

The Official Newspaper of the  
City of Heppner and the  
County of Morrow

Heppner  
**GAZETTE-TIMES**  
U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper  
Published weekly and entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon under the Act of March 3, 1879. Second class postage paid at Heppner, Oregon. Office at 147 West Willow Street. Telephone (503) 676-9228. Postmaster send address changes to the Heppner Gazette-Times, P.O. Box 337, Heppner, Oregon 97836. Subscriptions: \$18 in Morrow, Wheeler, Gilliam and Grant Counties; \$25 elsewhere.

April Hilton-Sykes ..... News Editor  
Stephanie Jensen ..... Typesetting, Layout, Distribution  
Monique Devin ..... Advertising layout & Graphics  
Penni Keersemaaker ..... Printer

**David Sykes, Publisher**

**More accountability with home rule**

To the Editor:  
I am writing in support of the proposed home rule charter for Morrow County. As a member of the committee that drafted this charter I feel that, despite what has been implied, we did give careful and thorough consideration to the issues surrounding home rule. We met for nearly a year before we even started to draft a charter. When we had drafted the charter and solicited public comment on it, we took those comments into consideration and amended it appropriately. We did not make these decisions lightly or in haste. I am proud of the work that we accomplished as a committee and believe that Morrow County can benefit from it.

I would also like to address a statement made by Morrow County judge Louis Carlson in a recent article in the East Oregonian. Judge Carlson is quoted as saying that "positions can be consolidated and changed due to need with our current government make-up."

This statement is not completely accurate. As a statutory county, we cannot legally consolidate or eliminate departments that are headed by elected officials. We must adopt a home rule form of county government to do this.

I am surprised that Judge Carlson seems to be opposed to this measure. The biggest advantage that I see for home rule is that every administrative department would become accountable to the governing body of the county. This would eliminate the power struggles between elected officials. As an administrator who has worked to establish cohesive county policies, without having the authority to enforce them, I would think that Judge Carlson would see the advantages of home rule.

If you are in favor of less division in county government and more accountability, you should vote yes on home rule government for Morrow County.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Rietmann  
Ione

**Morrow County needs home rule**

To the Editor:  
This letter is written in support of the home rule issue on the ballot for Morrow County. Morrow County needs home rule to ensure equal representation, make county government more efficient and to bring government into the 21st century.

For too long, a wedge has been drawn between the north and south ends of the county. The new home rule charter will ensure adequate representation for all parts of the county.

Trying to run a multi-million dollar operation with five or six bosses doesn't make sense.

Home rule will make county government more efficient by having one administrator responsible for the overall operation of county government.

With the number of people employed by the county, we need to use the expertise of a "business manager" to address the needs of this huge company.

I support the majority opinion of the charter committee who studied this issue for many months to come up with a positive recommendation on home rule.

Vote yes on home rule.

(s) George Koffler  
Heppner

**Come Share With Us**  
at  
**Willow Creek Baptist Church**  
Bible Study for all ages 2 p.m.  
Worship Service 3 p.m.  
Meeting in the  
**7th Day Adventist Church**  
560 North Minor

**COAST TO COAST**  
YOUR  
**SOURCE**  
FOR  
**PAIN**

Interior  
Decorating  
Time

**Coast to Coast**  
Heppner WE CAN HELP YOU 676-9961

**Skeptical of home rule**

To the Editor:  
After serving on the Morrow County Home Rule Committee for the last two years, I wish to express my concerns on the proposed county charter.

The home rule charter as proposed will replace the three member county court with five nominally paid members who will hold evening meetings. The daily operations of the county will be conducted by a full-time manager who will oversee all county departments. The intent is to allow residents to serve who are unable to attend the current Wednesday meetings. I see several problems with this proposed arrangement.

First of all, I doubt if county commissioners can adequately conduct county business by merely attending evening meetings. Under home rule in Hood River County, county supervisor Jerry Robson told the Morrow County Home Rule Committee that most commissioners in his county are self-employed, semi-retired, or others who can devote week-day time to fulfill their duties. Hood River County commissioners meet one evening a month and one afternoon a month in order to conduct county business. With many other evening commitments, it would be difficult for many residents of Morrow County to travel to one end of the county or the other several nights a month to conduct county business. In fact, in was hard enough for members of the Home Rule Committee to get together one evening a month.

Secondly, many members of the committee have expressed their concern about recruiting and retaining a competent county manager. It is very possible that Morrow County could become a training ground for management trainees looking for career advancements. In Hood River County, Jerry Robson stated that the tenure of managers was "reasonably short". Robson himself has filled in the position during management vacancies. Robson feels the current county manager (administrator) is doing well. It seems that home rule runs smoothly in Hood River County under the leadership of Robson. That brings up an observation by the Coos County Home Rule Charter Committee who decided the advantages of adopting a county charter did not outweigh the disadvantages.

