

HEPPNER



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Dr. Bitsas resigns

Morrow County Health District and Pioneer Memorial Hospital administrator Kevin Erich has announced that Dr. Bill Bitsas resigned from his position as physician at the hospital and Pioneer Memorial Clinic as of Friday, April 11.

Erich said that other providers will care for Bitsas's patient load "to make for a smooth transition".

Dr. Bitsas told the Gazette-Times Tuesday that "disagreements have arisen and discussions deteriorated" over such issues as "appropriate

scheduling" to allow him adequate time to care for patients and time off.

Dr. Bitsas, who began working for the health district Sept. 1, had a three-year agreement with the district.

"I'd like to work it out," said Dr. Bitsas. "I would really like to stay here. I would be glad to figure out some agreement to continue to practice here."

"I'm not planning on moving," he said, adding that if conflicts cannot be resolved he planned to look at temporary assignments which would allow him to continue to live in Heppner.

Free vaccine clinic planned

Free tetanus and diphtheria vaccines will be available for adults as well as children during a free immunization clinic planned by the Morrow County Health Department this month.

Clinics will be held in Ione on Wednesday, April 23, from 3-6 p.m. and in Heppner on Thursday, April 24, from noon-6 p.m.

Clinics are also planned in Irrigon on Monday, April 21, from 1-6 p.m. and in Boardman Tuesday, April 22, from noon-6 p.m.

School superintendent undergoes surgery

Morrow County School District Superintendent Chuck Starr underwent surgery Monday to remove a cancerous rectal tumor, it was announced at the school board meeting that evening in Ione.

Administrative secretary Julie Ashbeck told the assembly that after chemotherapy, the tumor was "significantly smaller and movable". She said that Starr was expected to spend seven to 10 days in the hospital and four to six weeks in recovery.

She said that Starr's physician said that other than the cancer, he was in "remarkable health" and "doing very well".

In other business the board: -approved employment for Ron Neighorn for a probationary contract to teach music in Heppner and Ione in 1997-98 and for Ralph Werner, to teach music half-time in Heppner in 1997-98. A probationary contract for Heather Hacking, music and Spanish teacher at Heppner Junior and Senior High Schools, was not renewed.

-approved resignations for Mark Girod, Riverside High School science teacher; and Angela Preslar, A.C. Houghton and Sam Boardman elementary schools.

-accepted donations from the Ione Booster Club for \$500 toward purchase of a tennis serve machine for the Ione tennis team. The team raised the balance of \$400; from Harold Teters for \$200 work of art supplies to the Riverside High School art program.

-approved a field trip request for seventh and eighth grade students to travel to the Oregon Coast May 16-18 to study marine ecosystems.

-heard reports on the bond issue projects by Bob Baker, a list of classified and confidential employees for May action, academic excellence reports from

district principals.

-heard a performance by the Ione choir accompanied by teacher Ron Neighorn;

-approved a second reading of the driver education policy and a resolution accepting A.C. Houghton and Columbia Middle School remodeling and additions, with additional discussion concerning problems with carpeting at A.C. Houghton Elementary School.

-accepted March 11 election canvass results as follows: Board of Directors Zone 2- Dwayne Carroll, 979; Lisa Nelson, 813; Zone 6-Barney Lindsay, 1,506; John Kilkenny, 78; Zone 7-Scott Bauska, 1,422; Boardman-Irrigon Advisory Committee Position 1-Dean Mason, 673; Position 3-Kathy Neal, 690; Position 4-Wayne Huwe, 672; Position 6-Patrick McNamee, 671; Ione-Lexington Advisory Committee Position 2-Hank Pointer, 300; Position 3-Jim McElligott, 306; Heppner-Lexington Advisory Committee Position 1-Kelly Merrill, 18; Position 2-Virginia Nairs, 695; Position 5-Greg Smith, 602; Position 6-Stephen Hill, 659; and Position 7-Rollie Marshall, six. Patricia Wehli received 17 votes for Ione-Lexington Advisory Committee Position 4, but does not live in the Lexington attendance area and does not qualify for that position. Mike Armato received 19 votes for Heppner-Lexington Position 4, but does not live in the attendance area. Mark Rietmann, who received five votes, does live in that area and qualifies for that position.

-approved low bid on fixed asset inventory from Valuation Resource Management for \$6,500;

-discussed purchase of two buses which would be used to transport students for evacuation from the North Campus and from Boardman Schools to A.C. Houghton Elementary School,

which has been over-pressurized, if necessary during incineration at the Umatilla Army Depot.

