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Ione youth group attends Blazer game



Ione Youth Group leader Cathy Halvorsen obtained free tickets to a Portland TrailBlazer game for the youth group for the second year in a row. The tickets, donated by player Steve Smith, were given to the group in recognition of their community involvement for the past year.

The group attended the Blazers vs. Minnesota Timberwolves game on April 1. They each received

autographed photos of Smith and the group was recognized during the game.

Ione Youth Group members attending the game were Adrienne Swanson, Allison Halvorsen, Richard Campbell, Corey Morgan, Ashley Carmack, Adam McCabe, Derek Campbell, Adam Neiffer,

Salli McElligott, Tracy Griffith, Karl Morgan, Diana McElligott, Jaysi Bennetto, Natalie McElligott, Jeff Hunt, Tim Doherty, Paul Neiffer, Billy Gates and Johnny Collin. Others making the trip were Becky Hunt, Virgil Morgan, Frank Halvorsen, Cathy Halvorsen, Jim Swanson, Jeri McElligott and Jason Snow.

School bond ballots to be mailed April 27

Ballots for the upcoming special Morrow County School District election will be mailed by the Morrow County Clerk's Office on Friday, April 27.

Ballots must be received by Tuesday, May 15, at 8 p.m.

Ballot boxes will be located at the clerk's office in Heppner; the Morrow County Public Works Office in Lexington; at the Bank of Eastern Oregon in Ione until 4 p.m. and then at the Ione City Hall from 4-8 p.m.; at the Morrow County Annex Building in Irrigon; and the Docken Building in Boardman.

The last day to register to vote in the May 15 election is Tuesday, April 24.

In the special election, Morrow County voters will decide the fate of a \$22 million school district bond issue.

The monies will be used to:
-construct, equip and furnish two new elementary schools in Boardman and Irrigon with classrooms for 200 students each and infrastructure to accommodate 500 students in each school;

-replace aging elementary facilities, renovate existing facilities to improve energy conservation, upgrade technology capabilities and "protect the community's investment in existing facilities";

The improvements will:
-upgrade electrical wiring and connect schools with a high-speed network to improve student access to technology and

expanded learning opportunities;

-replace outdated heating cooling, ventilation and plumbing systems and make health and safety improvements;

-replace elementary building in Ione and the elementary gym and band room in Heppner;

-replace unserviceable roofing on identified facilities;

-improve athletic fields and parking at Columbia Middle

School to accommodate grades seven-12.

To be passed, the measure must have at least a 50 percent voter turnout

The bonds will mature in 20 years or less from the date of issuance.

The tax rate is \$1.38 per thousand. A homeowner with an \$85,000 home, for example, will pay about \$117.30 per year or \$9.78 per month.

Wheat Foundation golf tournament

The fifth Annual Oregon Wheat Foundation Golf Tournament has been set for Wednesday, May 23, at the Willow Creek Golf Course in Heppner. Last year's event drew 72 golfers to play.

Everyone is invited to attend this year's event. Individuals without teams of four will be matched up with other individuals to form teams. Non-golfers are also welcome to

attend. Those who would like to attend, but do not golf are welcome to come and help out.

Registration materials are available from the OWGL office, 276-7330, and are also available on the OWGL website at <http://www.owgl.org>.

The tournament is an annual fund raising event for the Oregon Wheat Foundation's many programs.

Anson Wright opens April 28, Cutsforth delayed

Morrow County Public Works has announced that Anson Wright Park will open Saturday, April 28.

The park is available for overnight camping as well as day-use picnicking and fishing.

Eight new camping spots were added at the end of last year's camping season, all of which are ADA accessible. Anson Wright Park is located 26 miles south of Heppner on Highway 207.

The opening of Cutsforth Park will be delayed this year until Saturday, May 12, due to park maintenance and weather conditions.

Cutsforth Park is also available for overnight camping as well as day-use picnicking and fishing. Cutsforth Park is 28 miles south of Heppner on the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway, going toward Ukiah.

For additional information about these parks, contact Morrow County Public Works at 989-9500.

Heppner loses population in latest census

The population of Heppner is now down to 1,395, according to data released by the 2000 Census.

The current population is down from 1,465 in 1994, 1,412 in 1990, 1,498 in 1980, 1,429 in 1970 and 1,661 in 1960, according to information obtained from the 1995-96 Oregon Blue Book.

July 2000 Census figures list Boardman as having 2,910 residents. According to the 1995-96 Blue Book, Boardman had 2,145 residents in 1994, 1,387 in 1990, 1,261 in 1980, 192 in 1970 and 153 in 1960.

Irrigon now has almost doubled, with 1,740 residents, according to the Census. In 1994 it had 890 residents, in 1990-737, in 1980-700, in 1970-261 and in 1960-232.

Ione currently has 325 residents, up from 250 in 1994. In 1990 it had 255 residents, 345 in 1980, 355 in 1970 and 350 in 1960.

Lexington currently has 265 residents, compared to 285 in 1994, 286 in 1990, 307 in 1980, 230 in 1970 and 240 in 1960.

Morrow County has grown in numbers, with 11,100 people as of July 1, 2000; 8,600

in 1994, 7,625 in 1990, 7,519 in 1980, 4,465 in 1970 and 4,871 in 1960.

