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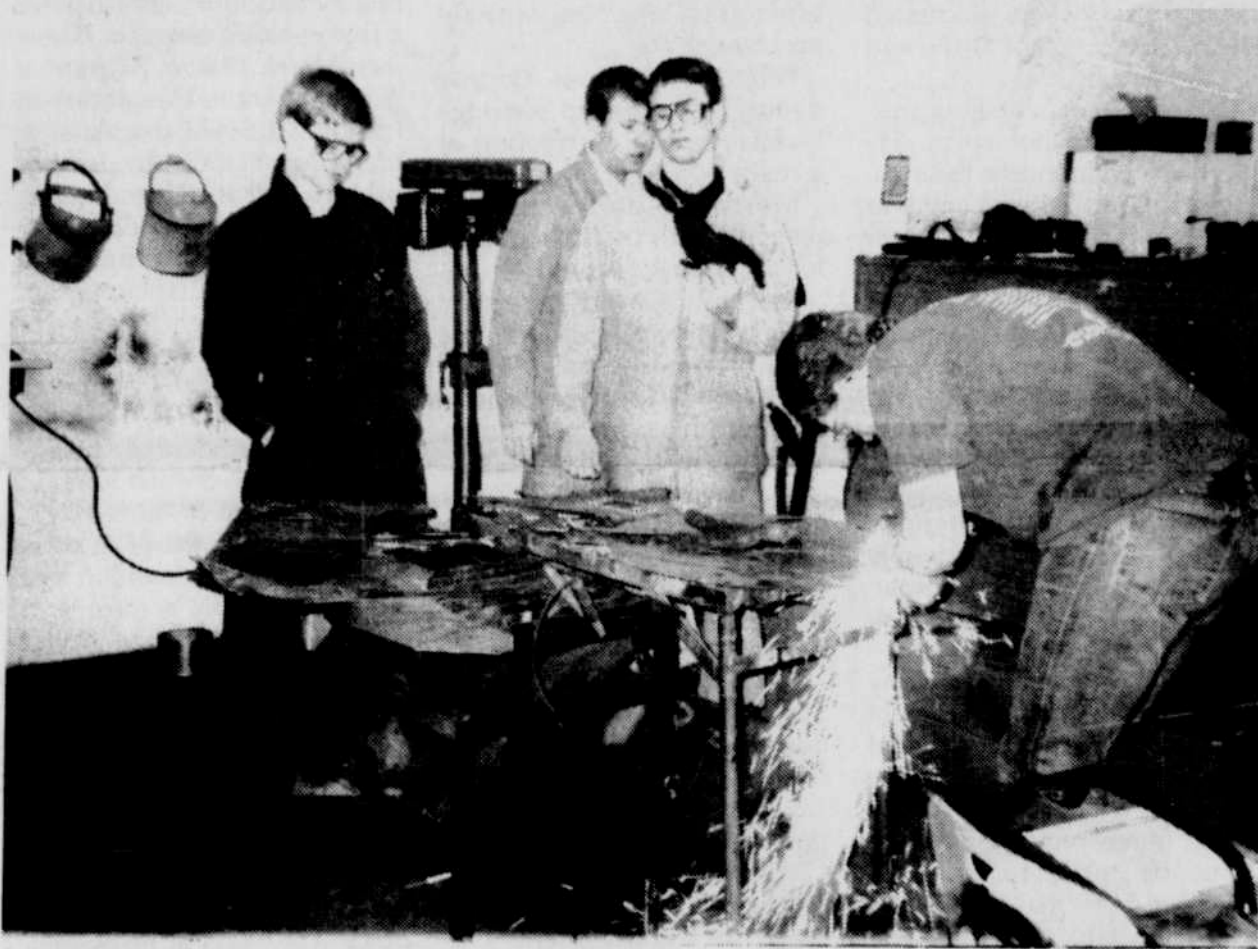
HEPPNER



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Lab program a community partnership



Students learn metal working skills

By Merlyn Robinson

Chilly weather outside doesn't keep things from heating up inside the Heppner High School Agriculture Department metals lab. With sparks from welders and torches flashing, metals lab students are on a roll constructing heavy-duty projects.

"It's a community-based partnership," says Barney Lindsay, instructor of the Vocational Agriculture and Technical Science Department. Lindsay believes students are developing employable skills within the community. As proof, former students Danny Sharp, Gene Lancaster and Mike Gorman, along with Ray and Ryan Miller, are all employed locally in agri-business occupations.

