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Ione's planning to get the blues

Ione's planning to get the blues in a big way--with the annual Ione Fourth of July Blues Festival. This year's festival will offer not only offer "big-time music and small town hospitality," but will also honor World War II veterans.

The kickoff for the celebration will be the Fourth of July Golf Tournament at Willow Creek Country Club in Heppner. cost is \$30 per golfer. Contact Jim Swanson, 541-422-7410 to sign up or for more information.

Also that day there will be music in the Ione City Park with "Wood", featuring Ionians Dustin Padberg, Jeff Eyentich and Dave Anderson. Food vendors will also be on hand.

July 4 festivities get underway bright and early with the 7 a.m. Dawn's Early Light Fun Run beginning at the Ione School. Contact Dale Holland, 541-676-5034, to sign up for more information.

At 7:30 a.m. muffins and coffee will be available in the park, sponsored by ICABO.

The horseshoe tourney will begin at 10 a.m. Contact Monty Crum, 541-422-7286.

At 11 a.m. the parade will get underway with World War II veterans as the grand marshals and the Blues Cruise Classic Car Show. Contact Chuck Nelson, 541-989-8148.

A host of events begin at noon with food vendors in the park; pie and coffee in the fire hall, sponsored by the Catholic ladies; children's games; frog jumping; a straw money pile for children ages three to eight; a dunk tank from noon to 2 p.m. (contact Theresa Hams, 541-422-7038); tricycle races (contact Terry Mewhinney, 541-422-7259); and Bingo (contact Harold Rietmann, 541-422-7472).

Swimming in the Ione Pool will be available beginning at 2 p.m. with a charge for admission.

Also at 2 p.m. music begins in the park with "Too Loose", Robbie Laws, "Too Slim and the Taildraggers" and featuring Sonny Rhodes.

The fireworks will begin at dusk.

Health district board to meet

A regular meeting of the Morrow County Health District Board will be held on Monday, June 25, at 7 p.m. at the Morrow County Annex Building in Irrigon.

The agenda will include a budget meeting; May financials; a county treasurer investment resolution; staffing concerns; CEO report; and an executive session.



Too Loose, featuring Bill Runyon, who grew up in Pendleton and still has family and friends in the area, will perform at the Ione Blues Festival at 2 p.m. on July 4. Runyon and his brother, Steve, previously had a band, "Silver Foxes," which played at many of the local rodeo dances. Steve Runyon will be coming from California and their sister will be coming from Salem for the festival.



Too Slim and the Taildraggers

Sex abuse case involving former dispatcher delayed

The case against a former Morrow County sheriff's dispatcher indicted on 12 counts of encouraging sexual abuse was continued again on Thursday, June 14, to give the defense time to review evidence.

The evidence primarily is a duplicate of the computer hard drive used by the suspect, Hector Pacheco Morales, said Tammy Schilling, assistant district attorney in Morrow County.

Morales is accused of attempting to build a Web site with photos of

children involved in explicit sex acts, Schilling said. None of the 12 boys, ages 10-15, are believed to be from Morrow County.

"We're of the opinion that he was manipulating it and getting it ready to launch a Web site," David C. Allen, district attorney, said. "His lawyer is saying he was just organizing it for his own pornography files."

The next court date for Morales is set for Aug. 9. Schilling said she expects a trial date to be set at that time.

Recall petitions filed for three school board members

Mike Armato of Heppner has filed petitions for recall of Morrow County School District Board Members Pat McNamee, Gary Frederickson and John Rietmann.

Armato was listed as chief petitioner. The petition was co-signed by Marcia Kemp, who was listed as treasurer for the chief petitioner's political committee.

Armato said that petitions will be available for registered voters to sign this Thursday and Friday from 4-6 p.m. in front of Central Market in Heppner and later at other locations.

Armato said that his committee must obtain 404 signatures per board member in order for the issue to be placed on the ballot. Petitioners have until September 30 to collect the signatures, he said. According to Armato, after the signatures are submitted, the county clerk has 10 days to verify the signatures, after which the clerk will send notice to the board members. Then board members may resign or state why they don't believe they should be recalled, he said. If they don't resign, a recall election will be set, he said.

"They (the board) are trying to illegally recall (school board members) Keith (Lewis) and Barney (Lindsay)," said Armato. "We're going to show them the right way to do it."

"This is not just a reaction to Keith and Barney. This started way back to February 2000. That's when things started to go sour. Several hundred people showed up and we spoke for several hours. They refused to listen to us," Armato said, referring to a board meeting which resulted in the board cutting teachers, mainly in south end schools in response to a budget shortfall. Armato and others protested the cuts.

"Bruce (Anderson, the Morrow County School superintendent) is exercising poor leadership," added Armato.

Armato is married to Lewis' step-daughter.

The statement on the recall petition reads as follows:

"We are all patrons of the Morrow County School District. We pay school taxes directly or indirectly. We entrust the education of our children, grandchildren, and our neighbor's children to the schools. We entrust our futures to the ability of the schools to do what is right in order to help these young charges become productive members of society.

