

HEPPNER

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Ione church to rebuild

Ione United Church of Christ is currently engaged in a capital funds campaign to build a new church facility in Ione.

Anyone who is interested in assisting is invited to attend "Challenge Sunday" on April 11 and "Celebration Sunday" on April 18. The theme for the capital funds campaign is "Rebuilding with Glad and Generous Hearts."

The church sanctuary was severely damaged by fire in April of 1998. In January of 1999, the congregation decided to proceed toward construction of a new facility, and to raise \$120,000 or more to supplement the funds available through the insurance settlement. Both actions were approved by unanimous votes of the congregation.

The minimum goal of \$120,000 will allow the construction of a new sanctuary and community hall with kitchen and restrooms. Gifts beyond the minimum goal will make possible the addition of other spaces such as an office, a nursery and rooms for classes, meetings and choir rehearsal.

Helen Crawford of Ione is chair of the Capital Funds Committee for the church. Other members are Janet Allen, Rich Harper, Joe Rietmann and Nancy Snider. The pastor, Rev. Paul Clay, and the moderator, Jerry Rietmann, are assisting the Capital Funds

Committee. Judy Rea is receiving the gifts and pledges on behalf of the church, with the assistance of Harold Rietmann.

The first phase of the Capital Funds Campaign is directed primarily toward the members and committed friends of the church. Letters have been mailed, requesting contributions and pledges for a period of up to 10 years.

"Challenge Sunday" on April 11 will include a presentation after worship. "Celebration Sunday" on April 18 will feature a sermon by Rev. Hector Lopez, who is conference minister of the Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ, and a potluck at which the results of the first phase of the Capital Funds Campaign will be announced. All who would like to attend are welcome to participate in the worship services, meeting and dinner.

A second phase of fund raising will take place when plans have been completed and groundbreaking is near. At that time, Ione United Church of Christ will seek donations from members of the community and more distant friends of the church.

The church meets every Sunday at St. Williams Catholic Church at 11 a.m. with Sunday school at the Christian Education Building at 9:45 a.m.

Mill site decision expected soon

A decision whether Kinzua owner Greg Demers will donate the old Kinzua mill site to the Port of Morrow should be made soon, it was reported this week.

Gary Neal of the Port of Morrow is negotiating with Kinzua officials about the fate of the site.

Originally shortly after closure of the mill was announced, Demers had indicated he would donate the mill site for future economic development, for possible new business location in Heppner. The donation would have been to help alleviate the negative economic impact the mill closure and loss of jobs is having on the community, and also might provide a tax benefit for Demers.

Later it was announced the mill property might not be turned over after all. Demers is apparently assessing the best financial benefit in disposing of the property.

In other mill business a decision on whether to add a third shift at the Pilot Rock mill, also owned by Pioneer Resources (owner of Kinzua) will be made by May 1.

Cleanup at the mill site should also be completed by the May 4 mill auction date.

The Port of Morrow is applying for an economic zone in case it does take possession of the mill site. An economic zone will allow tax abatement for potential new businesses moving into the area.

More money will become available soon for training displaced mill workers, after the mill closure has now been blamed partially on world trade issues, or the North American Free Trade Agreement.

CAPECO now has an office open in the Pettyohn building in Heppner to help laid off workers obtain training and other jobs.

District math contest April 8

The annual Morrow County School District Elementary Middle School Math Contest will be held on Thursday, April 8, at 6:30 p.m., at the Ione School.

The public is welcome to observe the contest.

Diana Kincaid is in charge of local arrangements. Refreshments will be served at the end of the competition.

Chamber group learns of Burns economic development efforts



Heppner Chamber of Commerce members tour lamination plant.

Seeking to learn more about economic development, the Heppner Chamber of Commerce sent a group of six to Burns last week.

At Burns, the Heppner group met with some of the local people responsible for an economic turnaround that has brought new jobs and renewed vigor to the area.

The Burns area lost 1,100 jobs and suffered devastating economic consequences when the large Hines lumber mill closed.

In light of the recent Kinzua mill closure and the loss of 137 jobs, the Heppner Chamber was seeking advice and information as to how the cities dealt with the closure, and what was done to attract new businesses.

Following the closure the cities of Burns and Hines brought in a motor home manufacturing plant with 350 new jobs, a wood lamination factory with 250 jobs, a youth prison with 50 jobs and a state lottery computer center with three to four jobs. But it didn't happen overnight, and not without hard work and "some luck," officials told the Heppner Chamber.

"We sat around for eight years wishing for the old days to come back," said former 24-year county judge Dale White, who was there through the good times and bad.

During a two-and-one-half-hour meeting with the Heppner Chamber at the Harney County courthouse, White related how people in Burns were waiting for something to happen, and for someone to help them. "There is no one coming in on a white horse, you have to do it on your own," he advised about economic development.

To emphasize how low the Burns/Hines area had sunk after the mill closure, White gave some facts: Before the mill closure Harney county had the fourth highest per capita income in the state of Oregon; after the closure it sank to number 33. (It

is now much higher, but not at the level of the 1980s). Before the mill closure the county unemployment rate was between seven and eight percent; after the closure, 33-34 percent. The county population dropped from 8,300 to 6,900. It is now back up to 7,600. White said drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse and domestic violence all increased, and downtown Burns had 20 vacant store fronts.

White said local people finally realized that if anything, good was going to happen, it would have to come from them. A local organization called PRIDE was formed. A meeting was held and 50 to 60 people attended, set priorities on what the city wanted to do, developed a time line and then went to work.

