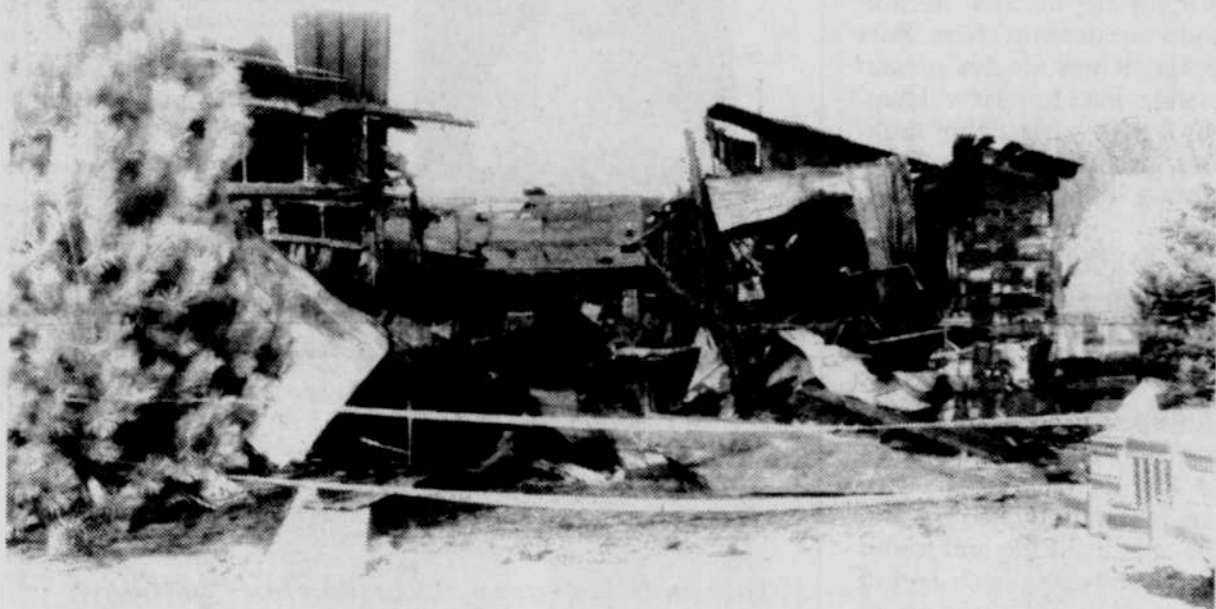


HEPPNER



VOL. 115 NO. 8 10 Pages Wednesday, February 21, 1996. Morrow County Heppner, Oregon

## Heppner home destroyed by fire



Fire completely destroyed this Heppner home

**By April Hilton-Sykes**  
A home in Heppner was completely destroyed by fire and an adjacent home damaged shortly after midnight Monday, Feb. 19.

The house across from Miller's Mini Mart, at 135 Center Street, rented by Bob Lancaster and owned by Don Erickson of Scappoose, was totalled in the fire. The house behind the R&W Drive In "sustained a lot of damage," said Heppner Fire Chief Rusty Estes.

Estes said that the Heppner Volunteer Fire Department arrived at the scene within two minutes of the call and had water on the fire within three minutes, but the house was fully involved by the time the fire fighters came on the scene. Fourteen fire fighters responded with four major trucks and "every piece of equipment," said Estes.

Estes said that the problems were compounded by burning power lines that dropped from the homes and fell to the ground. He said that Columbia Basin Electric responded immediately and turned off the power.

Estes said that the home behind the R&W sustained fire, smoke and water damage. The R&W and the home behind it were recently purchased by Alex and Patty Rystedt of the Bend area. Fire burned through the attic and roof of the kitchen and one bedroom of their home.

Estes said that no one was injured in the blaze. However, Lancaster and a woman living in the totalled home escaped with only the clothes they had

on. Estes said that Lancaster went back into the house to rescue his pet bird, but the flames were too severe when he tried to return a second time to rescue the family's cat. However, they left the door open in hopes that the cat would be able to escape, said Estes.

No cause has yet been determined for the blaze, which is believed to have started on the back porch.