However, Lindsay is quick to say that he doesn't take full credit for all the student training. He credits Miller and Sons and Jay Coil Fabricating for providing additional knowledge, the use of tools and supplying materials. Additional help has also come from the Lexington Body Shop.

Inside this school building, students have constructed sturdy carts for welders and a large metal rack to hold steel. Long pieces of metal of various lengths can now be stored for handy access instead of being heaped on the concrete floor.

Presently under construction are metal panels that will be used in the land lab building adjacent to the shop. Steel for these heavy-duty panels was

partially funded by a grant.

"There's an unlimited amount of exciting possibilities," claims Lindsay. Already in use are pickup guards and bang boards built by students Dale Wilson, Brian Struckmeier and Dan Samples. The material just arrived to make a flatbed trailer for the school district.

Another class project under construction are bleachers for the Heppner High School baseball field. Donnie Pointer has masterminded much of the cutting for this project. The Heppner Booster Club purchased the materials for one 16-foot and two 12-foot bleacher sections. Employees at the

Morrow County Grain Growers and Jay Coil Fabricating have agreed to donate a Saturday to weld the pieces together. Just another community partnership in action, says Lindsay.

Students learn to safely use welders, torches, band and cut-off saws, drill presses, grinders and paint sprayers. Thanks to a grant, the department also obtained a plasma cutter that is now in heavy use. From scrap pieces of steel, students are fashioning miniature mustangs, capitalizing on the school's logo. Students hope to sell these as objects to provide funding for additional supplies and materials.

FBI may investigate power outage

The Federal Bureau of Investigation might be called in to investigate the shooting of insulators, and the power outage it caused Sunday morning, Feb. 26, according to Columbia Basin Electric Co-op manager Fred Toombs.

Toombs said someone shot the insulators off a Bonneville Power Administration power pole sometime Saturday, which caused the outage covering all of Morrow and parts of Gilliam counties early Sunday morning.

The Oregon State Police are investigating the incident, but since the vandalism was done

on federal land (in the area of Juniper Canyon 2 miles west of Bombing Range road) the FBI might also get involved, Toombs said.

The power was off for five hours Sunday morning, and Toombs is asking for help from the public in trying to catch the vandals. "We're asking anyone who might have information about this to contact either the state police or myself," he said.

Toombs also pointed out how dangerous it is to shoot power line insulators. "It's a very poor thing to do. If the line happened to break and fall on someone, they could get killed," he said.

County officials, home rule proponents face off

By April Hilton-Sykes

The stew over the proposed home rule charter now before Morrow County voters has passed the simmering stage and has now advanced to a full rolling boil with many county officials squaring off with home rule advocates.

The Home Rule Pac committee recently sent county residents a pamphlet outlining benefits the charter would bring to the county. Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson and Morrow County Counsel Val Doherty say that some of assertions made in the pamphlet are simply untrue.

The pamphlet says that with home rule, the county would be able to enact laws and ordinances. "We can do this now," says Doherty. "The implication is that we're gaining something we don't have now. That's simply untrue." Rollie Marshall, chairman of the Home Rule Committee, says that while the county can enact ordinances, it simply does not have the "teeth" to enforce those rules. "For example, if the county makes an ordinance that people are supposed to spray weeds, they can't enforce it, because they don't have the statutory power to do that," says Marshall.

Carlson says that the county can not only enforce ordinances, but does so regularly. Carlson says that the county now has a code enforcer. If, for example the county receives a complaint about junked cars on a lot, the code enforcer (a Morrow County Sheriff's deputy) has the ability to impound the cars and the county may sell them. If the county receives complaints about too many animals on a piece of property, the county can turn the case over to the district attorney for prosecution, says Carlson. If a county resident refuses to spray their weeds, the county can have the weeds sprayed and then apply the cost to the owner's property tax, he continued.

The pamphlet says that the home rule charter makes the board of commissioners the governing body for the county, rather than the current county court. Doherty says that the present county judge and two county commissioners function just as a board of commissioners would.

The pamphlet says that by having evening meetings any citizen, not just the retired, unemployed or self employed, would be able to either serve as a commissioner or attend meetings of the board of commissioners. Doherty says that any citizen can now be elected as county judge or a commissioner and adds that the job is too big for anyone expecting to spend only a night a month at a county commission meeting.

According to home rule advocates, the home rule charter allows for nominal compensation to help defray the costs of being a commissioner. Doherty says that the board itself would determine its own salary under home rule.

Marshall counters this, saying that the charter specifies that the budget committee, not the commissioners, would determine the commissioners' salary and adds that it would cost approximately the same to pay the salary of an administrator and nominal salary for board members as it does under the current system.

