

HEPPNER



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Changes in administration yield positive results

Changes in the Morrow County Health District administration are already yielding positive financial results, according to information released at the district's regular monthly meeting held in Lexington Monday night.

Interim administrator Sheila Dahlman reported that the sale of the district's dental clinics in Heppner and Boardman brought in \$200,000, part of which will be used to retire a \$62,000 loan from the Bank of Eastern Oregon.

After expenses of \$150 for the escrow fee, \$388 for title insurance and \$62,068 to repay the Bank of Eastern Oregon, the district will be able to put \$137,393 in a savings account, said Dahlman.

Dahlman said in her financial report that September revenues were up around \$100 thousand over August with September net operating revenues of \$356,149. Operating losses for September were \$24,694, down from \$170,084 for August. When non-operating revenues are figured in the Sept. financials, the district is in the black by \$26,947, compared to August, with net losses of \$123,120. Losses for the year to date are \$133,787.

At the end of September the district had a cash balance of \$43,953.

In other good news for the district, Dahlman reported that the tax levy revenues for the coming year will be \$567,530, and increase of around \$42,000 over last year.

The district also approved extensive rate changes in numerous departments, proposed in a preliminary report by Michael Bell, a consultant hired by the Pioneer Memorial

Hospital Foundation to explore the district's financial situation. Bell said that his recommendations are expected to increase patient service revenue by \$215,000 during the eight-month period ending June 30, 1999. However, board member Sharron Meyer, cautioned that rate increases do not necessarily equal increased revenues.

Bell's recommendations, effective retroactively to Nov. 1, except for the nursing home rates which will increase Dec. 1, include:

Nursing home-basic rates increased from \$90.63 to \$125 per day, complex rate increased from \$90.63 to \$135, private room from \$118 to \$135 and hourly from \$4 to \$8.

Acute care-increased from \$375 to \$450 per day for a semi-private room. Intensive care (ICU) and private room rates would remain unchanged.

-Observation bed-increased from \$20.15 to \$40 per hour, up to \$450 per day, and ICU observation bed increase from \$35.42 to \$80 for ICU up to \$850 per day.

-Central supply-hospital charges increased by 10 percent and nursing home charge increased to equal hospital charge. A minimum of \$2.50 would be charged for any supply item. Bell also recommended that the district implement a cost-based mark up system to be implemented by July 1, 1999.

-Pharmacy-charges increased by 10 percent and a minimum of \$2.50 charged for any drug item. The recommendation includes a cost-based mark-up to be implemented by July 1, 1999.

-Laboratory-outpatient and inpatient charges averaged so that both inpatient and outpatient charges would be the same.

-Radiology- increased 10 percent across the board.

-Electrocardiology-remain unchanged.

-Physical Therapy-inpatient and outpatient charges averaged for same charges for both types of patients.

-Speech Therapy-increased from \$40 to \$80 per unit.

-Respiratory Therapy-increased 10 percent across the board.

-Ambulance-increased 20 percent across the board.

-Emergency Room-10 percent across the board.

-ER Physician-rates unchanged.

-Clinic-some specific diagnoses or procedures increased at variable rates, others increased \$25 percent across the board with the exception of emergency room charges; clinic emergency room physician charges changed to equal the temporary doctor (locum tenens) emergency room charges.

-Medical Surgical Supplies-personal items increased to cost plus 25 percent; non-personal items increased at variable rates; minimum charge of \$2.50 on all supplies.

-Pharmacy-increased at variable rates depending on whether medication is non-injection/non-intravenous, injection or intravenous.

Dahlman said that Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements are set and would therefore the rate increases would not affect those patients; increases would apply to private pay and insurance billings.

Further recommendations by Bell are forthcoming. Dahlman said at the meeting that the chief financial officer position, formerly held by Dan Grant, has

been eliminated by attrition, since Grant has resigned. Dahlman Tuesday announced the elimination of the human resources director position, which will save the district \$46,360 a year, which includes benefits.

Dahlman also announced that the Heppner area has been designated by the Department of Health and Human Resources as a physician shortage area. The designation will enable Pioneer Memorial Clinic to receive an increase in rate reimbursement. Dahlman said that the designation is expected to increase revenues by about \$100,000 a year. "That is a very integral part of your recovery," said Dahlman.