The Coos County Home Rule Committee concluded that counties which had been plagued by strife before adopting a charter were still contention-ridden afterward, and that counties which had enjoyed a cooperative atmosphere before adoption continued to experience a congenial and cooperative environment afterward. While Hood River County government continues to function smoothly after adopting a home rule charter, Clatsop County continues to battle within itself. Last year, I had a phone conversation with Clatsop County clerk Lori Davis and within two minutes became aware of a power struggle between the county manager and county officials and learned of a petition to repeal the home rule charter. Apparently, home rule didn't solve all the problems of Clatsop County. Home rule in

Josephine County has also proved controversial.

The petition to form a home rule committee was signed by many ranchers whose grazing permits are threatened by actions of the Forest Service. It was hoped that home rule would give our county local control over the resources that fuel our economy, such as land, water and timber. However, home rule counties in Oregon do not enjoy the same power as home rule counties in New Mexico who have taken on the federal government over resource issues.

In fact, non-chartered and chartered counties have basically the same power, although state legislature could discriminate against non-chartered counties. Such action is unlikely since most counties are not chartered and would quickly become chartered if needed. Also, both forms of counties can pass ordinances but only a chartered county can impose jail sentences over these ordinances (and subject itself to additional legal liabilities).

I agree with the majority of the Home Rule Committee that the residents of Morrow County should have the chance to vote on the proposed charter. Since the attendance at the last home rule meeting was small, my vote was needed to put it on the ballot before the commission of the Home Rule Committee expired.

I have talked to many current, former and soon-to-retire county officials in Eastern Oregon who are skeptical of home rule. I am skeptical of a board of commissioners who may not have the time to fully understand and adequately direct our county government through a county manager.

(s) Daniel R. Van Schoiack  
Heppner

**Incredible tripe**

To the Editor:  
Morrow County voters have now received their ballots to vote on the issue of adopting a home rule charter. The development of this document took place over the course of two years, at the end of which everyone associated with the process appeared to be thoroughly sick of it. I know I certainly was.

I need not elaborate the reasons for this reaction because I believe that job has already been done (quite admirably, in my opinion) by Mr. Hal Dinkins of Heppner. Mr. Dinkins has made it clear that he considers the particular charter proposed by the charter committee to be an absolute abortion which deserves nothing more than a decent burial. I quite agree with that assessment.

That, however, is not why I am writing this letter. I am writing this letter because I read a full-page ad in last week's Gazette-Times, and also a yellow pamphlet that appeared in my mailbox (a very apt color choice for this particular journalistic effort). It is common knowledge that the PAC which sponsored these extraordinary materials includes a member of the charter committee. Therefore, I realized over the weekend-with growing horror-that some may suppose that I might have been the original source of this so-called "information" because of my role as advisor to the charter

**Letters to the Editor**

committee.  
The very thought makes my skin crawl.

To set the record straight: I did not indicate in any way that Morrow County was presently impaired in its ability to pass ordinances relating to matters of county concern. On the contrary, I provided the committee with copies of the statute which specifically empowers the county to do so "to the fullest extent allowed by constitutions and laws of the United States and of this state." In fact, Morrow County has routinely enacted such ordinances.

I did not hint, suggest, advise or imply in any way that passage of a charter would change the fundamental relationship between the state and one of its political subdivisions-in this case, a county. With or without a charter, a county is still a political subdivision of state government. The implication that, by means of passing a charter, Morrow County can declare some sort of separate sovereignty is simply outlandish, and is certainly a notion that was never expressed or intimated by me.

I did not imply in any way that the offices of clerk, treasurer, sheriff, surveyor or assessor could be eliminated. Those offices, and their functions, are mandated by statute and cannot be impaired by charter or otherwise. By charter it is possible to make the officials themselves appointed through the governmental bureaucracy rather than elected directly by the people, but the functions of their offices may not be compromised.

I did not indicate that it would be impossible to hire a county administrator without passing a charter. This is ridiculous. Of course, the county could create such a position, and fill it, but has never attempted to do so, probably for fear of being laughed out of town by the budget committee.

I could go on and on with this, but hope that this will suffice to make my point: none of this incredible tripe came from, by, or through me, and I want nothing to do with it. It is legally unsound, grossly misleading, and I vehemently deny that any such inferences could reasonably have been made from the information I did provide to the committee.