Two other homes in Heppner, both on Chase Street, have

## 2.9 earthquake hits Lexington

**By April Hilton-Sykes**  
There's a whole lot of shaking going on near Lexington.

A 2.9 magnitude earthquake, centered between the Cutsforth and Tad Miller ranches, south of the North Lex Elevator near the Boardman interchange, occurred about 12:48 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 13.

Morrow County Emergency Management Director Casey Beard said that his office received a call from the U.S. Geological Survey associated with the University of Washington informing him of the quake.

Beard said that no one from the area reported feeling movement from the quake, but added that an earthquake would probably have to register about 5 on the scale before significant movement would be felt.

Beard said that a current study is reevaluating earth-

quake activity in the area. Beard said that there is seismic equipment located in Willow Creek Dam, but the Feb. 13 Lexington quake was not significant enough to be recorded there. Beard added that "It would take a very major event (to harm Willow Creek Dam), but even then, it wouldn't cause catastrophic damage to the dam."

He said if officials thought there was structural damage to the dam, they would plan for evacuation and a draw down of the water in the dam.

Beard said that there was a major quake located near the Army Depot area in the 1880s or 1890s and one occurred in the Lone Rock area near Condon on Dec. 16, 1993. Apparently some people felt a little bit of shaking, but nothing very significant, during the Lone Rock quake.

## Home Rule, county levy to go before voters

**By April Hilton-Sykes**  
Ballots are being sent out this week for the presidential primary mail-in election March 12. Ballots must be returned to the county clerk's office by that date.

This election marks the first time that the Morrow County Clerk's Office will use an automatic ballot counting machine. Voters will be asked to fill in the broken arrow on the ballot next to the candidate of their choice or 'yes' or 'no'.

Voters in this election will decide the fate of presidential candidates and two county measures.

Democrats have only one presidential candidate on their ballot, Bill Clinton, while Republicans will decide among nine candidates, Bob Dole, Pat Buchanan, Phil Gramm, Steve Forbes, Lamar Alexander, Robert K. Dornan, Alan L. Keyes, Richard G. Lugar and Morry Taylor.

Voters will also decide the fate of a \$3,160,155 county operating levy outside the tax base for fiscal years 1996-97 and adoption of a home rule form of county government.

According to Morrow County officials, the operating levy represents a zero increase in total tax asking from the 1995-96 fiscal year. The levy will provide funds to balance the Morrow County operating budget for the fiscal year 1996-97, including the road fund, the county school fund, the cities' portion of the road fund, the fair and rodeo fund; and the general fund. The general fund provides funding for the Extension Service, the Soil and Water Conservation District, the Irrigon-Boardman Emergency Assistance Center, the Neighborhood Center of South Morrow County, the watermaster, the Predatory Animal Control, the museum, Justice Court and Veteran's Service, as well as those services required by Oregon law. County operating funds do not include monies for the medical fund. A separate Morrow County Health District has been established to fund medical services in the county.

If voters approve home rule for Morrow County, county government will be changed significantly.

The assessor, county clerk, county treasurer, county judge, surveyor, two county commissioner positions, sheriff and justice of the peace are now elected at large by Morrow County voters.

With home rule, five commissioners will be elected. The county judge's position, now held by Louis Carlson, will be eliminated. Instead, a county administrator will be hired and will answer to the commissioners. The assessor, treasurer, surveyor and county clerk will no longer be elected, but instead will be hired positions and will answer to the administrator and commissioners. The present assessor, clerk, treasurer and surveyor will serve out their current terms. The sheriff and justice of the peace will remain as elected positions. The election of the district attorney and judicial positions will be provided as by state law.

The Home Rule Charter also includes the following specifications:

-The county seat will remain at Heppner;

-The chairman of the board of commissioners will be elected by and from the board which will be elected by the people of the county;

-County commissioners must be a resident of the county for at least a year;

-Commissioners will serve a four-year term;

-No one employed by Morrow County will be eligible to serve on the board;

-Commissioners will have the power to enact ordinances and adopt administrative code;

-Three commissioners will constitute a quorum and three affirmative votes are required to take action;

-The board will meet at least once a month.