Both sides agree that with home rule, the county's juvenile system would move to circuit court. However the sides disagree as to whether the move would be good. "There's

no way the juvenile court is going to get the kind of treatment that we presently get," says Doherty. "We're already down to pretty minimal service from district and circuit court. Clearly we're not going to have the same level of juvenile service. We haven't seen a circuit court judge here in at least two or three years. Virtually all the work is done by district court judges who pro-tem circuit court."

Doherty says that Carlson now holds juvenile court hearings in Boardman and Irrigon as well as Heppner. Home rule proponents say that juvenile court matters would be better served by the circuit court, perhaps especially in the north end of the county, and the circuit court will have enough time to deal with the juvenile matters.

Home rule proponents say that with home rule, county government can be streamlined. Present county officials say that the positions of assessor, surveyor, county clerk and treasurer are mandated by state law and cannot be combined. However, home rule supporters say, for example, perhaps it is not necessary to have six separate financial departments (the financial positions of treasurer, assessor, tax collector, finance director, clerk and county court) and that consolidation is not only possible, but would also be more efficient and less costly.

Home rule proponents say that the five commissioner home rule system will provide better representation throughout the county. Those against home rule say that there is no guarantee of better representation. They say that because the commissioners will be elected at large, there is no certainty that all five commissioners won't be elected from south Morrow County, or, if the north Morrow population explodes as predicted, that all five won't be elected from north Morrow County in the future.

Marshall says that with home rule, the at-large system can be changed to a district system by a vote of the people. "There's nothing to prevent the board of commissioners from putting it

(districting) back on the ballot," says Marshall. Marshall said, however, that the overwhelming majority of those attending public hearings on the home rule issue favored at large election of commissioners rather than districting.

A change to the home rule system would change the county assessor, treasurer, clerk and surveyor from elected to non-elected positions. Home rule advocates say that the department heads would then be more answerable to the county commissioners. Those against home rule say that the department heads are now responsive to the voters. "What people would lose," says Doherty, "is their elected representatives. No one can tell them to shut up and hold the county line."

However, she adds that the county court maintains control over the different departments through control of staffing, office space and funding.

Doherty says that what home rule will not bring is restructuring of county government. "All of the state laws apply just as equally to charter counties as to statutory counties," she said. "All of the laws that define the relationship between counties and the state apply equally to charter and non-charter counties. You don't change your basic identity as a county."

The two sides also differ on their views on a county administrator. Those against home rule say, in effect, that an appointed administrator will pander to the board. Marshall looks at it differently. "If you're running a \$14 million business," he said, "I think you need a professional."

While home rule will be in effect "immediately" after the election, says Marshall, current elected officials would continue their positions with the county until their terms expire. However, the candidate winning the commissioner's position now held by Don McElligott, would be elected under home rule, since McElligott's term will be up Jan. 1, 1997.

Home rule ballots, which were mailed to voters last week, are due into the county clerk's office by March 12.

St. Pat's team roping March 17

The Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo (OTPR) St. Patrick's Day Team Roping event will be held Sunday, March 17, at the OTPR arena in Heppner beginning at 11 a.m.

Entries will be open the morning of March 17 until 10 a.m.

Classes are as follows: open-three for \$20.50, limited to three

entries; no. 9 and 7-three for \$15.50, limited to three entries; and no. 5-three for \$12.50, unlimited entries.

Concessions will be available and spectator admission is free.

For more information, call Ken Bailey, chairman, 676-5110 or (541)379-2812. Committee members are Mike Proctor and Bailey.

WIC clinic scheduled March 18

A WIC (special supplemental food program for women, infants and children) clinic will be held in Heppner on the third Tuesday of each month from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

WIC participants or those interested in determining if they are eligible may call the Morrow County Health Department, 676-5421, for an appointment.

The program is open to women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, women who have delivered babies in the last six months and infants and children from birth to five years of age.

Income must be within the WIC income guidelines. For example, a family of four must make less than \$28,028 a year

or \$2,336 a month and be residents of Morrow or Umatilla counties. Participants must also have a medical or nutritional risk, which will be evaluated every six months.

WIC provides: screening for anemia, poor growth patterns, inadequate diet and other health problems and needs; nutrition counseling and education to relate good nutrition to their health and dietary habits; nutritious foods to improve nutrition-related medical problems; and referral to other health or social services when needs are identified.

Those attending the clinic should bring income data and a list of foods eaten in the last 24 hours.

For more information, call 676-5421 or (541) 278-0770.

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