

HEPPNER



50¢

Court OK's Recreation District

The Morrow County Court, at a public hearing Monday, Feb. 27, at Riverside High School in Boardman, went a step further toward establishing the Morrow County Unified Recreation District. The hearing was called to determine public interest in forming the district, which was designed to fund co-curricular activities throughout Morrow County. Said Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson, "From the size of this crowd, I think this must be a pretty important issue for a lot of people." Over 125 people from Heppner, Lex-

ington, Ione, Boardman and Ir-rigon attended the hearing and no one spoke against formation of the district. The idea was formed in response to a Morrow County School District decision to cut all co-curricular activities, including sports and clubs, from the school budget next year because of revenue shortfalls resulting from Ballot Measure 5 and the state school funding formula. Greg Grant, Heppner teacher, coach and member of the co-curricular committee said, "We saw a void. We wanted to fill that void. We found a way."

Grant said that the estimated cost to fund the program for one year could be over \$450,000, which would amount to around 50 cents per thousand valuation. The owner of a \$50,000 home would pay \$25 a year; the owner of a \$250,000 business would pay \$125 a year and the owner of a \$1 million farm would pay \$500 a year. However, the cities in the county, with the exception of Lexington, have reached their \$10/thousand cap as designated under Ballot Measure 5, said co-curricular committee member Cyde Estes. Therefore residents of the cities of Heppner, Ione, Boardman and Ir-rigon will not pay more taxes to fund this district. The monies will be compressed from other taxing entities in the district, the county, city budgets, cemetery and fire district, medical fund and park districts, for example. Rural residents have not yet reached this cap, so they will pay additional taxes to fund this district if the serial levy is approved. Estes said that the greatest burden of taxes, over 70 percent, will fall on the commercial, industrial and utility taxpayer. The farming community pays around 16 percent of the taxes and residential, around 12 percent, she said. The cities of Heppner, Lex-

County employees receive raises

Morrow County's non-union employees will be getting a healthy raise, retroactive to January, averaging around 11.3 percent and costing around \$93,000. However, according to Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson, the county had renegotiated health insurance and around \$70,000 saved by those renegotiations will help pay for the salary increases. Carlson said that a consultant's study determined that county managers, supervisors and confidential employees were simply underpaid and their salaries were not in line with comparable jobs throughout the state. He said that the raises are the result of an average between an internal market figure and an external market. He said that the previous situation resulted in the county not being able to attract professionals to Morrow County jobs. Carlson said that some of those who did not receive a raise had been overpaid and

Brosnan family St. Pat's honorees



Jeremiah Brosnan



Four generations of Brosnans live on the Brosnan Ranch. L-R: Mike, his son Brent, his grandmother Marion and his father Eddie Brosnan.

As a tribute to Morrow County's early day Irish settlers, the Brosnan family has been selected as this year's honorees during Heppner's annual St. Patrick's celebration, March 17-19.

About 120 years ago, Jeremiah Brosnan from County Cork, Ireland, staked his claim to land in the picturesque hilly area of upper Little Buttercreek. To date six generations of Brosnans have trod about on this century farm. But it was a long journey from Ireland before Jeremiah Brosnan settled on land that would be handed down to descendants. Upon arriving by boat in New York he lived for some time with a sister and brother-in-law in Pennsylvania.

Next he traveled westward with a team of oxen pulling a wagon. When he arrived in Omaha, Nebraska, in 1863 he went to work for the Union Pacific Railroad that was building rails westward to link up with the Central Pacific Railroad headed east from Sacramento, California.

Jeremiah and one other worker were the only two "gandy dancers" who stayed with this construction until the two railroads were linked at Promontory, Utah in 1869.

From Utah, Jeremiah traveled to western Oregon where he worked for several years at Currieville before coming to eastern Oregon. Then he accumulated large herds of horses that roamed the sandy area of north Morrow County. Many of those horses were sold to the British who took them by boat to South Africa.

In 1875 Jeremiah put down roots on Little Buttercreek where he ran horses and cattle. During the 1920s, this ranch also became home to large bands of sheep. But when the Great Depression caused the sheep market to falter the ranch turned to raising cattle, a practice that is continued today.

During the days of that sheep operation, sheep bands were sent by train to Montana for summer pasture. In late summer the weaned lambs were shipped from there to New

York. It's said that at one time it would have cost more to ship the ewes home than they were worth, so Jeremiah turned the ewes loose on the Flathead Indian Reservation and he returned home empty handed.

But the luck of the Irish smiled on Jeremiah when a wee Irish lass named Mary Gaffney from County Leitrim, Ireland, left her home and sailed across the ocean and around the tip of South America. Accompanied by her cousin, Mike Kenny, they continued by boat up the Columbia River where they were met at the Umatilla Landing by Mary's sister and husband, the Felix Johnsons.