I have only one more thing to say. Ordinarily, when people, special districts, committees, interest groups or the like wish to put something on the ballot, they are the ones responsible for writing the ballot title. It is then submitted to the county clerk, who passes it to the district attorney for review. This is the statutory procedure.

In this case, however, the committee initially requested the county clerk to write the ballot title. When she very appropriately declined, the DA was persuaded to do so. I was not consulted.

However, the ballot title is, in my opinion, both legally accurate and compliant with statutory standards. To be blunt, I believe that the PAC's criticism of the ballot title re-

sults solely from its own Twilight Zone misconceptions regarding charter government and does not arise from any legitimate complaint about the contents of the ballot title.

Sincerely,  
(s) Valerie B. Doherty  
Lexington

**Make positive change with home rule**

To the Editor:  
On March 12, Morrow County voters will have the opportunity to make a positive change. We can vote yes to adopt the proposed Home Rule Charter.

Most of us have felt the frustration of our county activities being authorized or mandated by the state. The needs of Morrow County are not necessarily the same as other statutory counties. Unfortunately, the state cannot look at each county and address those individual needs, so we all live by the same government organization.

Under home rule, citizens of Morrow County would have the power to adopt and amend their own county ordinances and government organization. The charter can also be amended by a vote of the people as changes are needed.

The proposed home rule charter would allow individuals who hold full-time jobs the opportunity to hold one of five commission positions. The commissioners would be elected at large. A chairman would be elected by the commissioners. The commissioners would receive a monthly stipend, the amount to be determined by the budget committee. Board meetings could be held in the evenings instead of all day on Wednesdays to better accommodate those serving.

The board of commissioners would develop administrative policies and procedures and appoint a county administrator. The administrator would report directly to the board of commissioners for the day-to-day administration of the county. The person filling the position of administrator would be a political appointee and would serve at the will of the board of commissioners.

Currently, nine counties in Oregon have adopted home rule. Hood River County established home rule in 1964. Umatilla County is the most recent home rule county, established in 1993. The charter being proposed for voter approval is patterned after Hood River County with changes specific to Morrow County.

Your yes vote will afford Morrow County wider representation and more flexibility in government operation.

Sincerely,  
(s) Linda K. LaRue  
Ione

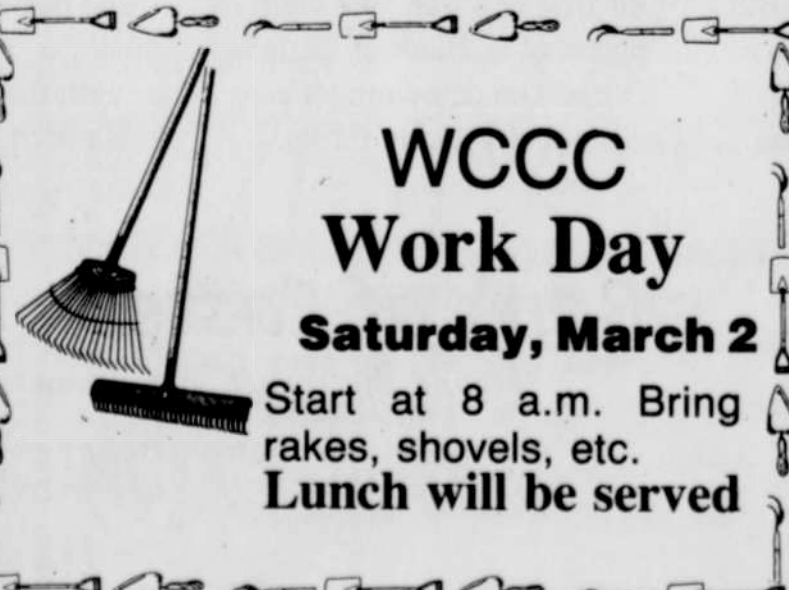
**Market Report**

Compliments of the Morrow County Grain Growers

**Tuesday, Feb. 27**

Soft White	
Feb.-April	\$5.48
May	\$5.47
new crop-Aug.	\$4.84
Barley	
Feb.-March	\$155
Aug.	\$130

**WCCC Work Day**  
Saturday, March 2  
Start at 8 a.m. Bring rakes, shovels, etc.  
Lunch will be served



**GENUINE CHEVROLET**  
Remember when your word was your Bond. - You sealed a deal with a handshake - That's still the way we do business today.

COMFORTABLE • TRUSTFULL • HONEST • CARING



The Largest Volume Chevy Truck Dealer in Eastern Oregon  
**SHERRELL CHEVROLET**  
Hermiston, Oregon 1-800-567-6487  
New Car Sales 567-6488 Used Car Center 567-3919