



50¢

VOL. 114 NO. 30 6 Pages Wednesday, July 12, 1995, Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

## Meeting set on park district withdrawal

A public meeting to discuss the Willow Creek Park District, and petitions recently filed by 20 landowners in Ione to withdraw from that district, will be held Monday night, July 17 in Ione at the Ione High School cafeteria. The meeting will begin at 8 p.m.

The meeting is being held to discuss the recently approved \$975,000 bond issue for construction of a pool in Heppner, and the subsequent requests by Ione area land owners to withdraw from the district.

Landowners are apparently contending they will receive no benefit from the district and should therefore be excluded.

The park district also built and operates an RV park at Willow Creek Lake near Heppner.

The county court held a hearing June 22 on the original three landowners' withdrawal petitions, and although has authority to grant the withdrawals, has taken no action. Reportedly 17 more landowners have

since filed withdrawal petitions with the court.

The court instructed the park district board of directors and the landowners to try and work out their differences. The meeting next Monday will be an attempt to find common ground. Linda LaRue will be the facilitator of the meeting.

The Morrow County Court will hold another public meeting on the issue Tuesday, July 18, at 1 p.m. at the courthouse.

## Medical district plans to hire Irrigon PA

By April Sykes

The Morrow County Health District Board, at its regular meeting July 10 in Irrigon authorized Chief Executive Officer Kevin Erich to pursue hiring a physician's assistant (PA) for the Irrigon community.

According to Erich, Dave Jones, a PA who has practiced in Condon for the past 15 years, has indicated that he is interested in practicing in Irrigon. The board had earlier said that they wanted to establish a clinic in Irrigon. Erich said Jones was also an EMT instructor.

The board also approved a 2.5 percent salary increase for non-union employees for the fiscal year 1995-96. Non-union employees include registered nurses and management.

In other business, the board: approved an amendment to bring the contracts of dentist Dr. Blair Smith and newly hired dentist, Dr. Paul Marshall, in line. Both dentists will work at both the Heppner and Boardman clinics.

Clients at the clinics have increased to the extent that the board found it necessary to hire a second dentist. Non-emergency patients at the Heppner Dental Clinic now face a two month delay for appointments to see Dr. Marshall and a three-month delay in appointments to see Dr. Smith.

agreed to wait to consider the appointment of a new Boardman-area board member until board chair Cara Osmin was in attendance. Former board member Roger Cash resigned because of a change in work hours. Gene Allen and Jim Hankins have expressed interest in the position and several others, Dan Daltoso, Mick Tolar and Sam Edwards, were suggested as possible members.

learned that a nursing home

survey indicated only one minor deficiency that was in the process of being corrected.

learned that around \$6,670 had to be reimbursed to Medicare for 1993. However, Erich said that around \$30,000 had been accrued for those reimbursements. Erich also said that Medicare reductions will impact Pioneer Memorial Hospital around \$72,000 over the next seven years. Erich said that the reductions were "not as drastic as we thought, but we will have to make some hard decisions."

discussed the district's cash carryover, which is around \$741,000 currently. The carryover is estimated to bottom out at around \$350,000 in October before taxes and to be around \$650,000 at the end of the fiscal year.

discussed a reduction in in-

patient revenues, partially attributed to a mild winter. Erich earlier said that the hiring of an additional physician at Heppner, Dr. Ernie Atkins, would probably help increase inpatient revenues. Drs. Ed and Jeanne Berretta had restricted new patients to help ease their heavy patient load.

approved, with certain conditions, a quit claim deed and an intergovernmental agreement between the Morrow County Health District and Morrow County in the change from a county medical board to a county health district;

discussed a standardized system to re-evaluate and adjust rates;

approved a contract with a company to provide cost accounting;

discussed a plan for an ambulance membership program.

## Employee seminar planned

The "Customer Satisfaction Equals Customer Retention" seminar will be a morning full of activities for employees in south Morrow County, says a spokesperson for the event.

