

HEPPNER



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Yes vote will fund school activities

By April Hilton-Sykes

Ballots will be mailed this Thursday, Aug. 31, to ask voters' approval on a Morrow County Unified Recreation District three-year serial levy at \$450,000 per year.

Ballots must be returned to the Morrow County Courthouse by Tuesday, Sept. 19, at 8 p.m.

If passed, the levy will fund all school sports and co-curricular activities, such as drama and other school clubs. If the levy fails, all school co-curricular activities county-wide will end after the fall quarter.

The recreation district's serial levy tax rate is estimated at 53 cents per thousand dollars of valuation. A homeowner with a \$50 thousand home will pay \$26.50 a year; a business owner with a \$200,000 business will pay \$106 a year; a farmer with a \$1 million farm will pay \$530 a year.

According to Morrow County Assessor Greg Sweek, utilities pay approximately 57.86 percent of the tax burden in Morrow County, farm owners approximately 16.33 percent; homeowners around 12.38 percent; industry around 10.64 percent; businesses around 2.4 percent; and forest owners around .39 percent.

The Morrow County Recreation District was created by concerned parents and other individuals following the Morrow County School District's decision to eliminate school sports and other co-curricular activities from the school district budget because of budget shortfalls. The school district now receives less money from the state than in previous years because of Ballot Measure 5 and a revised state school funding formula. Ballot Measure 5 reduces school districts' taxing limit to \$5 per thousand assessed valuation for the 1995-96 school year. All other government taxing authority is limited to \$10 per thousand combined. While the tax rate is the same for rural residents as it is for city dwellers, city residents in Morrow County have reached their \$10 per thousand cap and will not see an increase in taxes.

In addition to cutting sports and co-curricular activities from the school district budget, the school district also took other money saving measures—cutting teachers, eliminating some educational programs, moving to a four-day student week, trimming the food ser-

vice budget and consolidating Heppner junior and senior high schools.

The school district says if the recreation district levy passes, the school district and the recreation district will form an intergovernmental agreement.

The school district will run the co-curricular programs, providing staff, equipment and transportation, and then bill the recreation district for expenses as specified in the agreement. Each student participating in sports or other activities will still pay \$50 per activity up to \$150 per student or \$200 per family a year to participate. The pay-to-participate monies and gate receipts will offset the recreation district budget.

The recreation district will also provide community activities and is seeking input to identify the activities desired by the communities.

Supporters of the recreation district say that a vote for the serial levy is a way to return local control that was taken away with the passage of measure 5. They also stress the importance of co-curricular activities for the physical, mental and social well-being of our youth. "Some kids sole purpose in staying in school is for sports, drama or musical performance," said Cyde Estes, Morrow County Unified Recreation District representative from the Heppner area.

Morrow County School Superintendent Chuck Starr

New area code to begin Nov. 5

Oregon telephone customers outside of the Portland area will have a new area code, 541, beginning November 5.

To ease the transition, callers may use either the current 503 code or the new one through June 30, 1996. After that date, the new 541 area code must be used or the call will not go through.

Like many area codes around the country created recently to deal with an extraordinary demand for service, Oregon's new area code features a different format, a middle digit other than "0" or "1".

Certain business customers may need to reprogram or upgrade their PBX, electronic telephone sets, auto-dialers or other specialized systems and should consult their equipment vendor or agent about specific requirements and capabilities.

Now is a good time to suggest to those who call you from

echoed that sentiment, saying, "There is no question that our co-curricular program contributes educationally. It (the co-curricular program) is a laboratory for many things we teach." Starr went on to say that co-curricular programs are a microcosm of society, teaching competition, the value of preparation, and teamwork. Starr added that the activities teach "not only how to prepare to win, but how to accept losing."

Supporters also stress the importance of school activities to the communities. School football or basketball games or school plays, for example, are a vital part of small communities with few other opportunities for entertainment.

Rick Minster, Morrow County Unified Recreation District representative from the Lone-Lexington area, said that while in previous years it may have been possible for communities to support their schools' co-curricular programs on their own, the cost for funding is prohibitive. "Historically people that contribute, can't keep contributing year after year," said Minster.

According to Estes, the sports programs must be continued through the schools in order to be recognized by the Oregon School Athletics Association.

She said that without membership in the OSAA there would be no district or state sports playoff tournaments.

Man cited for church damage

Richard Ellis Pettyjohn, 37, Heppner, was cited for failure to perform duties of a driver and property damage in connection with an incident at the Church of the Latter-Day Saints in Lexington.

According to a Morrow County Sheriff's report, a vehicle had run into the Mormon church, tearing up the yard and fencing.

Lone family all in it together



The Minster family (L-R): Rick, Lynde, Crystal and Pam

By April Hilton-Sykes

Most families are anxious for school to start. The Minster family of Lone is no exception. But in their instance it's not just the kids who are going back to school. Mom and dad are off to college too.

Rick and Pam Minster and their daughters, Crystal and Lynde, will all be enrolling in college this fall. The elder Minsters will be renting out their home near Lone and will live in an apartment at LaGrande with their younger daughter.

