

HEPPNER



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VOL. 114 NO. 15 10 Pages Wednesday, April 12, 1995, Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

## City breaks ground for new restroom



L-R: Steve Dickenson, Marcia DeBo, Marsha Sweek, Claudia Hughes, Dave Winters, Bob Jepsen, Gary Marks, Mike McGuire and John Edmundson at city ground breaking.

Ground was broken Tuesday for the new restroom facility to be built at the city park in Heppner.

Walton Construction from Umatilla was low bidder on the \$31,000 project which is expected to be completed by June.

City manager Gary Marks

said construction on the block building with limited heating system may begin next week. The small heating system will enable the restroom to be open all year.

The new building will be built where the playground equipment is currently located. The old playground equipment

will be removed and new equipment installed, Marks said.

The city manager is currently approaching local civic groups in search of donations to purchase the \$19,000 playground equipment. The city has \$12,000, and the Soroptimists have already pledged \$1,200.

## School district funding for fall activities only a loan

A story in the April 5 Gazette-Times, entitled "School district will fund fall sports", was in error, according to the Morrow County School District. Heppner High School Principal Steve Dickenson, acting on behalf of MCSD superintendent Chuck Starr who was ill, told the board at its regular meeting Monday night that the \$140,000 recommended to fund fall sports and other extra-curricular activities district-wide was a loan to the proposed Morrow County Unified Recreation District, not outright funding.

Dickenson told the board that the \$140,000 must be repaid by the Morrow County Unified Recreation District (MURD) if the MURD's budget passes in September. In an editorial Starr said that the \$140,000 was "available as a start-up loan only" which must be "restored through donations and/or a recreation levy". He also said that the \$140,000 should be car-

ried over to 1996-97 to reduce the expected staff reduction. It will help save 3.5 teaching positions in 1996-97, said Starr.

Facing funding reductions because of Ballot Measure 5 and the state school funding formula, the district earlier said that it would not have the funds to support school sports and other co-curricular activities such as FFA, drama and after-school music and band programs.

A group then stepped in to provide funding for those co-curricular activities through creation of a separate district, called the Morrow County Unified Recreation District. However, because of state regulations, formation of the district could not be placed on the ballot until September, after the beginning of fall sports and other activities.

Starr then recommended that \$140,000 to provide funding for fall activities be transferred to a special fund, to be repaid if the

special district passes. Starr said that the March 28 passage of the school bond issue and a projected increase in state school funds enabled the district to recommend the \$140,000 loan.

However, he said that because of budget restraints, no more monies could be provided. In the budget message, Starr said that in two years the district has reduced the general fund budget by \$745,948, while inflation has increased by six percent. The 1994-95 budget was \$602,744 lower than the 1993-94 budget and that year's budget was \$143,204 lower than the 1992-93 budget. Next year's proposed budget will be increased \$89,712 over the current year.

The MURD proposes a budget of over \$450,000 to fund co-curricular activities county-wide for the 1995-96 year.

## Forest Service donates pagers to EMT Assoc.

The Heppner Ranger District was nominated for the Ranger District of the Year award by the supervisor of the Umatilla National Forest. Heppner employees put together a packaged report of all the good things that go on at the Ranger District, quietly, routinely, without a lot of fanfare, said a spokesperson. The report addressed several criteria, such as how well the district has achieved sustainable use of natural resources, and the effectiveness of partnerships developed by the district.

The Heppner Ranger District competed with many other Ranger Districts throughout Oregon and Washington, and easily made the finals. A review team from the Portland Regional office visited the District last November to see first hand all the good things that happen at Heppner, said the spokesperson. The District received the runner up award worth \$5,000. District Ranger Delanne Ferguson was invited to Portland in December to attend the award ceremony and receive a plaque on behalf of the district.

Each year the Regional Forester of the Pacific Northwest Region bestows the award upon the Ranger District that best demonstrates the Forest Service's value and commitment of their employees to



EMT Carl Lauritsen (l) and Delia Robinson (r) accepts pagers from Heppner Ranger District Delanne Ferguson (c).

earn the trust of the people they serve. This award allows the regional forester to recognize outstanding achievement in public land management as it relates to the important role the Forest Service plays in the community, continued the spokesperson.

The \$5,000 award can be used for anything the federal government's spending regulations will allow, which can be very limited. The Forest Service employees held a meeting to vote on the best way to spend the money, knowing ahead of time they wanted a large portion of the winnings to benefit the community, said district Ranger Delanne Ferguson. They overwhelmingly elected to contribute \$4,000 to the South Morrow County Emergency Medical Technician

Association for emergency medical equipment, and use the remaining \$1,000 toward their safety and wellness program.

