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HEPPNER

# Gazette times

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VOL. 118 NO. 12 6 Pages Wednesday, March 24, 1999 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Elks' Americanism winners announced



Ione Middle School Americanism contestants (left to right) back row: teacher Chris Davis, Karl Morgan, Mike Radie, Til Tullis, Cody Bergstrom, Tracy Griffith, Jaysi Bennetto, Andrew Rietmann. Front row: Kody Rea, Cameron Krebs, Aaron Tworek, Caitlin Orem and Diana McElligott.



Heppner Junior High Americanism contestants (left to right) back row: Cindy Gall, Tracey Baker, Josh Winters, Brad Adams, Donald Adams, Jerry Shank, teacher Greg Grant. Front row: Jessica Krieger, Sibbea Jones, Sally Calvert, Marcy Miller, Ashley Ward, Megan Healy and Whitney Sherritt.

Ashley Ward, Heppner Junior High School, and Diana McElligott, Ione Middle School won first place in the Americanism Poster contest sponsored by the Heppner Elks Lodge.

They each received a \$ 100 savings bond for their work. Second place winners, receiving \$75 savings bonds, are Sally Calvert, Heppner, and Cody Bergstrom, Ione.

A total of 26 students participated in the contest, 13

from Greg Grant's eighth grade social studies at Heppner Junior High School and 13 from Chris Davis' eighth grade class at Ione Middle School.

In addition to winners being awarded savings bonds, each participant received a certificate of appreciation from the Elks

## UofO announces degree candidates

University of Oregon has announced candidates for degrees at the end of the winter

Lodge Exalted Ruler, Joe Kenny.

The purpose of the contest is to encourage patriotism through increased involvement. Each year the contest is sponsored by a number of Elks lodges around the state. Competition is only at the local level.

term, 1999.

Dani Maree Hill, bachelor of science, biology, Heppner, was a candidate.

## Mill closure impact discussed

A town hall meeting to discuss the closure of the Kinzua saw mill in Heppner drew about 50 participants last Thursday night.

Representatives from various government agencies were on hand to discuss efforts underway to help laid off workers, and to acquire the mill site for future economic development. The meeting, called "Life after Kinzua", was sponsored by the Heppner Chamber of Commerce.

### Employment situation

The first to give a report was County Judge Terry Tallman. Tallman said he had talked to Mike Evans of Frontier Resources which owns Kinzua, who said three upper management members at the Kinzua mill had lost their jobs. Jan Jones, Tony Williams, John Green and Jim Salyers apparently are no longer with the company.

Tallman also reported that an auction to dispose of equipment at the mill will be held May 4, 5 and 6.

A decision to add a third shift at the company's Pilot Rock mill also was being put on hold, Tallman said he was told. Prior to the Heppner mill closure at the end of February it was announced that a third shift was to be added to Pilot Rock operations that would have added 36 jobs, some of which could have gone to laid off Heppner workers. A decision on the third shift will be made after May 1.

However, there will be some workers from the Heppner mill employed at Pilot Rock no matter what happens, it was reported.

In a related matter about 35 people will be employed at the Heppner site preparing for the auction until May 4.

### Mill property

An original proposal to donate the Kinzua mill site to the Port of Morrow for use in attracting other businesses is also apparently now in doubt. It was reported that tax consequences for the mill owners if the property is handed over are being examined, and a decision on whether the property will be donated is expected "in about two weeks". The mill owners are apparently waiting for an appraisal of the property before deciding whether to donate the property to the Port of Morrow.

The Port had earlier expressed an interest not only in the property and buildings to develop into an industrial facility, but also the machine shop and planer operation at the mill.

Tuesday it was announced by mill spokesman Evans that because of prior commitments, the machine shop probably will be sold off, however, the company is working with the Port of Morrow on the planer. It is possible the Port may purchase the planer operation.

On the question of cleanup at the Heppner mill it was reported that it should be finished in three to four weeks. One million dollars had been pledged by Kinzua for clean up of the mill site. Apparently a level one environmental assessment has been completed on the mill site with no major problems showing up.

### Port of Morrow

Port of Morrow board member Jerry Healy reported that the Port is interested in the planer and machine shop areas of the mill, as well as the office area. "Things are going to be tough," Healy warned about attracting businesses to the area. "We are off the beaten path here."

Healy did say that the Port has hired Richard Hill to do a feasibility study of the mill site to identify the type of businesses that may be able to locate there.

"The Port is going to make every effort to make something happen here," Healy said.

On a related subject Healy

said that Tillamook Cheese Co., which is looking to build another cheese operation in Oregon, is considering locating at the Port of Morrow, which may bring opportunity for some dairy operations in South Morrow County.