Employers recently attended a similar seminar and helped create the upcoming session for their employees. All businesses are welcome to send their employees to the seminar Monday, July 31, from 8-10:30 a.m. at the Heppner Elks. The seminar will include group activities, video, discussion and

sharing of ideas.

The cost will be \$10 per employee up to three, or \$7 per employee if employers attended the previous seminar in June. More than three employees will be free. Coffee, juice and muffins will be provided.

Registration forms will be going out soon. The seminar is sponsored by the Morrow County Tourism Committee. For more information, call the Heppner Chamber of Commerce, 676-5536.

## Livestock growers social set

The Morrow County Livestock Grower's will hold their summer potluck and social, Saturday, July 22 at the Morrow County Fairgrounds in Heppner. The social hour will start at 5 p.m. and dinner will follow at 6 p.m. Meat will be provided. Those attending are asked to bring a salad or

dessert. Music and a dance will conclude the evening.

Anyone interested in the livestock industry and buyers at the Morrow County 4-H and FFA Livestock Auction is invited to attend.

A saddle valued at \$1,400 will be raffled off. Tickets will be sold only at the social.

## Morrow County School district loses suit

By April Sykes

The Morrow County School Board has lost an unfair labor practices suit to the Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA).

According to a news release from Gary Baysinger, OSEA field representative, administrative law Judge Dave Stiteler ruled in favor of the OSEA, determining that the district acted in bad faith concerning contracting Morrow County School District bus service.

Baysinger said that the district took steps toward contracting out before bargaining was completed.

Morrow County School District Superintendent Chuck Starr said that the district will appeal the decision. But, he added, the district's decision to appeal "doesn't affect our commitment to negotiate with the employees."

Starr said that after the appeal, if the judgement against the district stands, upon completion of negotiations with the

OSEA, the district will rewrite the bid specifications and go out for bids again.

Starr said that if the decision is reversed, the district will still complete negotiations and then enter into a contract with the low bidder or, if negotiations with OSEA are resolved, the district would not contract out transportation services.

The school board earlier decided to contract busing services as a money-saving measure.

## MCGG purchases Lexington ball field

By April Sykes

The Morrow County School District (MCSD) Board, at its regular meeting Monday, July 10, revealed that Morrow County Grain Growers (MCGG) has purchased the old baseball field across the street from the school district offices in Lexington.

Neither the city of Lexington, nor the district wanted to continue upkeep on the field, which was owned by the district and seldom used by the community.

MCGG manager Larry Mills said that MCGG had no specific plans for the field, but purchased the property for "possible future expansion." Purchase price was \$25,000.

MCGG said they would repave the old tennis court behind the school district offices for either a new tennis court or a basketball court for the community of Lexington. MCGG also agreed to keep the ball field watered until they decided what to do with the property.

In other business, the board: received engineering reports concerning repairs for the lone swimming pool. According to MCSD Superintendent Chuck Starr, Timothy Rundquist, Spokane architect, said that repairs, which would take care of the pool's immediate problems and keep the pool operating for at least 20 years, would cost around \$324,000.

Starr told the Gazette-Times that he hopes that the current problems concerning Willow Creek Park District and the funding of the proposed swimming pool in Heppner can be worked out. He also indicated that he hoped the park district and the school district can come to an agreement so that repairs to the lone pool can be funded through the park district. MCSD will not be able to pay for repairs because of budget shortfalls resulting from Ballot Measure 5 and the state school

funding formula. The school district has already cut teachers, programs and co-curricular activities and consolidated Heppner High School and Junior High as money-saving measures.

Following the breakdown of the Lone Pool, three landowners have petitioned to withdraw from Willow Creek Park District, according to Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson. Carlson said that several others have turned in petitions to the Morrow County Clerk's office. Voters in the district, which includes Heppner, Lexington and Ione, approved a bond levy in March, 759 to 726, to construct a pool in Heppner and a levy for operation of that pool, 788 to 737. Ione voters overwhelmingly rejected both issues, 229 to 77 for construction, and 229 to 84 for the operating levy.

