

## School board approves controversial vehicle use policy

The Morrow County School Board approved the second reading of a controversial resolution setting the district's vehicle use policy at its regular meeting Monday night at Heppner Elementary School.

The approved policy would continue the district's practice of prohibiting district vehicles for personal use, while at the same time, giving the superintendent discretion in the issue.

According to wording of the policy, "The board may approve the purchase of vehicles to be used by staff for district business, including transportation services. The superintendent will develop and maintain regulations that define the appropriate use and care of district vehicles and the responsibilities of district staff using those vehicles."

The policy continued, "Personal use of district vehicles is prohibited; except for commuting to and from work for designated employees and de minimis (minimal) personal use such as stopping to do a personal errand on the way between a business delivery and the employee's home."

Those voting in favor of the policy-Dwayne Carroll, Gary Frederickson, Pat McNamee, John Rietmann and Julie Weikel-said that voting against the policy would negate contracts the district currently has in place with several district employees. Board members also said that they trust their employees and believe that in a competitive job market it may be difficult to recruit administrators and other experts without some additional benefits, such as use of vehicles.

Superintendent Bruce Anderson commented that because of the size of the district, distances traveled and long work hours it would not be practical, nor cost-efficient, for the employees.

Anderson said that if all personal use was prohibited, employees would have to drive to Lexington to pick up a district vehicle, drive back to their respective jobs in various parts of the district, drive back to the district office to pick up their own vehicle when work was completed and then drive home again.

Anderson also said that he supported the current practice because certain maintenance and computer

technology personnel not only worked long hours all over the district, but were often called to work at odd hours of the evening. If those employees had to pick up the vehicles in Lexington, he said, necessary repair and maintenance would be delayed.

He added however, that if the board would build a compound at the district office he would be happy to comply with a change in policy.

Board members Keith Lewis and Barney Lindsay, dissented with the majority opinion, saying that employees' personal use of the district vehicles is prohibited and also against IRS regulations.

Anderson countered, saying said that the use of vehicles by district employees had been reviewed by the district's accountant and that the particular employees must declare that benefit on their own tax returns.

Ann Murray, a member of the audience, spoke out against the district's action. She said that since the district cut 17 teachers to cope with an earlier budget shortfall, every bit of money possible should be used to rehire teachers, not to pay for administrators' use of district vehicles.

Also at the meeting the board voted to spend \$3,000 in order to increase state funding to small schools. The board stipulated that the money would be donated only if other small schools around the state also contribute and join in the battle to increase small school funding.

The monies would be used to develop a small school funding formula that would apply to all small schools around the state and would be used for lobbying purposes to increase funds for these schools.

Anderson said that he would send a letter to all those schools seeking funding and support for the project.

The board also approved a resolution authorizing the district's \$22 million capital bond levy for new construction, repairs and maintenance projects and approved a notice of the bond levy election and ballot title.

Board members expressed a desire that the public is made aware that free standing furnishings for new school buildings will not be included in the bond.

In other business the board:

- heard a curriculum report on writing from Heppner Elementary teachers;
- accepted resignations/retirement from Sharon Leinweber, Columbia Middle School math teacher and approved an interim agreement with her so that she may finish the school year from March 1 through June 11.

- approved employment for: Terri Clay, temporary lone Elementary kindergarten teacher, replacing Diana Kincaid who is on medical leave; Tanya Morris, CMS

## Baker-Morrow Partnership announces investment guidelines

The Baker-Morrow Regional Partnership has finalized details on two investment programs for small businesses located in Baker or Morrow counties. The two programs include a marketing fund and a workforce enhancement fund.

For the marketing fund, small businesses are encouraged to apply for grants to help develop or implement marketing strategies. Grants of up to \$2,500 are available to help businesses research a market or develop a marketing plan. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available for developing a new product line or breaking into a new market. Grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis and must be matched 1:1. The purpose of this fund is to help small businesses expand and create jobs. Applications are due March 1.

For the workforce enhancement fund, small businesses are encouraged to apply for grants to provide worker training and education. Grants of up to \$500 per employee or \$5,000 per business are available to help businesses increase the skill base of their current employees. Grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis, but no match is required. Applications are due March 1.

In addition, the partnership announced the creation of a small projects fund where \$75,000 will be available for community

part-time food service clerical assistant, replacing Pat Erickson.