-Board members will receive nominal compensation as determined by the lay members of the budget committee.

Proponents of the home rule plan say that the move will eliminate county politics from the clerk's, surveyor's, treasurer's and assessor's jobs. They claim that an administrator will make county operations more business-like and say that home rule is a rational approach to coping with growth and representation in the county. While north Morrow County is more populous, traditionally, their voter turnout is not as great as in south Morrow County. However, with continued growth in the north, the voter turnout may eventually shift from south to north.

Many people in north Morrow County say that they feel they have no representation on the county court. In the past, one county commissioner was traditionally elected from north Morrow County. However, in the last election, Don McElligott of Ione defeated Ed Glenn of Boardman. The other commissioner is Ray French of Heppner.

Operations at the Port of Morrow and the Morrow County School District are somewhat similar to the home rule proposal. In both, there are elected commissioners or board members and an administrator hired by the board. School board members are now elected from zones, while Port of Morrow Commissioners are

elected at large.

Home Rule proponents say that the intent is to hold meetings in the evenings, so that more citizens will be able to attend. Meetings are now held in the daytime on Wednesday.

Those against the home rule plan say that county government is already operating efficiently and equitably. They say that the current method is the most democratic because county positions are elected at large by all the voters of the county. They also argue that taking away the elected positions of assessor, treasurer, clerk and surveyor will take control away from the people and place it in the hands of commissioners and the county administrator who may be free to appoint their friends and political allies as clerk, assessor, treasurer and surveyor.

The members of the Morrow County Home Rule Charter Committee include: chairman, Rollie Marshall, William Dinkins and Dan VanSchoiack of Heppner; Linda LaRue and Lisa Rietmann, Ione; John Prag, Bill Brown and Jack Stregge of Boardman; and Don Holes of Irrigon. Four were appointed by the Morrow County Court, four by state representatives and senators from the area and one was appointed by the other eight members.

After 22 months of work on drafting a proposed home rule charter and three public meetings, the committee, with one opposing vote, voted to place the charter on the ballot. William Dinkins has come out against the charter.

A political action committee, "Morrow County Deserves Home Rule" (MCDHR), in support of adoption of home rule has also been formed. The directors for the committee are George Koffler of Heppner, Jerry Rietmann, Ione, and Don Eppenschlager, Irrigon.

## Cards, Lady Cards make state playoffs at Baker

Both the Ione Cardinal boys and girls basketball teams are headed to the state tournament in Baker next week.

The girls will take on Alsea at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, and the boys will face off against North Clackamas Christian at 8:45 p.m., also on Thursday.

## Mustangs, Fillies head to district tournament

Both the Heppner Mustangs and the Fillies basketball teams have made it into post-season play this year, and will be going to the district basketball tournament starting Friday at the Convention Center in Pendleton.

The girls defeated Sherman Saturday to lock up third place in the Columbia Basing Conference and a place at the tournament, and the boys defeated Stanfield in a playoff game Monday night to capture fourth place and a spot in the action.

The girls will play Friday at 7 p.m. against Weston McEwen. If they win that game they will play at 1:30 on Saturday.

The boys play at 3 p.m. Friday against Umattilla, and if they win will play Saturday at 3 p.m.

Cost for the games is \$5 for adults and \$4 for students. School will be let out for 9-12 and 7-8 Friday if 50 percent of students arrange for pre-release. Otherwise there will be classes as usual with pre-arranged release students having assignments to make up.

## MCHD health programs upcoming

The Morrow County Health District will air two community health education programs on Tuesday, Feb. 27, beginning at 7 p.m. The half-hour programs, "The Bright Side of Depression" and "Keeping Your Blood Pressure in Check," will be shown on Heppner TV's public access channel 3.

The first program will high-

light the signs of depression in older adults, ways friends and family can help and effective treatments. The second provides in-depth information about high blood pressure and how it can be treated with and without medication. Both programs are produced by the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics.

**GOOD LUCK**  
Cardinals, Lady Cards, Mustangs, Fillies  
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