The designation will also enable the district to qualify for grants to help fund a telemedicine program. Telemedicine is a process by which x-rays and other diagnostic tests may be sent via computer to experts in other areas for their diagnoses. With telemedicine, patients may stay home, rather than being sent out of town.

The designation will also allow physician recruitment from out of the country.

Dahlman told the board that as soon as immediate pressing problems have been dealt with, she plans a visit to Boardman. "I want them (the people of Boardman) to be heard and know that their needs will be met," she said.

Veteran's Day Memorial, Nov. 11

The citizens of Morrow County are invited to participate in a Veteran's Day Observance to be held Wednesday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. at the Veteran's Memorial Park on Highway 74 (Linden Way) between Hinton and Willow Creeks.

If you see yellow in the snow...

Curious about the little yellow flags posted on the bump-outs on Heppner intersections?

According to Heppner city manager Jerry Breazeale, the flags will mark the curbs for State Highway Division snow plows this winter.

Six Mimis and a Drew



If you happened into the Bank of Eastern Oregon last Thursday, you probably thought you had stumbled onto the set of the Drew Carey show. Well... pictured left to right Mimi, Mimi, Mimi, Drew, Mimi, Mimi and Mimi.

Co-op's financial picture "very strong"

The Morrow County Grain Growers' financial picture remains "very strong", co-op accountant Steve Green told the annual meeting Monday night.

Because of lower wheat prices, total sales volume for the co-op was down for the year, but all the financial ratios are good, Green told the gathered crowd.

Co-op Manager Chris Meyers said the coming year is expected to be a "little tougher", but the co-op still expects to remain strong.

Meyers pointed out the diversification of the co-op which will help to maintain a good financial picture in the coming years. "The C store (convenience store) in Lexington has exceeded our expectations," Meyers said. He also said the new facilities in Wasco were "successful".

Meyers said there have been quite a few changes at the co-op including a new computer system. "We should have the bugs worked out of that very soon," he said.

For the year the Grain

Growers showed sales of \$43.8 million, as opposed to \$53.6 last year. However, net income remained strong at \$922,225 compared to \$1.01 million last year.

In board elections Virginia Grieb and John Luciani were both reelected to the board of directors, and Barney Lindsay and Joe Rietmann were newly elected.

Associated directors elected were: Todd Lindsay, Harvey Childers, Vern Frederickson and Gary Rea.

Mustangs volleyball/football teams go to state

Both the Heppner Mustang Volleyball and Football teams are going to the state playoffs next week.

The Mustang Varsity

Cardinals first seed going into districts

The Ione High School Varsity Volleyball team battled with Condon Tuesday evening, winning the match in three, 15-9, 14-16 and 15-12, and earning the first seed position going into the district tournament to be held Saturday, Nov. 7.

The district contest will begin at 2 p.m. at Sherman County High School at Moro.

The first seed has two chances in the district tournament to go to state. Condon, now the second seed, will be eliminated in their first loss at district.

Meetings planned on superintendent

Meetings to identify the qualifications sought in a superintendent for Morrow County Schools will be held this week throughout the county.

A meeting will be held Wednesday, Nov. 4, at Heppner High School at 7 p.m.; and Thursday, November 5, at Ione Schools at 7 p.m. A meeting was held Nov. 3 at Columbia Middle School in Irrigon.

Current superintendent Chuck Starr has announced his retirement on June 30, 1999. The Morrow County School Board plans to have a new superintendent hired by spring.

General Election Results

Tuesday, November 3, 1998
Morrow County

TOTALS
(Preliminary results only)

Morrow County Judge		
John Mollahan		838
Terry Tallman		1046
Morrow County Commissioner		
Leann Rea		823
Dan Brosnan		1044
City of Irrigon - Council Positions (3)		
William H. Cooley		73
Ivan W. Dike		136
Raymond W. Morin		102
Jim McCombs		62
Keith L. Kitcher		132
Larry Ford		50
R.C. "Bob" Flournoy		27
Linda L. Fox		76
Oregon Trail Library District Levy	Yes No	404 560
MCURD Advisory Vote	Yes No	1311 572
BMCC Obligation Bonds	Yes No	1050 797
Ballot Measure 64 (Timber Harvest Practices)	Yes No	237 1660

We Will Be Closed November 11th
for Veteran's Day

MORROW COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS

Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net