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HEPPNER



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Public Hearing held on proposed Heppner youth camp



Greg Smith of the Port of Morrow, Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson and director of the Tillamook Youth Accountability Camp following a public information meeting March 26 in Heppner

The prospect of siting a youth boot camp in Heppner drew more positive comments than negative at a public hearing on the issue held Monday night at Heppner High School. Around 100 people attended the hearing with over 60 indicating they were in favor of siting a 50-bed Youth Accountability Camp in Heppner and around 20 opposing it. Another 60 written testimonies were submitted at the meeting with few negative comments.

Heppner Mayor Bob Jepsen, Morrow County Judge Louis Carlson, Heppner City Manager Gary Marks, Morrow County Commissioner Ray French, Heppner Chief of Police Doug Rathbun, Morrow County School District Superintendent Chuck Starr, Morrow County Commission on Children and Families Director Dar Merrill, Church of the Nazarene Pastor Duane Jones, retired Methodist minister Grace Drake, Bank of Eastern Oregon President and CEO George Koffler and Oregon State Representative Lynn Lundquist were among the many speaking in favor of the facility.

The site being considered is located past the Morrow County Fairgrounds on the hillside on the right side of the road as one is leaving town.

Many of those favoring the camp spoke of the economic boost it would give to the community.

The Youth Accountability Camp would employ 32 people, some of which, officials say, could come from the community, and is expected to have a payroll of around \$85,000 a month. Dwayne McNannay, manager of

the Oregon Youth Authority said that while many goods required at the camp would be obtained through a state contract, many items would also be purchased on the local economy. He also said that local merchants and vendors would get assistance in filling out the paperwork for purchase agreements with the state.

Others in favor of locating the camp in Heppner stressed the importance of providing a place for troubled youth and said they felt Heppner, because it is a close knit community, would be an ideal place to help the young people turn their lives around.

Concerns were raised that there are no guarantees that the camp would not be expanded or converted into a maximum security facility. Timothy Travis, program manager for the Juvenile Court Improvement Project and member of the siting committee, said that there were no assurances, but added, "This facility is not designed as a maximum security facility. We just built maximum security facilities all across the state and they are all expandable." Travis said that the committee "was not here to sell you this facility," but also said, "Measure 11 got a lot of support... and I think that's something you've got to own up to."

Travis also said, "This is not an economic development project," placing the economic benefits second to the goal of helping troubled youth.

Several people indicated concern about the Morrow County Health District's ability to provide medical care for Youth Accountability Camp cadets and employees, when the

only doctor in south Morrow County has said he will not renew his contract, which expires May 31. However, Ken Schmidt, Morrow County Health District and Pioneer Memorial Hospital administrator, assured the siting committee that the district has a "very good clinic" (Pioneer Memorial Clinic) and a Level 4 trauma center at PMH which could handle the camp's medical needs.

Several of those against siting the facility in Heppner said they were concerned such a camp would lower the real estate values and discourage people from moving to the area. Testimony indicated that real estate prices have continued to climb and the population has continued to increase at Tillamook, where a Youth Accountability Camp and a work study camp are located.

School Superintendent Starr said that the school district would be willing to contract for education services for the camp. He said that the state, not the district would pay for education costs of the camp's cadets and the per student outlay is \$8,700 per student, double the amount spent on Morrow County School District students.

Starr said that he spoke to officials at the Tillamook School District, who said that his teaching staff enjoyed working at the camp and "did not want to go back" to teaching at the high school.

Other fears voiced about locating a camp in Heppner include the possibility of the cadet's escaping, escape, damaging property and being a bad influence on local youth. Officials said earlier at two

Rod Osgood to run for JP



Rod Osgood

Rod Osgood of north Morrow County has filed for the Morrow County Justice of the Peace position, opposing incumbent Judge Charlotte Gray.

Osgood, 40, who lives between Boardman and Irrigon, is the owner of Osgood Feed and Supply, which he started in 1992.

Osgood was raised in Umatilla County in the Hermiston area and moved to Morrow County nine years ago.

Besides operating his store, Osgood runs a few cows, quarter horses and running horses.

Osgood has been married for 22 years to Wendy, his high school sweetheart. The Osgoods have two children, 20 and 21 years old, and one grandchild.

Osgood says he hopes to "bring some sense to justice in Morrow County." "I don't think my job is to raise funds for the county," he said. "My job is to make it a safer, more pleasant place for the citizens of Morrow County."