"You have to let people around the state know you are open for business," White said. He pointed out that during recruitment of new businesses a group representing different aspects of the community could be assembled in 15 minutes to "sell the virtues" of the Burns area. He said they also helped interested businesses cut red tape such as building permits, and give them information about the local area they couldn't get anywhere else.

"And don't be afraid to cry a little bit. Let people know you are hurting, especially in Salem," he said.

Eventually the work paid off and a motor home company purchased the old Hines mill planer building, and installed an assembly line. The plant manufactures quality \$150,000 motor homes.

A youth prison was also built in Burns and caused a community split similar to the boot camp proposed earlier for Heppner.

White, who faced a recall but was retained over the issue, said business people were afraid to speak out in favor of the prison for fear of boycotts.

There was a ranching/town split on the issue, and the people against the prison were vocal and active, he said.

White said a phone survey of 400-500 people showed 70 percent were in favor of locating the prison in Burns.

Finally the business people in town stepped up and the prison was built, bringing in about 50 state jobs, some of the highest paying in town. "The facility has been there two years and you don't even know it's there," White said. "People stepped up, sometimes at personal peril."

The other business attracted to Burns recently is the Lottery back up data center, where all the information from the state's lottery computers are achieved. White said when they first applied for the facility "everybody thought it was a joke." He said with the help of representative Eugene Timms the facility was built there.

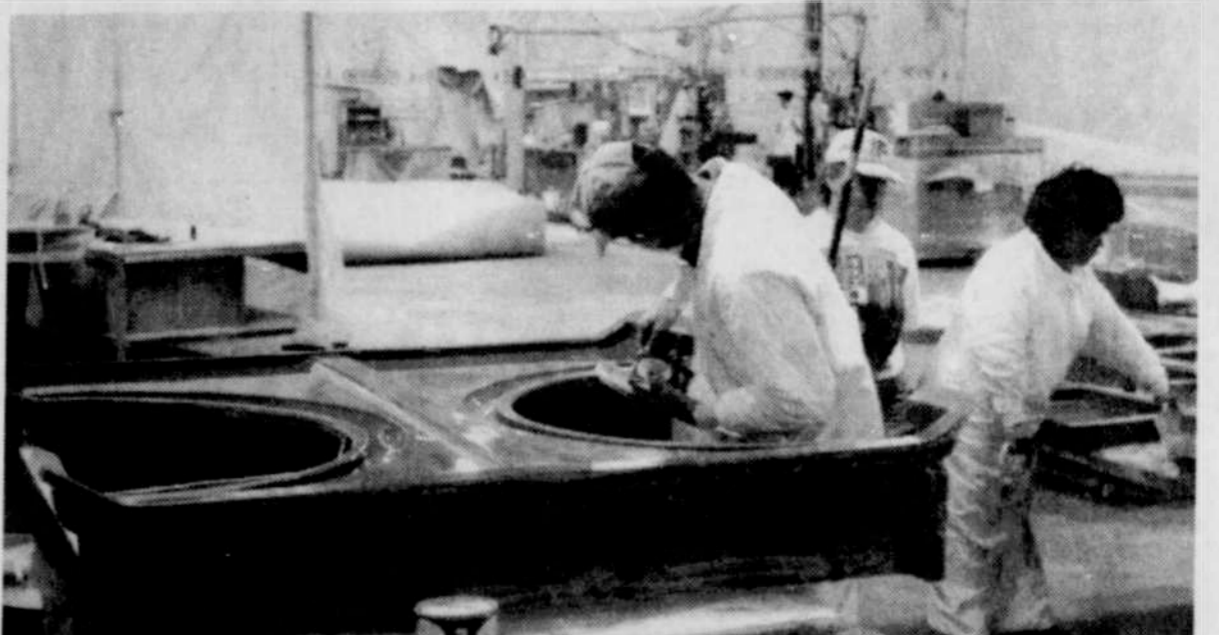
"Keep an open mind," White urged. "Success can come from unexpected places."

Money was also involved in the turnaround, with loans coming from the state economic development department, and Harney county even setting aside \$75,000 per year for economic development. An enterprise zone also was established, giving tax breaks to businesses locating in the area.

"Some people didn't want growth," White said. "They wonder now if we have too much, but we still need 700 people to get back to where we were before."

"It isn't easy, and there are a lot of obstacles, but you can't give up. You have to keep trying," White said.

The people who attended the Burns meeting from the Chamber of Commerce were: Cliff Green, Claudia Hughes, David Sykes, Tom Sly, Jerry Breazeale and Dan Brosnan. Gerald Bergstrom was volunteer bus driver for the trip.



Workers make molding parts for motor home assembly plant built in Burns as part of economic development efforts there.

25 gallon ATV sprayer: \$191.00
14 gallon ATV sprayer: \$177.49

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Ducks Unlimited banquet

The annual Ducks Unlimited Banquet will be held this Friday, April 9, at the Heppner Elks Club beginning at 6 p.m. with a social hour.

A prime rib dinner will be served at 7 p.m. with the auction, raffle and games getting underway at 8 p.m.

Chairing the event are Steve and Molly Rhea.

Senior girls' luncheon

The Soroptimist Senior Girls' Luncheon, for Ione and Heppner seniors and their mothers or guest, will be held this Thursday, April 8, at noon at All Saints Episcopal Church in Heppner.

The luncheon is catered by the women of All Saints.

Health district meeting changed

The Morrow County Health District's regular meeting has been changed to Thursday, April 8, at the Boardman Ambulance Hall at 7 p.m.



Steve Rhea with 20 gauge