

HEPPNER

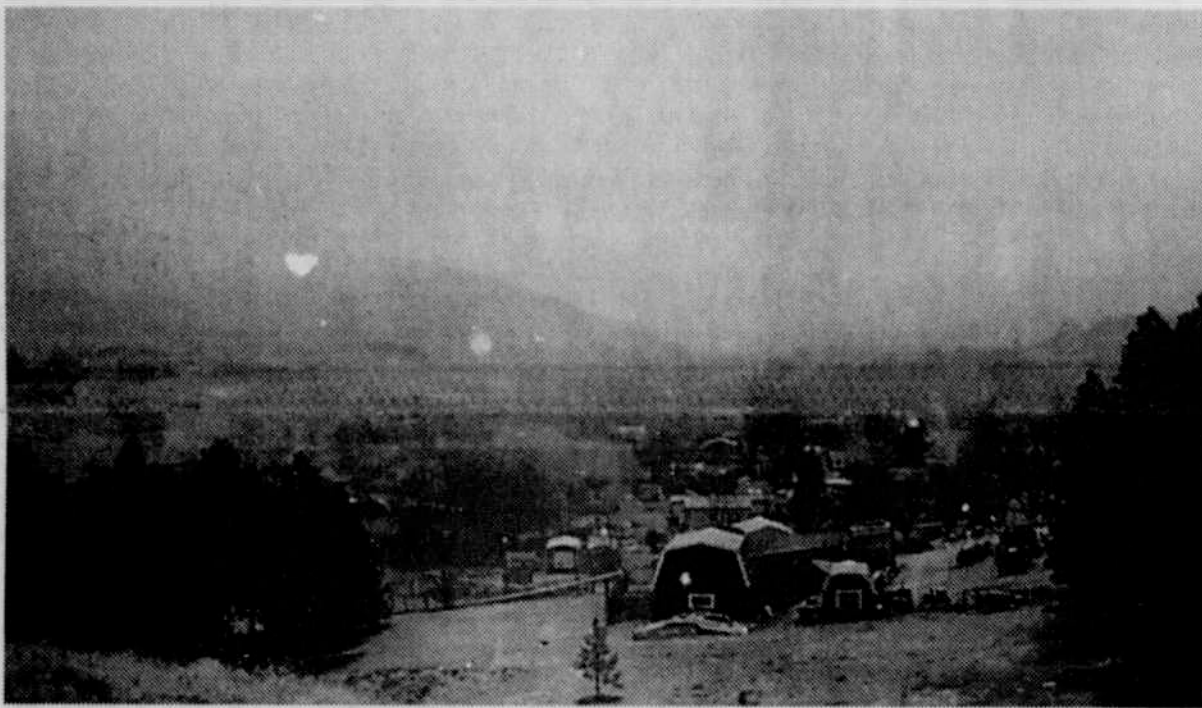


50¢

Gazette
Times

VOL. 119 NO. 2 8 Pages Wednesday, January 12, 2000 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

A little bit of winter



Heppner got a little bit of winter Tuesday, when snow dusted the hills around town but didn't stay on the ground long.

School district in the red; board to discuss proposed cuts

The Morrow County School District will be over \$1 million in the red for the current 1999-2000 year, according to information released by Superintendent Bruce Anderson at the regular board meeting Monday, January 10, at Heppner Elementary School.

Anderson said that if cuts are not made the district will continue to lose money at the tune of \$943,000 in 2000-01; over \$1.1 million in 2001-02; and over \$1.2 million in 2002-03. "This is where we are headed if we continue the current programs," said Anderson. "We cannot spend more money than we have."

Proposed cuts in district expenses would pare the projected losses down to \$71 thousand in 2000-01; \$218 thousand in 2001-02; and \$296 thousand in 2002-03. Cuts would include a reduction in personnel amounting to \$992,789 for the next school year.

In either case, Anderson projected a 2.7 percent increase in revenue from 2000-2003, a three percent increase in general fund expenditures and a cash balance of \$1 million at the end of each year.

According to school district figures, expenses took a \$2 million jump from \$13.2 million to \$15.4 million between the 1998-99 school year and the current one, partly due to a retroactive raise for the district's teachers. However, said Anderson, "Even with that, our teachers are still below (other districts)."

The board discussed putting a local option before the county

voters which would bring in more money for the district. The Oregon State Legislature recently passed a law which would allow the district to levy taxes up to the Measure 5 level, which could amount to an additional \$500,000 for the Morrow County School District.