It was at the Johnson home on Buttercreek that Jeremiah and Mary met. They were married in 1880. To this union three children were born.

Katie Brosnan married Hugh Currin and they had four boys, George, Hughie, Ralph and Bob.

Their daughter, Mary married Sam Nelson and they had three children.

John Brosnan married Zetta Hager in 1908. They had three children, including Jerry, who in time became the ranch operator. Joe Brosnan lives in Little Rock, Arkansas and they have five children.

A daughter, Margaret, had no children and passed away in 1983.

The ranching Brosnan clan is now headed by matriarch Marian Brosnan, 80, who continues to live where she shared over 50 years of her life with her husband, Jerry, who died in 1991.

Marion Good Brosnan grew up around Monmouth and became a teacher. Teaching jobs then were scarce, she says, and when she was told about a job at the Lena school, she decided to take a chance. Without a clue as to where Lena was located, she boarded trains and ended up in Arlington. There she discovered there weren't any trains running that day to Heppner and a couple offered to drive her to

Heppner where she gave them her last dollar. Ranch hands came and took Marian to the Brosnan ranch where she would have room and board.

Marion claims that if she'd had any money she would have turned around and gone home after seeing this remote and desolate land that was to become her future world. That one-room school house at Lena had five pupils, including three Seehafer girls and two French boys, one of whom is Morrow County Commissioner Ray French. But during that year of teaching, love entered the picture. Marian and Jerry Brosnan were married in 1936.

Marian and Jerry lived with his folks for a number of years until a new house was built. To this union four children were born.

John and Charlotte Brosnan live at Hubbard and have four children.

Eddie, who now operates the ranch, married Lorraine Hadden and they have five children, Mike, Jim, Jerry, Mark and Dyanne McCarty.

Joann Brosnan Weister, lives in Portland has three children.

Dan his wife, Doris, have two children and they recently returned to live in Morrow County.

Jerry and Marian's children all attended school in Heppner as the Lena country school was closed. Although Marian had a full-time job as a ranch wife while rearing children, she continued to substitute teach in Heppner schools for many years.

Marian recalls that in those earlier days the Brosnan home was a gathering place, especially when a traveling priest would come to say Mass. At that time Heppner did not have a Catholic Church. Marian also remembers when 15 to 20 sheep shearers were fed in this home. Lena was also the site of a grange hall and at one time there was a post office and store. During the 1930s there was also a Civilian Conservation Corps located at that site.

Because times were hard and families were somewhat self sufficient, Marian says "we didn't go to town often back then." Chickens, milk cows, garden produce and 'lots of mutton' fueled hungry appetites. It was also customary in those days for the Currins and Brosnans to take turns hosting holiday dinners. Many a bountiful feast came from the old wood ranges while the men visited and the children played cards.

Jeremiah and Mary and their son John and his wife Zetta, and buried in the Vinson cemetery on Big Buttercreek. But now there are numerous grand children as well as some great grandchildren to carry on with a rich Irish heritage.

Find The Hidden Shamrock Win Silver Medallions

The popular St. Patrick's Day treasure hunt is back again. Each week until March 15 a clue for the treasure hunt will be printed in the Gazette-Times. If followed these clues will guide treasure hunters to a green 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 over \$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 15.
3. The hidden shamrock is not on private property and no digging or moving of objects, dirt or other materials 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 Two

A palacial Inn
in old Heppner
is where you'll stand
if your clue hunt's been good
There inside from Les's guy
you'll hear my missive
and know what to try
Mr. A's age reveals his clue
remember this and know what to do
A yellow sheet where you reside
look on the age page
and then decide

A monumental call you have to make
Get your directions down pat, for goodness sake.

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.

added that the county commissioners' salaries were determined to be in line. The commissioners did not receive raises this year or last. He attributed the reported fuss around town

about the situation to disgruntled employees who did not receive raises. Other employees raises ranged from one percent to a 47.9 percent for one individual.

G-T newspaper prices increased

Single copy price for the Heppner Gazette-Times will increase to 50 cents beginning this week.

Subscription prices have also gone up from \$16 a year to \$18 per year in Morrow County. Senior citizen rates went from

\$10 to \$12, and outside th county rates have been increased from \$23 to \$25 per year.

These rates have not been increased since 1992 and the raise is necessary because of increased production and distribution costs, says publisher David Sykes.

**Good Luck Cardinals
&
Lady Cardinals
Morrow County Grain Growers**
Lexington 989-8221 1-800-452-7396