Lone gas station included in DEQ list

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has identified 49 high-priority rural gas stations in Oregon that may close by the end of this year unless they get financial help to replace old, and possibly leaking, underground gasoline storage tanks. The Lone Key Gas Service is included in those stations, according to a DEQ news release.

DEQ estimates there are several hundred more single-station businesses which have not yet complied with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) December 22, 1998 deadline for upgrading underground storage (UST).

DEQ will submit a funding request that provides more assistance for rural gas stations to the Legislative Emergency Board meeting on April 9-10. This appearance at the emergency board is a follow-up to a November 1997 session where board members deferred action on the initial DEQ funding request and told the agency to return with more specific information.

Stations on the DEQ high-priority list are at least five miles away from another station and have been prioritized based on community impact if closed using criteria established in

House Bill 3385 which was passed by the 1997 legislature. DEQ established the list based on requests submitted by individual station owners seeking assistance. If the emergency board approves additional funding, financial assistance would consist of grants providing 75 percent of funding for the necessary tank upgrade work for stations that can demonstrate financial need. Grants to individual stations would not exceed \$75,000 per site.

Congress passed the tank upgrade law in 1984 to protect groundwater from contamination from leaking underground tanks. Groundwater provides drinking water for much of Oregon, especially in rural areas, according to DEQ. House Bill 3385 is Oregon's most recent attempt to prevent closure of gas stations deemed to be essential in ensuring the continued availability of motor fuel for tourism, recreation and the economic survival of rural communities, said the release.

DEQ has already provided financial assistance to 81 rural gas stations. Many more than the 49 stations listed face closure, but do not meet eligibility requirements for funding under House Bill 3385, according to the state environmental agency.

Portland attorney to oppose Earl Woods



David Allen

A Portland attorney, David Allen, 32, has filed for the Morrow County District Attorney's position against incumbent Earl R. Woods, Jr.

Allen grew up in western Kansas and attended the

University of Oregon Law School. While still in law school he worked under Bill Hanlon, who was then district attorney in Madras. (Hanlon served as interim Morrow County District Attorney while Woods served in Bosnia with the National Guard. Hanlon remains the Morrow County counsel.) After law school Allen returned to Madras and worked as a deputy district attorney for Hanlon for three years. He also spent one year in Madras in private practice before moving to Portland in 1995. He is now employed with the law firm of Gary Carlson.

Allen says that he has missed working in a district attorney's office and is excited about criminal law.

He says that having grown up in Kansas, he is looking forward to living in a small rural area and is interested in being an active member of the community.

Allen and his fiancée, Dierdre, have a 10-month old daughter, Alexandra.

Response overwhelming in favor of assisted living

A questionnaire on a proposed assisted living center in the Willow Creek Valley sent out to local residents received better than a 50 percent return, which is exceptional, said Suzanne Jepsen, a member of the Willow Creek Valley Assisted Living Corporation, the group conducting the survey.

Jepsen said that the questionnaire was sent to 994 homes and 500 surveys were returned. Of those 500, 474 were in favor of establishing an assisted living center in the area and only 26 were against it. "This shows this is a project people are really interested in," said Jepsen.

An assisted living center is a facility which would provide intermediate care for seniors--in between Pioneer Memorial Nursing Home which provides high level care and the St.

Patrick's Senior Center, which is designed for independent living.

An assisted living center would provide help to its residents who need assistance in one or more of the activities involved in daily living, such as bathing, dressing, preparing meals or taking medications, for example.

Jepsen said that the group is in the process of negotiating for a consultant to apply for a \$10,000 technical assistance grant to fund a feasibility study. They have also applied for tax exempt status and are working on their bylaws and mission statement.

She said that All Saints Episcopal Church in Heppner has dedicated its February mission and outreach money, which came to \$1,500, for start-up costs.

Any group interested in having someone speak about the proposed facility is invited to call Jepsen.

HHS baseball team to sell sign ads

By Rick Paullus

The Heppner Mustangs baseball team is selling 4x8 foot out-field ad signboards to further fund improvements on the field and in the program. Players will be visiting local businesses soon to inquire about ad signs, or call Robin Graff, 422-7191, if your business is interested in purchasing a signboard.

Martingale 4-H club to sponsor egg hunt

The Martingale 4-H Horse Club of lone will sponsor their fifth annual Easter Egg hunt on horseback on Sunday, April 5.

In addition to the Easter egg hunt, other Easter games and playday events will be held.

All 4-H members, their families and guests are welcome to attend the hunt which will be held at Gene and Kristy Crowell's at 68104 Highway 74, Lone, beginning at 1:30 p.m.. For more information call 422-7564.

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