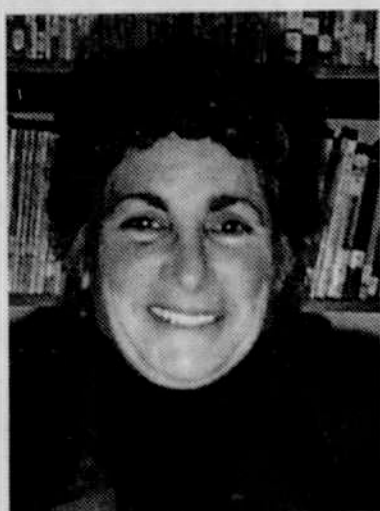
A special board budget workshop has been scheduled for this Thursday, January 13, at 2 p.m. at the Riverside High School Library. The board will hold an open meeting from 2-4 p.m., with an executive session planned from 4-5 p.m. to discuss possible cuts.

A meeting has also been planned for Tuesday, January 18, at 7:30 p.m. at Sam Boardman Elementary School to discuss district-wide facilities.

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce is organizing transportation so that south Morrow County residents may attend the Jan. 18 meeting. Those who wish transportation to the meeting should meet at the Klamath First Federal parking lot in Heppner at 6:15 p.m. For more information, call the chamber office, 676-5536.

The meeting will include discussion of needs at Heppner Elementary School, Heppner Junior/Senior High School, Lone Schools and the north end schools, including possible construction of a new school in Irrigon, as well as plans for the old Heppner Junior High building and gym.

District-wide public input is being sought at this meeting, which will include a



Julie Weikel brainstorming session.

The Matrix Group, educational planning and management consultants from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, who are in the process of studying the Morrow County School District facilities, will be present at the January 18 meeting. The Matrix Group assisted in the planning of Umatilla's new school.

Another open meeting with the Matrix Group concerning district facilities has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, at the Lone School at 7:30 p.m.

In other business: -newly-appointed school board member, Julie Weikel, Boardman, was sworn in. Weikel, 53, was appointed to fill out the term of former board member Scott Bauska who resigned when he moved out of the district. She will be up for re-election in March of 2001.

continued page 2

Employment expected to start at 60

Wheat straw particleboard plant to locate at Kinzua site

Efforts by the Port of Morrow to land a business at the old Kinzua mill site near Heppner have apparently been successful, port officials announced last week.

Advanced Composite, Inc. has indicated plans to set up a manufacturing plant making composite panel materials made from agricultural by-products at the old mill site.

The plant could be up and running as soon as August and will initially employ 60 people making panel products mainly from wheat straw.

Officials of the company were at the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Tuesday, and said the company would use a minimum of 34,000 tons of wheat straw per year to make the particle board. They said the company would make every effort to hire local people, and wages would range around \$10 per hour and higher for more skilled workers.

Equipment is expected to be installed to produce 30 million square feet of panel products per year at the 120 acre former Kinzua site.

The product is "An environmentally friendly 4 X 8 panel product made from agricultural fiber waste, and is identical to wood based particleboard in both strength and machinability," according to a press release from the company. "Finished panels are used in the building construction industry as well as in the manufacture of furniture.

"Because of its positive value to the environment, our panel products are in good demand to Western U.S. and Pacific Rim users," the company said. "In addition, State and Federal Government agencies are required to give buying preference to building components and furniture which uses wheat straw as its raw material."

Officials of the company were well received by the Heppner Chamber Tuesday, with the announcement of the new facility coming almost one year after Kinzua said it was closing its lumber mill in Heppner.

Gary Neal, manager of the Port of Morrow, as well as Port Commissioners Jerry Healy and Marvin Padberg have been working to find a new tenant for the facility. Pioneer Resources, which owned the mill site, agreed earlier to give the site to the port to be used for development.

"Because we are located in the middle of wheat country (the source of its raw materials) we feel this is a good place," Bob Eckard of Advanced Composite told the chamber. He said there was a few more details to be worked out with the port, but he expected everything to move ahead with a starting time around August.

Mark Maxon, chief executive officer of the company was also on hand. Maxon is a chemist who has worked for many major companies that make various wood based particle board. He holds the patent on the resin which binds the fiber together.

Eckard said although employment would probably start at around 60, it could go as high as 100 with a possible expansion. Kinzua employed around 130 when the mill shut down last year.