-discussed addition of two new sports activities for 1997-1998-girls' JV softball at HHS for Heppner and Ione students and soccer at Riverside. Cost would be around \$8,100 for the softball program and \$7,900 for the soccer program, but no school district funds would be expended.

A school district budget committee meeting has been scheduled for April 21 at 7:30 p.m. at Riverside and, if necessary, April 28 at the district office and May 5 at Riverside.

The next regular meeting will be held May 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the district office.

Booster Club to award scholarships

Four \$200 Heppner Booster Club scholarships will be awarded to Heppner High School (HHS) seniors "desiring to further their education past high school," said a club spokesperson.

Booster Club invites all HHS seniors to participate. Scholarships are based on school activities, leadership and academic average. Applications can be picked up at HHS, and are due by Wednesday, April 30.

Odd Fellows contribute \$10,000 toward pool



Jerry Hollomon (left) and Cliff Green (right), on behalf of the Willow Odd Fellow Lodge, present a \$10,000 check to Archie Padberg, representing the People for the Pool. People for the Pool is a group dedicated to raising funds for the indoor multi-use pool to be constructed at the Heppner pool site. People for the Pool originally set \$50,000 as their goal for construction of the multi-use pool, but a change of plans in materials necessary to construct the indoor facility pushed the goal up to \$65,000.

Volunteers install water line at fairgrounds



Morrow County Fair Board members (L-R) Alan Holmes, Joe Yocum and Sam Bellamy pause from work on the fairgrounds new water line.

The three, along with board member Kelwayne Haguewood, and Holmes' crew from Mid Columbia Excavation, Boardman, spent two days putting in the new lines, including a three-inch line to the pavilion, a new line to the bus shed, and new frost-free valves around the pavilion. They said that when the project is completed, the water lines will not be tied into the pump.

Holmes donated equipment and time for the project. Roger Britt, Heppner, also contributed to the project.

Renovation project underway at rodeo grounds

A major renovation project is underway at the Morrow County Fairgrounds in Heppner this year. The renovation is especially significant since this year commemorates the 75th celebration of the Morrow County Rodeo.

A bleacher project will include a 1050 aluminum bench seating capacity, 428 VIP stadium chairs of high density polyethylene with plastic backs and arm rests, and an eight foot by 16 foot announcer/press box with stairs usable for football field and arena events with sliding glass windows, heat and air conditioning. The first row of VIP seating will be elevated four feet.

VIP seating sales will begin May 3. VIP seating will be sold in lots of 10 and will include all three rodeo performances and two slack performances for \$360 per section.

Contact Nicole Mahoney, 676-5157 to purchase the VIP seating. The bleacher project will also include a donor wall, with a permanent sign with sections, thanking donors of under \$500, \$500 and up, \$1,000 and up, \$10,000 and up and \$50,000 and up.

The Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo is offering to name the stadium after a donor who contributes \$100,000 or more. The donor's name will be permanently installed in large block letters across the upper back side of the bleacher structure.



Marcia Kemp, representing the Heppner High School Booster Club, and Larry Mills, Morrow County Grain Growers manager, with Maryann Munkers. The Booster Club and MCGG each donated \$2,500 towards the press box and bleacher project at the Morrow County Fairgrounds.

Other plans for this year include:

-Installation of drainage curbs and pipe in front of new cyclone fencing that was installed last August. The curbs will also act as parking bumper curbs.

-Construction of a 16 foot by 24 foot rodeo office on the west end of Shorty's Museum. The office will be accessible from the west end of the building and will eliminate having to bring in a camp trailer for use as an office. The office, which will have a "western" false front and a landscaped area under the awning on the south side, will also be used for monthly meetings.

-Construction of a new access road and bridge and increased

contestant parking. OTPR officials say that contestant parking is now limited and not accessible for most contestants as it is too steep and the corner too sharp for horse trailers.

-Landscaping and beautification with trees, shrubs and flower beds to beautify the spectator area.

Future plans are to build a log cabin concession stand on the east end of the bleachers usable as a beer garden on one side and food and drink concessions on the other side.

OTPR also plans to eventually cover the new bleachers.

Sue Gibbs, Rodeo Committee media chairman, says that Kinzua has been a main contributor to the project. The St. Patrick's motocross and team roping events also raised funds for the grandstands project, she said.

The group is encouraging the city and local organizations to plan activities to make the 75th anniversary of the Morrow County Rodeo a "huge celebration".



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