"This is not going to be easy," Healy stressed again about economic development in this area. "People are not going to be tearing doors down unless there is a sweetheart deal." He said the Port is also looking at setting up an enterprise zone in South Morrow County, either through petition for a new zone or expansion of the one in Boardman, to further help in attracting businesses.

Enterprise zones give property tax abatements to businesses for set lengths of time. "We don't like enterprise zones, but you need it to attract industry," he said.

Rick Minster, regional economic director, also gave a short report and said that if the site is transferred to the Port, help from government agencies could be expected.

### Schools

Chuck Starr, school superintendent, gave a report on the impact of the mill closure on the Morrow County school district.

Starr said that about 70 students in the Heppner-Ione area had been identified as members of mill workers' families. He said the district will lose \$4,600 in state aid for every student it loses, however, with the growth in the North end of the county he expected no major problems for the district. He said the district expects to lose about 20 students from the Heppner-Ione area because of the mill closure.

### HEDC

George Koffler gave a report from the Heppner Economic Development Corporation.

He said that Kinzua had pledged to put up \$15,000 to help fund a study on economic diversification of the Willow Creek valley. (As of Tuesday Kinzua had given \$12,000 to help with the study).

Koffler reported that the jobs forum sponsored by HEDC had attracted six businesses from out of town to come to Heppner and talk to former Kinzua employees about job opportunities.

He said about 30 to 35 workers had come to the meetings and some people had applied for jobs.

### City of Heppner

City manager Jerry Breazeale said that the city was mostly in the support role for workers, and that the city was looking at some type of transportation system to Pilot Rock if enough former employees went to work there, or possibly transportation to the North end of the county for workers.

He also asked for community input on the city's strategic plan which is available for viewing at city hall or on the city's web site at [www.heppner.net](http://www.heppner.net).

Mayor Bob Jepsen gave a report on Burns, Oregon which went through the same type of economic upheaval when Hines Lumber closed there and they lost 200 jobs. "Four years ago unemployment was 19 percent," Jepsen said. "Now it is six percent."

He said a motor home factory located in Burns with 350 employees, and a youth camp there employs another 50 as some of the examples of economic recovery.

He said economic incentives of no property taxes for three years, were given to attract businesses.

Jepsen also said many of the workers in Burns that were laid off did not sell their homes, but opted instead to commute to other jobs outside the community.

### CAPECO

Denny Newell from CAPECO reported that his agency will be setting up a full

time office in the Pettyjohn building soon to help laid off workers.

Employment training programs will be available and he said there are "bundles" of money available to help displaced workers find re-employment. He said about 50 percent of the Kinzua employees had applied at his office.

### Other matters

Other matters related to the mill closure and discussed at the transition meeting Tuesday morning were:

1.) it was reported that some of the equipment from the Heppner mill will be moved to Pilot Rock before the auction.

2.) Pioneer Resources plans to begin purchasing logs from state and federal timber sales. (A three year ban on such timber purchase because of the company's former log exporting practices has apparently ended).

3.) Cattle grazing leases on the company's land will remain the same. Brian Thompson will be handling the leases.

4.) The company's portable chipper will work through August.

5.) Mike Evans will be in charge of the Heppner mill through the auction May 4, 5 and 6.

6.) The talked about sale of the Pilot Rock mill is a "dead" issue and the mill there will continue to be operated.

7.) The company expects to sell the boiler at the mill at auction, but does not expect that the co-generation plant will be sold.

## Band festival to come to Heppner

High school bands from Morrow, Grant and Umatilla counties will gather at Heppner High School on Wednesday, March 31, at 6:30 p.m. for the Tri-County High School Band Festival.

This yearly gathering of smaller bands gives students from Arlington, Condon, Fossil, Culver, Helix, Heppner, Pilot Rock, Riverside, Sherman, Stanfield and Weston-McEwen the experience of being a part of a large band.

The guest conductor will be Leon McKinney, former band director of East Wenatchee High School. McKinney will choose three or four individual bands from different schools to perform, followed by the Dixieland Band, a band formed from the band conductors from each school. Finally, all of the participating bands will combine into one and play an ensemble performance.

The songs this year will include the themes from "Jurassic Park" and "Phantom of the Opera", the famous Fillmore march, "Americans We", and James Swearingen's haunting melody, "Romanesque".

The cost is \$1 per person at the door.

## SciFi exhibit to hover at museum

SciFi FANTastic IV, the fourth annual exhibit of local collections of science fiction memorabilia, will be on display Tuesday, April 6, through Saturday, May 1.

The exhibit features books, toys, movie and TV scripts, posters and other memorabilia.

Area fans who would like to share their collections (or any prized item) for the duration of the exhibit may bring them in to the museum during open hours, 1-5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday, March 30 through May 3.

Space limitations may restrict the display of large collections. Collectors of all ages are welcome.



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