Crystal, 20, a 1993 graduate of Lone High School, is enrolling at the Inter-Collegiate Nursing Education Center at Spokane, WA, which is affiliated with Washington State University. She attended Gonzaga for a year and a half and then transferred to Blue Mountain Community College to get her nursing pre-requisite classes. Sometimes taking 18-20 credit hours per term, Crystal qualified for the president's list. She also obtained her certified nurse's aide training at BMCC. Crystal will go on for her bachelor of science degree in nursing and then will put in another two years to become a nurse practitioner.

Lynde, 17, is skipping her senior year at Lone High School to enter college at Eastern Oregon State College at LaGrande. In addition to a high grade-point average and SAT scores, Lynde was required to take her GED test, submit an essay, pass an admissions board and provide letters of recommendation to be admitted to college a year early. Besides all of her hard work, Lynde credits the "excellent high school teachers" at IHS, especially science and math teacher Dale Holland. Lynde will be majoring in biochemistry with plans for a career in genetic research.

The college path for Pam, 45, and Rick, 46, was not quite as straight. In fact it was downright circuitous.

Pam and Rick both grew up in Eugene and attended college for a year before getting married. After they married, they attended college for another year.

Pam then attended business college and worked in different offices. Rick got a job at Lane Plywood.

In 1973 they moved to Keck Canyon and Rick went to work for Kinzua Corp. working on the green chain. He then went to work for a wheat farmer and decided he wanted to become a farmer. He began working for Allen Anderson, a wheat farmer near Olex, and worked there for a year or two. It was during this time that their first daughter, Crystal, was born.

The family then moved to Moses Lake, WA, where Rick eventually became an insurance agent for Farmer's Insurance. In the meantime, he worked at a series of jobs—for a circle irrigation company putting up circles, for a construction outfit building potato sheds, and for a private contractor helping build houses. Their second daughter, Lynde was born in 1977 in Wenatchee, WA.

In 1978, the family was back in the Lone area visiting friends when they spoke to long time area resident Walter Jepsen, now deceased. When Jepsen told them he was ready to sell his place, Pam said, "We'll take it," and the family returned to Morrow County. After their return, Rick worked for Eric Anderson, Dobyn's Pest Control and Allen Anderson before going back to Kinzua in 1988.

"Kinzua was responsible for me returning back to school," said Rick. "The management had an education policy where they would pay books and tuition. Kinzua was a good organization to work for. They were very supportive. I wouldn't have done it without their support." Rick was working swing shift at the time, so he drove back and forth to BMCC at Pendleton five days a week for four terms to finish his college algebra classes. He received his associate of arts degree in the summer of 1991. Pam also took a college algebra class that summer term.

Rick's work schedule changed and he quit college for a while. By then, Pam applied for and received a scholarship from the Rural American Scholarship Fund. Because of the scholarship, which covered part-time tuition, she was able to take classes from Eastern at no cost. The first year she took chemistry at Eastern, but the rest of her classes were at home. Last year she started part-time, but ended up a full time student through an external degree program. "Pam got up at 4 a.m. and maintained a 3.87 grade point average," says Rick proudly, adding that his wife is a very organized person. During this time Pam also worked at Lone schools as an educational assistant. She has now reached a point where she has to go to school on campus to finish obtaining her degree in elementary education with a minor in business. She is taking a year's leave from her job.

Rick went to school last year through the external degree program on a scholarship through the Job Training Partnership Act. He left Kinzua during the sale of the mill and obtained his scholarship because of his displaced worker status. When he finishes his

schooling, Rick will have a bachelor of science degree in liberal studies in business and psychology.

"We're going to go in debt," said Rick. "It's extremely scary for someone who lived in a lunch pail all of his life. But the time was right." "We would have postponed it a year if Lynde wanted to stay," added Pam. Both Rick and Pam agree that completing their education will enable them to have more rewarding and interesting careers. "We'd like to come back here," said Pam. "But it depends on where the jobs are."

The family also agrees that their spirituality is a big part of what keeps them going. "If it wasn't for our spirituality, we wouldn't be able to make this move," added Lynde. "There's nothing else to fall back on. In 1991 when Rick went back to BMCC the Bisbee Fund at All Saints Episcopal Church, of which the Minsters are members, offset the cost of transportation."

The Minsters' biggest regret is that Crystal isn't going to go to Eastern with the rest of the family. "I wish Crystal was going with us," said Pam. "But it's going to be fun having Lynde."

Crystal says that it's fun having parents who are also in college. "I'd call and complain about a test," laughs Crystal. "And they'd say, 'I had one of those.' There's no pressure about grades. They're like my friends."

"Our kids have been very supportive," adds Pam. "It's fun being in it together. It's going to be an exciting year."

News deadline September 1

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed Monday, September 4, for Labor Day.

The deadline for news items for next week's paper will be 5 p.m. Friday, September 1.

Electric company schedules outage

All Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative customers receiving electric service from the Bonneville Power Administration Substation will be without electric power from 11 p.m. Thursday, August 31 to 6 a.m. Friday, September 1, for Bonneville Power Administration maintenance.

The following general areas will be affected: Heppner, Lone, Lexington, Ruggs, Olex, Cecil, Morgan, Hinton Creek, Willow Creek, Rhea Creek, Rock Creek, Shutler Flat, Lower Willow Creek, Mikkalo, Ciem and Ajax.

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