Eckard said it would take between 12 and 13 thousand acres of wheat to provide the raw material to run the plant. He said the plant would operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

A leader in resin applications research, Advanced Composite, Inc. is the exclusive owner of

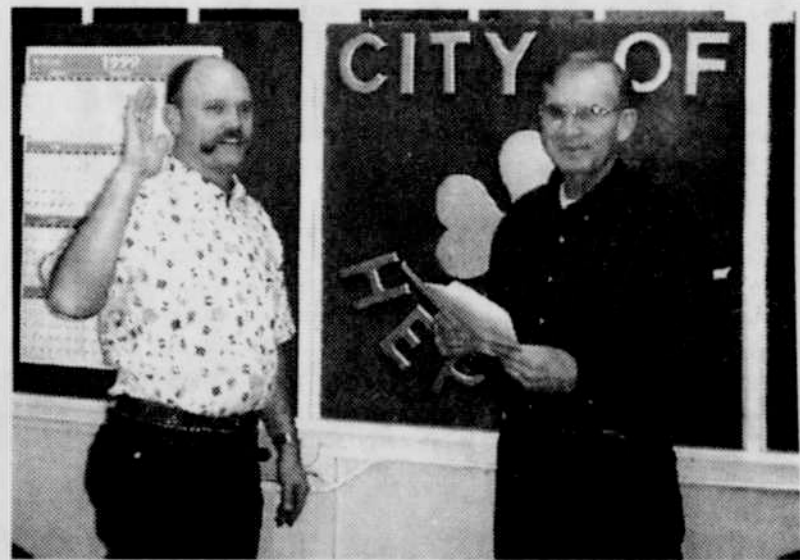


Bob Eckard (left) and Mark Maxon (right) of Advanced Composite, Inc. confer with Port of Morrow Manager Gary Neal Tuesday. The three were in Heppner Tuesday to announce the opening of a particleboard plant at the Port of Morrow site (formerly Kinzua) near Heppner.

several variants of resin technology used in Ag panel production, the company said. "By forming a relationship with the Port of Morrow, (the second largest West Coast inland Port Authority), to provide local guidance and expertise, ACI has insured for the continuing success of wheat straw particle board manufacture in eastern

Oregon." The company, which will be named the Willow Creek Wheatboard Plant, will be in a recently formed enterprise zone, which provides tax incentives for companies that locate within the zone and create jobs. As part of its agreement ACI will pass on 5 percent of its profits to the port.

Wolff sworn as council member



Tom Wolff (left) was sworn in as a Heppner City Council member by Mayor Bob Jepsen at the council's regular meeting January 10. Wolff replaces Mike McGuire who moved from the area. Wolff's term will be up for re-election in November of this year.

Former residents connected with Hermiston double homicide

A 17-year-old, Travis Ray Powell, Hermiston, was arraigned on Monday, January 10, on two counts of aggravated murder in connection with a double homicide in Hermiston on December 13.

Julie Ann Wilde, 28, and Victor Hugo Torres, 19, both Hermiston, were found shot to death in a vehicle near the intersection of Southeast 10th and East Columbia Boulevard in Hermiston shortly before midnight. Wilde, formerly of the

Heppner area, was three months pregnant at the time of her death. Powell and Rashan Sarad Brown, 19, also of Hermiston, were arrested over the weekend in connection with the deaths.

Penny Lea Anderson, 22, Powell's girlfriend, was taken into custody along with Powell, but was released from the Umatilla County Jail on Monday. No charges have been filed against Anderson, who is also formerly from Heppner.

Little League plans meeting

Heppner Little League will have a business meeting on Thursday, Jan. 20, at 7 p.m. at Cal's Restaurant.

Included on the agenda will be the upcoming season and how the league can improve it. Getting and keeping qualified umpires will also be discussed.

Board members for the upcoming year are John Murray, president, Shawn Kempas, vice president, Gayle Gutierrez, treasurer and Cindi Doherty, secretary. Other board member are Wayne Seitz, Steve Lankford and Jay Coil. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Town & Country sold out

Tickets are sold out for the annual Town and Country Chamber Awards Banquet to be held Thursday, Jan. 13. The Heppner Chamber of Commerce requests

that if someone is unable to use their ticket to contact the chamber as their is a ticket waiting list. Call 676-5536.

Rodeo court plans can drive

The Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo Court has planned a pop can drive this Sunday, January 16, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

They will provide pick-up or people may drop cans off behind Central Market in Heppner

during those times. Call 676-9748 to make donations.

NEWS DEADLINE
5 p.m. Monday

New Millennium
Calkins Parts Sale
10% OFF ALL PARTS through Jan. 31st
MORROW COUNTY GRAIN GROWERS
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcggn.net