"In order for us to trust this institution, we must have a board of school directors that is responsive to our legitimate concerns. This is not the case. Patrick McNamee (Gary Frederickson and John Rietmann were listed in separate petitions) has abused the public trust by failing to adequately oversee the district superintendent. He has engaged in unprofessional conduct towards other board members, participated in the abuse of Oregon's open meeting laws, ignored public input, favored administrative spending over student needs and finally, he is attempting to overturn the rightful election of two other board members. It is time to correct this situation. We need a school board that understands that our children's needs are the first priority and realizes its authority comes from us. We must take back our schools."

Armato's action on June 14 followed the school board's decision to seek the decision of an independent judge concerning residency disputes between the board and Lewis of Heppner and Lindsay of the Lexington area.

At an earlier Morrow

County School Board meeting, the board said they had received an anonymous letter claiming that Lindsay lived in a different school district zone from which he was elected. Lindsay was elected from Zone 6, but the letter claimed that he actually lived in Zone 2. While researching the issue, the district said they discovered that Lewis actually lived in Zone 6, not Zone 4, from which he was elected.

Lewis has said that prior to his registering for election for the school district spot, the district had confirmed that he lived in Zone 4.

Lindsay's residency issue revolves around whether he actually maintains his residence at 73968 Feedlot Lane in Zone 6 or at 68062 Lindsay Road which is in Zone 2.

Lindsay and Lewis had previously been at odds with the majority of the school board over budgetary issues and teacher cuts

and had accused the board of holding an illegal meeting. They claim that the residency issues may actually be politically motivated. They also suggested that the issue may be influenced by "north-south" alliances. Lindsay and Lewis represent the Heppner and Lexington areas in south Morrow County. Rietmann represents Ione in south Morrow County, although some detractors have said that he is forging alliances with north Morrow County. McNamee represents the Irrigon area and Frederickson, Boardman, both in north Morrow County. School board members must live in the zone from which they are elected, but are elected county-wide.

Armato said that his committee decided against attempting to recall board member Julie Weikel because she had been on the board only a brief period.

Hearing held on school board residency issues

An independent judge, hired by the Morrow County School District, heard testimony Tuesday concerning the dispute over legal residency of two Morrow County School District Board members.

Judge Warner Wasley, a retired judge from LaGrande who presided over the hearing, said that he would return by July 1 with a decision concerning the residency issues of board members Barney Lindsay, Lexington area, and Keith Lewis, Heppner.

The judge's decision, however, is not binding and Lindsay and Lewis have said that they would not be bound by the judge's decision and may be "forced" to take the issue to court.

The school board, represented at the hearing by Crook-Deschutes ESD attorneys John Witty and Steve Herron, maintains that school board votes may be challenged because they claim that Lindsay and Lewis do not live in the zones from which they were elected.

Lewis, represented by attorney Douglas E. Hojem, and Lindsay, represented by attorney Ed Sullivan, maintain that the board is attempting to change the outcome of an election, which it has no authority to do.

According to the district, the board received an anonymous letter claiming that Lindsay actually lives at 68062 Lindsay Road, which is in Zone 2, rather than at his residence at 73968 Feedlot Lane, which is in Zone 6, the zone from which he was elected.

The district then investigated the residences of all board members and consequently discovered that Lewis' residence at 440 Terrace Drive in Heppner is actually in Zone 6, not Zone 4, the zone from which he was elected.

Lewis, who has been a board member for two years, said at the hearing that the district had earlier confirmed that he lived in Zone 4 prior to his running for the director's position.

Lindsay, who is in the middle of his second four-year term as director, said that his residency had been investigated before and it had been determined that his legal residency was at the Feedlot Lane address within Zone 6. At that time, the school district superintendent was Chuck Starr and the school district's attorney was Bill Kuhn. Kuhn testified at the Tuesday hearing on Lindsay and Lewis' behalf.

Lindsay said at the hearing that his residence had been at the Feedlot Lane address since he returned home from college in 1993. Lindsay said that when his grandmother became ill, however, he and his wife and children moved to another family-owned residence outside his zone to be near her. When his grandmother died, he, his wife and children moved into her residence on Lindsay Road to allow him to do remodeling work on the house, which had fallen in disrepair since the grandmother's illness. He stated that they had moved there upon direction of his father and employer, Larry Lindsay, and intended to move back to his Feedlot Lane residence when the remodeling was complete. All of the residences are owned by Lindsay Ranch-Lindsay's parents and the grandmother, now deceased.

Lewis and Lindsay's attorneys charge that the residency issues are politically motivated because the two are often at odds against the board majority and superintendent Bruce Anderson.

Willow Creek Water Park News

The Bank of Eastern Oregon is sponsoring community days at the Willow Creek Water Park during the month of July. Every Monday in July the pool will be open to the public at no charge from 1-5 p.m.

Also, scholarships for swimming lessons are available. Those interested should inquire at the pool.

A new policy is now in effect at the pool concerning temperature. If the temperature shown on Heppner TV channel 3 (available only in Heppner) is below 60 degrees, the pool will not open that day, according to manager Merry Brannon.

Mural dedication, open house slated

A dedication of the Agricultural Equipment Collection mural and an open house will be held on Tuesday, June 26, at 6:30 p.m. at the museum on Riverside Avenue and Hinton St. in Heppner.

The open house is hosted by the Morrow County Arts and Crafts Council and the Museum's Farm Foundation Board.

Everyone is invited to attend. Refreshments will be served.

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