"I think it's a mistake to secede from the (park) district," said Starr. "It's a negative not only for the Heppner pool, but for the lone pool." He said that working together would be a benefit to both the Heppner and Ione communities. He added that it would be difficult for a community the size of Ione to be able to fund the repairs. "It doesn't mean they couldn't do it," Starr said, but added that "it's a different deal" than it was when the Ione community built the pool in the mid-1950s.

Morrow County School District pays for operation of the pool, which runs around \$10,000 a year.

Russ Morgan, Heppner and Scott Johnson, Irrigon, were sworn in as elected members of the school board;

Board member Scott Bauska, Boardman, was elected chairman and John Rietmann, Ione, vice-chairman;

resignations were accepted from: Craig Lankford, Sam Boardman Elementary School teacher; Kevin Swann, River-

side High School assistant custodian; Bob Morris, north end school bus driver;

employment was approved for: Ramona Hernandez, special education assistant, replacing Kay Ceton, and Paul Gisi, head custodian, replacing Ron Dean, both at RHS.

accepted a grant from Meyer Memorial Trust to Riverside High School to "bring global telecommunications into an isolated community and integrate multimedia technology into a freshman course combining technology, global studies and language arts";

learned that bids will be opened Thursday for outdoor basketball courts to be built at Heppner High School. Starr said that the four courts will be available during school hours for seventh and eighth graders, who will be attending classes at the high school beginning this fall. Previously there was no outside activity area for students. After class time, the courts will be available to other students. The gravel area below the shop building will be paved and fenced so that balls will not roll into the street. The courts will also have a wheel chair lift for handicapped access. Starr said that the paved access ramp to the courts will also be available for additional parking. He said that the goal is to have the court project done by the time school begins, but that may not be possible.

named Ann Spicer, Nancy Hungerford and John Witty, legal counsel; Van Marter and Kahl, insurance agent of record; the Bank of Eastern Oregon, First Interstate Bank, Inland Empire Bank and the Bank of America, depositories for district funds; and the Gazette-Times and The East Oregonian, newspapers of record.

The next board meeting will be held at A.C. Houghton Elementary School in Irrigon on August 14 at 7:30 p.m.

## Hail storm devastates area wheat ranchers

By April Sykes

Area ranchers were hit hard by the storm that carved a swath through Morrow County Sunday. Golf ball-sized hail stones were reported from Ione and north Lexington, as well as Condon and Hermiston. Flooding was also reported in Ione.

Jim Swanson of Wheatland Insurance of Ione said that he had processed around 90 claims for crop damage and 50 to 60 auto damage claims. Swanson said that around 60,000 acres of crops he insured were damaged and estimated that the claims could approach the neighborhood of \$2 million. "Some places were completely wiped out," he said.

Swanson also said he had 17 adjusters in his office to assess the damage Tuesday morning.

He said that damages occurring about five years ago resulted in around a half million in damages.

Bob Ployhar of Ployhar Insurance of Heppner said that he had around 40 claims as of Tuesday, adding that he was so busy he had no idea of the monetary value of the claims.

Morrow County Grain Growers manager Larry Mills said that farmers experienced some "very extensive losses" in the North Lex area. Mills said that most of the losses occurred in a four to five mile wide strip running northeast, with the worst damage in a one to one and a half mile strip.

Mills said that the losses on the edge of the swath ranged from 10 to 30 or 40 percent of the wheat crop, but in the

center of the strip there was extensive or total damage.

"Some losses in the area south of Ione don't appear to be too extensive," said Mills, who added that there was also extensive damage in the area south of Condon.

Mills said that some of the worst damage occurred as the storm crossed the Bombing Range Road, severely or totally destroying the crops on the ranches of Larry Lindsay, Dave Matheny, Virginia Grieb, Rivercrest Farms, Bob and John Kilkenny and Irvin Rauch.

Mills said that while he believes that most of the farmers were insured, some weren't because hail "rarely hits in that area."

## Protect Your Stored Grain

RELDAN 4 E

RELDAN 3% DUST

TEMPO

Morrow County Grain Growers

Lexington 989-8221 1-800-452-7396