Judge reports on Salem meetings

By Doris Brosnan

At the April 11 meeting of the Morrow County Court, Judge Terry Tallman reported on meetings he had attended on the previous day in Salem. Leadership of both houses, Tallman said, are in favor of channel deepening in the Columbia River, but the National Marine Fishery Service and Corps of Engineers need to approve the plan. Tallman said that this would only impact about a 50-mile stretch of the river and that Governor Kitzhaber is supportive.

While in Salem, Tallman attended a telecommunications meeting and learned that three entities are requesting another state study be completed. Brosnan reported that the Morrow County School District is moving ahead with their new system, planning to have it in by June 30.

Also, Tallman spoke to Representative Greg Smith, to Senator Ben Westland and to Katie Coda of the Governor's Office about the "Ione-Boardman Road," and reiterated the court's request for mitigation from the governor's office. He reported to the court that the Governor has requested another meeting of the buyer and the environmental groups to address the issue of a road easement in the land-sale agreement now under consideration.

Commissioner Dan Brosnan reported that at the Heppner Coordinating Council meeting the previous day, the Oregon director of the Nature Conservancy committed to putting in writing their agreement to keeping the PGE-access road open. In a related matter, Judge Tallman noted that the county will have to purchase from the Nature Conservancy about two or three acres in order to straighten out the Juniper Canyon Road.

County Counsel Bill Hanlon reported to the court that he has reviewed one party's attorney's written explanation of legal issues involved in the land sale and "Ione-Boardman Road" relationship. He and County Planning Director Tamra Mabbott both voiced some concerns and observations and agreed with Judge Tallman that a meeting for them with the governor's representative would be helpful. Tallman will try to set up such a meeting.

Hanlon also reported further developments in the issue of an Estreagaard Road closure, which remains in question. Following his recommendation, the court approved a public hearing to consider the status of the public access and will

Easter Bunny makes annual visit



Ryan, 5, and Coby, 9 months, Dougherty meet the Easter Bunny during the annual Heppner Easter egg hunt Saturday at the city park.

send notices to the property owners along Estreagaard.

Mabbott reported that she is requesting an impact analysis related to the raceway plan, and is requesting assistance from the Oregon Department of Transportation for the engineering.

Public Health Director Laura McElligott gave budget information to the court and explained some funding changes by the state. She also introduced to the court the possibility of administering a Nurse-Family Partnership program for Baker County. The court requested further discussion on both topics.

Sheriff Verlin Denton advised the court that LEDS no longer financially supports the LEDS computer-system upgrades, though it does make the necessary upgrades available: Denton reported that an upgrade will allow five terminals, which will help with training and usage, and suggested that the cost could be covered through the department's ending fund balance. The court approved the upgrade.

Public Works Director Burke O'Brien reported to the court: the crew finished removing asphalt on Columbia, are working on Second Street, and paving is now scheduled, to be completed in three or four weeks. They have extended a culvert, cleaned culverts and installed a culvert, finished the Morter-Bridge guardrail, patched Kunze and Frontage roads and chipped at Cutsforth Park. They bladed Clark's Canyon, Fuller Canyon, Stock Drive Road, Kenny Road, Sunflower Flats and Hinton Creek. Fifteen employees attended a training in Hermiston.

O'Brien said that Cutsforth Park will open May 12. Park hosts will be Judy and Willard Horton. Host at Anson Wright Park will be Gary Richard. O'Brien reported that no bid came in on the courthouse clock tower painting job. The final draft of the airport layout plan has been received.

A representative of the Education Service District addressed a problem with installation of the CSEPP video-conferencing system. He explained the costs of putting in a T-1 line for the Irrigon and Boardman annexes, with a connection to the respective fire halls or of putting in a microwave connection. Director of Emergency Services Casey Beard has explained to ESD that FEMA would require the county to share the costs because lines would also be used for non-emergency county business. The court will contact Beard.

The court heard a supplemental-insurance presentation by representatives from AFLAC. They offered some health-related and medical statistics, explained some features of AFLAC's plan and quoted a premium price.

Other action of the court:

- approval of three approach permits onto Bombing Range Road;
- renewal of the contract with Debbie White for grounds maintenance at the Irrigon Annex;
- approval of the contract with Maben Logging to remove dangerous trees at Cutsforth Park;
- approval of the contract for asphalt with Blue Mountain Asphalt;
- appointment of Mary Arbogast to the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee;
- approval of additional resources and corresponding appropriations in the Behavioral Health funds.

Small school funding bill passes Senate

A state-wide small school funding bill, which would give Heppner and Ione schools additional monies, has passed the Oregon Senate, according to Bruce Anderson, Morrow County School District superintendent.

Anderson said that if the bill also passes the Oregon House of Representatives, high schools with 350 or fewer students would receive an additional \$200 per student per year. Qualifying districts could also apply for an additional \$1.5 million to provide enough funds to hire additional teaching staff.

Heppner High School currently has 121 students and Ione High School, 60.

Anderson said that the smallest districts could receive \$4.5 million per year for the next two years. He added that the Oregon Department of Education is planning to conduct a study on size, costs and program needs in small high schools in order to make recommendations for permanent changes so that the schools will be able to maintain programs over a long period of time.

Anderson said that citizens are urged to contact Representatives Ted Ferrioli and Greg Smith to indicate their support for the bill.

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