

## County Court hears report on trails

By Doris Brosnan

At the August 8 meeting of the Morrow County Commissioners, Morrow County Public Works Office specialist Karen Wolff explained that the State Parks Department provides funding for creation of ATV trails for parks, as well as for related education,

enforcement, safety, operations, and maintenance.

According to Wolff, the public works department sees an opportunity to use some currently little-used roads - with potential for 72 miles of looping trails - and to provide economic development through tourism. Wolff detailed

some of the potential the public works office staff sees in the project and said that they are currently attempting to determine public support. She noted that there could be closures for fire and hunting seasons, that landowners would still have access to their properties and that the trails would not be closed to the public. She plans to address local organizations, requesting letters of support, and a booth at the county fair will provide a vehicle for public comments. The commissioners shared Wolff's enthusiasm, noting the long-term benefits and the fit with the race track facility planned in the north county.

Wolff also reported the closure on campfires in the county parks.

Morrow County Children and Families director Barbara Hayes presented to the court the amended Juvenile Crime Prevention Plan and reported the return to the state of some unspent monies. The plan had to be amended because of changes in the budget format and in the outcomes. It identifies the after-school program and the wraparound services with the Safety Net Program and targets reductions in juvenile crime arrests and recidivism. Hayes also presented charts of some programs' outcomes. The court approved the updated plan.

County Assessor Greg Sweek shared a concern that proper backup of the computer systems be complete. He also noted the need for more than one ESD staff member's knowledge of the county system. Judge Terry Tallman volunteered to speak to the head of ESD about Sweek's concerns. The commissioners and Sweek also discussed the need to convert some files from the old system.

Commissioner Dan Brosnan brought to the Court's attention the decision of the planning commission not to require a remonstrance agreement with the Port of Morrow, based on the port manager's assurance that the port would build a 3000-foot extension of the road involved. Brosnan's concern lay in the decision's setting a precedent, while requiring other developers to sign a consent-to-participate agreement. Commissioner John Wenzholz noted that the port's taking over the roads at issue would be in the best interest of the county but that the port should be held accountable. Judge Terry Tallman added that the court expects the fullest extent of cooperation that the port indicated they would carry out and Wenzholz agreed with him in not considering this decision a precedent-setting decision.

Tallman recommended the court review plans from the Morrow County Fair Board for improvement of the boys' dormitory at the fairgrounds. Fair Board member Mark Jones explained that this represents a two-year project intended to replace the single-wide mobile used as the dorm, which he reported as unsafe, with no shower facility and inadequate security. The Fair Board proposes to remove the old field house on the southeast corner of the football field and replace it with a new building, though they have not yet approached the city of Heppner about the plan. The site selection was limited by the floodplain.

Jones presented diagrams of the proposed building, which would include storage for the high school, the dorm area, restrooms and pay showers. He reported that the Lions Clubs of Irrigon and Heppner are interested in helping with fund raising. The court approved the Fair Board's pursuit of grant funding and requested that they check with the school district on ownership of the present building and that they keep the court informed.

Planning director Tamra Mabbott, Emergency Management director Casey Beard, and Bruce Schwann of SCM, the company that will provide the environmental technical support related to the chemical depot, discussed with the Court the status of that contract. Mabbott reported that as soon as the level of funding is approved by the Army, DEQ is prepared to sign the contract. She then went over the prioritized list of tasks for the contracted person, as the commissioners shared some information about related projects and asked questions about the tasks.

Beard reported that the "surrogate burn" is scheduled for June. Schwann noted that the tests reported in the newspaper are termed as "commissioning," include testing of electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems, and are an

important stage that deals with the complexities of low-voltage wiring.

The court agreed with Mabbott that as soon as this contract is signed, they need to go back to DEQ for funding for the next fiscal year, which begins on October 1. The court also appointed Brosnan to sign the DEQ and SCM contracts when they are ready.

Beard told the court that county counsel Bill Hanlon advised him that the court should complete a "sole-source declaration" for purchase of the 450 MHz Radio System. He also shared a preliminary cost estimate for the CSEPP loop microwave system, money for which the state is to have in the state budget. Brosnan recommended meeting with the state about the costs, which are "inching up," and the state's expenses in building up its system. Beard observed that the county is insisting that all funding is secured and available, all property leased or owned, and all permitting completed before letting contracts for purchase and installation. He will closely monitor the contract and financing, he said.

Beard also provided a purchase plan for mobile and hand-held monitors for area hospitals and fire departments, for the monitoring of chemical agents. The court authorized the purchase, with state budgeted funds, through Proengin Incorporated, the only manufacturer of these monitors.

Beard reported the need to replace his vehicle this year. His will become the monitoring unit for the Boardman Fire Department. He requested that the county purchase a vehicle and lease it to the Emergency Management Department. Beard also reported the cost of upgrading his department's audiovisual equipment and requested approval for the upgrade. The court approved both requests.

Beard reminded the court of the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the chemical depot on August 13, though issues remain, including the radio system, hazardous waste fees, and secondary waste.

Beard ended his reports with the "Fiscal Year 2002 CSEPP Work Plan," explaining that reports are completed on an annual and quarterly basis.

Assistant public works director Bob Nairns reported that the crew put some finishing touches on the work at the fairgrounds, started paving on Buttercreek at Pine City, worked on alkali blowouts on Strawberry, Juniper and Grieb roads; completed paving on Rippee Road.

Other actions of the court included the following:

- approval of replacing an Irrigon Justice Court printer;
- declaration of a drought emergency and approval of a letter to be sent to the Governor;
- signing of the Flamingo Rose

Subdivision plat;

- correction and approval of the order to vacate a portion of Sixth Street West;

- approval of a permit to Qwest for a line on West Oregon Lane and permits to CenturyTel for a line along Rippee Road and a line at the junction of Pole Line and Homestead;

- authorization for the emergency management director to declare an

emergency in the event of any public safety emergency in the absence of all three commissioners;

- approval of an order canceling personal property taxes for a particular individual.

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