the county, including the city of Irrigon. No one has filed for zone 4, which is the city of Heppner. Rollie Marshall has filed for the zone 5 Heppner-Lexington advisory board position. The filing deadline is January 26.

In other business: -the board learned of a minor accident between a school bus and a parked car at A.C. Houghton Elementary;

-heard a report on vandalism at Heppner Middle School. HES/HMS Principal Bill Karwacki told the board that 66 windows were broken the evening of Dec. 12 in the industrial arts and furnace building at the school. Two young men were charged with vandalism and turned over to juvenile authorities in connection with the incident, which resulted in around \$1,124 in damages, according to Karwacki.

-learned of a plan which would involve the Morrow County, Condon and Arlington schools each annexing a portion of the Olex school district. In addition to providing schooling for Olex students, the annexation would also provide school funding. Starr said that most of the students in the area to be annexed by Morrow County already attend Morrow

County Schools under a tuition program.

-adopted a resolution authorizing the March 28 bond issue election.

-heard a presentation by Heppner Middle School teacher Vicky Broden and several of her seventh grade Spanish students.

-learned that the Morrow County schools are in compliance with state standards.

-set a special meeting concern-

ing the possibility of contracting transportation at Lone High School at 7:30 p.m. Jan. 23.

-learned of scheduled meetings: Jan. 18, meeting with north end bus drivers on contracting services, Riverside High School, 7 p.m.; Jan. 19, meeting with south end bus drivers on contracting transportation, district office, 7 p.m.; Feb. 13, regular school board meeting, A.C. Houghton Elementary School, 7 p.m.

## Bank of EO installs ATM's



Jeanne Pettyjohn prepares to use the new ATM at the Bank of Eastern Oregon.

The Bank of Eastern Oregon has installed automatic teller machines at both the Heppner and lone branches according to Jeanne Pettyjohn, data processing manager for the bank.

"We're excited to offer this new service to all our customers in Morrow County," added George Koffler, bank president and Chief Executive Officer.

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