Last month the Forest Service finalized the process, and the \$4,000 was contributed via an existing economic recovery grant with Morrow County. The Association purchased additional pagers and chargers, which will equip each EMT with their own pager. This will facilitate response time to emergencies and provide more efficient emergency medical service for the citizens of South Morrow County.

"I believe this District has done good things for a very long time, and is a truly special place. I'm glad we were able to help the community in this way," commented Ferguson.

## City council approves park restroom bid

Heppner city park visitors will soon have the convenience of heated restrooms. The city council approved a bid of about \$31,000 from Walton Construction Company, Umatilla, to build this facility.

According to city manager, Gary Marks, this company would like to start construction immediately and the project is to be finished by June. The building will be built with split-face cinder block, a cement floor and a steel roof for low maintenance. This project is to be funded with the \$20,000 given for this community enhancement facility by former owners of Kinzua Mill. The balance of the cost will come from the general fund.

The city also approved the purchase of playground equipment for the city from Miracle Recreation Construction Company, at its meeting Monday night, April 10. Total cost of a proposed two-phase project is estimated at about \$19,700. The first phase of this project will be paid for by \$12,000 received by the city from Union Pacific Railroad. Marks said that anticipated donations, including

a \$1,200 Heppner Soroptimist pledge, may pay for the balance of the project so that it can all be installed at the same time.

City street improvements this summer include the replacement of the Elder Street Bridge. Bids are to be let for the reconstruction of Aiken and Elder Streets along with possible street improvements on a prioritized list including Riverside, Water, Gale, Chase, Hager and Rock Street. It will depend on how many repairs can be accomplished with an anticipated \$50,000 in revenues allocated to the project.

In preparation for the city's 1995-96 budget, the council approved a 2.7 percent cost of living pay increase for city employees. Marks said that the city will continue with the present level of staffing plus it will hire two instead of three summer workers for 12 weeks. One of those positions may become a year-around part-time position that would cover some weekend duties. This would reduce city employees' overtime pay Marks said. Anticipated payroll increased cost for the next fiscal year is projected at about \$1,817.

The council voted to delete the expense of purchasing a \$7,000 methane burner for the city waste water holding tank. According to reports, that methane gas burner, which is not required by the DEQ, may not give satisfactory service due to the low levels of methane gas produced in the tank.

The council approved the purchase of a new water telemetry system, at \$33,902 from Electronics Technology, Portland. The present outmoded telemetry system that is supposed to give readings about city water storage levels and pump functions, has not been serviceable for some time. The new computerized unit will monitor all pumps and reservoir levels in case of a pump failure. For instance, city employees will be notified automatically even on weekends and holidays. Currently daily manual inspection is needed to prevent a water shortage.

A used sludge truck for the city has been purchased for \$69,340 including some modifications. The truck will be used to pump liquid sludge on agricultural fields.

## Summer youth program to begin July 10

"Going With The Flow In County Morrow" is the theme of this year's city of Heppner Summer Youth Program. Children age 7 through 13 will have a unique summer time experience July 10 through August 3, said a spokesperson. The program will be held Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will offer opportunities to learn Native

American culture, Irish heritage, life on a farm in south Morrow County as well as fishing on the Columbia River near Boardman. Children will be able to enrich their skills in swimming, the arts, and athletics such as kick ball, gymnastics, and bowling and a host of other interesting activities.

This program, once known as

Neighborhood Center Summer Youth Project, becomes an official program of the city of Heppner on July 1. It will be funded through grants and public and private donations.

In order for this program to continue in its fourth year, it will need willing and energetic adult volunteers to step forth and give time to serve on the committee and to work with kids this summer. The committee will meet Thursday, April 20 at 4 p.m. in Lea Calvert's classroom at Heppner Elementary School.

Those interested in helping enrich the lives of the youth of south Morrow County, Ione, Lexington, Hardman and Heppner should contact Calvert, 676-5261, the Rev. Stan Hoobing, 676-9940, or Gary Marks at city hall, 676-9618.

## Kinzua Resources to upgrade equipment

Kinzua Resources general manager Rick Re presented a program at the Heppner Chamber of Commerce meeting Tuesday, April 11, concerning the upgrading of equipment at the mill during the month of July.

Re said that the small log side of the mill will change scanning and positioning and

breakdown solution (how the log is cut up) and two chipping heads and two bandsaws will be replaced with smaller, better band mills, making for more efficient operations. The mill will be closed in July to make these changes, he said.

Re also said that the planer is temporarily running a second shift this week.

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