- appointed John Kilkenny to the Heppner-Lexington Advisory Committee until June 30, replacing Kelly Merrill, who moved out of the district.

- heard the following announcements: deadline to file for board and advisory committee positions, January 11; bonds and ballots workshop, Beaverton, January 11-12; Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday Monday, January 15; next regular meeting, Sam Boardman Elementary, February 12, 7:30 p.m.

facilities and readiness projects listed on the county needs and issues list. Awards will be announced in March. Grants of up to \$7,500 will be made to projects prioritized by each county. Infrastructure projects are not eligible.

"The guiding principal of this partnership has been to make strategic investments which will have a regional payoff," said board member Tom Sly of Heppner. "The marketing and workforce funds really get at the heart of the challenges that face small businesses. And the small projects fund will give a boost to projects that mean a lot to the community, but can't attract the big grant dollars."

The partnership will be developing the details of other investments including a revolving loan fund for small businesses, a business incentive fund for business recruitment and assistance to county economic development efforts. The partnership is still identifying priority concerns in other partnership initiative areas including tourism, transportation, leadership development, health care, youth and family services.

The next partnership meeting will be held at the Port of Morrow in Boardman in March. The public is invited to attend. For more information or to request an application, contact GEODC, 276-6745 or NEOEDD, 426-3598.

## Colleges release honor rolls

### Linn-Benton Community College

Linn-Benton Community College in Albany has announced its fall 2000 honor roll. These students earned a grade point average of 3.5 or higher. Following are the local students who qualified:

Heppner-Kristen Marshall and Lexington-Amy Papineau.

Eastern Oregon University Eastern Oregon University has announced its dean's list for the 2000 fall quarter. Dean's list students achieved a grade point average of 3.5 or better. Local students who qualified are:

Heppner-Joshua Coiner, Lui Chung-wen and Tsai I-Kuang.

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Heppner Gazette-Times

## Wheat Foundation Scholarship offered

The Oregon Wheat Foundation, Inc. is offering a scholarship program for high school seniors in wheat-producing counties.

One \$500 scholarship will be made to a qualifying student from each of the participating counties which include Morrow, Baker, Gilliam, Klamath, Malheur, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa and Wasco. In addition, one scholarship will be awarded in the combined Willamette Valley counties.

Students whose parents are members of the Oregon Wheat Growers League (OWGL) or whose parents are employed by an OWGL member are eligible to apply.

Application forms are available from school counselors, scholarship chairman Cindy Osterlund, P.O. Box 322, Condon, OR 97823, or the Oregon Wheat Growers League office, P.O. Box 400, Pendleton, OR 97801. Forms must be returned by Thursday, Feb. 1.

## Assisted living center Lexington Grange topic

Lexington Grange will meet Monday, Jan. 15, for their men's pancake supper at 6:30 p.m.

The program will be presented by Suzanne Jepsen who will provide an update on plans for the assisted living center. The program is open to the public.

New officers will take over their jobs for the year. During the meeting, the charter will be draped for past members Kenneth Smouse and Dorothy Wilson.

Wheatland Pomona will be held at Willows Grange at Lone on Saturday, Jan. 27.

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**Tiffanie Munkers & Travis Greenup**  
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United Church of Christ, Ione

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**You're Invited to Celebrate**  
**BEV CRUM'S FAREWELL PARTY**  
on  
**Saturday, January 13th, at 9 p.m. at Beecher's Restaurant in Ione**

*Bev has been a very valuable employee for many, many years, so let's give her a BIG send off to the Bank of Eastern Oregon!*

*Snacks and finger foods are welcome*

*It's Party Time!*

## HiQual Calving Products SALE

Sale good through Jan. 27th

**CALVING PEN ~ ORIGINAL**  
Regular List Price: \$1,465<sup>00</sup>  
**SALE PRICE: \$1,220<sup>00</sup>**

**CALF PULLER**  
Regular List Price: \$227<sup>00</sup>  
**SALE PRICE: \$189<sup>00</sup>**

**CALF CATCH**  
Regular List Price: \$47<sup>00</sup>  
**SALE PRICE: \$39<sup>00</sup>**

**CALF TABLE**  
Regular List Price: \$609<sup>00</sup>  
**SALE PRICE: \$510<sup>00</sup>**

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