

## First phases of internet project completed

The first three phases of a plan to establish high speed internet access to all of Morrow County have been completed, according to Nate Arbogast, Morrow County School District technology coordinator.

Arbogast told the school board at their regular meeting Monday night that a network of aerial and underground fiberoptics cable has been established throughout Boardman, Irrigon and Heppner. The high speed internet access system links Boardman schools and learning center, Irrigon schools and learning center and Heppner Elementary School and High School.

The next phases of the plan will establish high speed internet access links for the "North Morrow County Spur", which is Boardman and Irrigon; then the "Heppner South Morrow County Spur", which would link Heppner and Lexington; and the "Ione South Morrow County Spur", which is Ione. The final step in the plan would link north county with south county, establishing a connection between Ione or Lexington and Boardman.

Arbogast said that the first three phases took only three months to complete, but the next phases may proceed even more rapidly because they had to take the complicated water, gas, electric and phone line systems into consideration when establishing the cable system within the cities.

Arbogast said that a combination of aerial and underground lines were established in Boardman and Irrigon, but Heppner's system was entirely aerial, through cooperation with Columbia Basin Electric.

He said that the system has one thousand times the capacity and speed of the current school district's T-1 lines for providing internet access and added that this system would serve the district for at least 20 years.

In addition to improving the district's system to provide student data, such as grades, assessments and testing scores, and greatly enhancing the district's ability for video conferencing between the schools and district office, the system could also link government entities, and could link with other retail providers to provide low cost, high speed internet access for the public.

Arbogast said that Heppner TV, which is linked to the system, could end up becoming the high speed internet access provider for Heppner. He said that it could also be feasible that Heppner TV could provide an opportunity to "interface video networks". For example, a school board meeting could be broadcast via Heppner TV.

In other areas Arbogast said utility companies, such as Umatilla Electric, have indicated an interest in providing high speed access to the public through the system.

Arbogast said that the system was made possible through a partnership among the school district, his private company, Arbogast Business Services, Inc., and Morrow Development Corporation, a non-profit corporation which includes the Port of Morrow Commissioners and two bankers within the county.

"Our (Morrow Development Corporation) primary goal is economic development," said Port of Morrow CEO Gary Neal. "It made sense for Morrow Development to get involved in order to diversify our ag-based economy. If we don't make fiberoptics a part of the county, the 21st century will pass us by."

Arbogast said his analysis predicts that the district will break even with telecommunication services circuit expenses in three to five years and added that bringing in additional users would reduce that timeline by bringing in additional dollars.

He said that in 1999 he established his private company when he was unable to find an entity to partner with the district to secure funding to establish the

fiberoptics cable system. He stressed that his company has not made a profit on the system. The district is eligible for funding through a federal program that provides monies for schools for internet access.

In other business, the Morrow County School Board: -learned that a music teacher has been hired for Heppner High School and Heppner Elementary and that a science teacher, who is also qualified to teach language arts, social studies and math, has been hired for Columbia Middle School. All licensed staff positions have been filled with these recent hirings. Some classified staff positions remain open.

Newly hired teachers include: Heppner Elementary School-Brandi Orem, second/third grade, Pam Dowdy, fifth/sixth grade, and Wendy Appleton, music; Heppner High School-Lucas Casady, math, Jason Palmer, science, Kathleen Spinks, special ed, and Appleton, music. Two educational assistant positions are still vacant at HES and a special ed assistant position is still unfilled at HHS.

-learned the meeting schedule for community input for the bond construction projects. Meetings are set as follows: Heppner-Lexington Advisory Board on Wednesday, September 5, at 6:30 p.m. at the Heppner High School cafeteria; Ione-Lexington Advisory Board on Thursday, September 6, at 7 p.m. at the Ione School cafeteria; Irrigon, Tuesday, September 11, at 6:30 p.m. A.C. Houghton Elementary; Boardman, Wednesday, September 12, 6:30 p.m., Sam Boardman Elementary.

-approved a \$395,000 contract with Heery International for project management services for the bond project.

-approved a \$1,116,492 contract with Barber Barrett Turner Architects Inc. for architectural services for the bond project.

-approved a contract with Morrow County Unified Recreation District for "cultural and recreation activities" for 2001-2002. MURD will pay the school district "a sum not exceeding \$432,300" to fund extracurricular activities. The amount is up from around \$410,000 for the 2000-2001 school year, said superintendent Bruce Anderson.

-adopted arts standards for Morrow County schools.

-decided by consensus against audio-taping school board meetings, although agreed that individual board members could tape the meetings if they so desire.

-tabled board policy development until a later date.

-discussed plans to interview two groups to conduct the search for a new district superintendent.

-heard a report from board chair Julie Weikel on board roles and responsibilities and a report from Weikel and board member John Renfro on the Oregon School Boards Association summer workshop.

-accepted resignations from Marchelle Downey, Riverside High School ed assistant and assistant volleyball coach; Natalie Kerfoot, A.C. Houghton Elementary fourth grade teacher; Matt Neff, RHS social studies teacher; Jane Akers, Sam Boardman Elementary School assistant cook; Lana Orr, Heppner Junior High School head volleyball coach; Webster Castaneda, Columbia Middle School social studies/Spanish teacher; Tiffanie Greenup, Heppner High School one-on-one special ed assistant; Angie Hanson, Heppner Elementary School ed assistant; and Pam Piper, HES ed assistant.

-approved employment for Jack Walty, RHS assistant custodian, replacing Allen Peck; John Baldwin, RHS half-time temporary science teacher, replacing George Riedel; Erin Andreason, RHS half-time temporary PE/health teacher, replacing George Riedel; Diana Hammermeister, ACH second-grade teacher, replacing Gabrielle Meyers; Dawn Sharp, ACH fourth-grade teacher, replacing Natalie Kerfoot;

William Pullen, RHS language arts teacher, replacing Keegan McCaslin; Wendy Appleton, HES and HHS music teacher, replacing Ralph Werner; Jorja Gunderson, CMS social studies/Spanish teacher, replacing Webster Castaneda; Tom Grimes, RHS social studies teacher, replacing Matt Neff; Pam Hancock, RHS ed assistant, replacing Marchelle Downey; Carol Smith SBE assistant cook, replacing Jane Akers.

-approved transfers/promotions for: Richard Smith from CMS assistant custodian to ACH head custodian, replacing Bart Prouty; Dana Reid, from HHS assistant volleyball coach to HJH head volleyball coach.

-heard a report on the Umatilla-Morrow ESD Migrant Education Program and the Morrow County 2001 Summer Program. A total of 545 students enrolled in the migrant program and 124 enrolled in the summer program, including 15 from Heppner, 42 from Boardman and 67 from Irrigon.

-established a new form for citizen input at school board meetings. In the future, citizens are requested to fill out a form, stating the pertinent issue and their concerns, and then present the form to the superintendent.

-approved extra duty contracts for Brandon Kauffman, HHS assistant football coach; Bill DeBoard, student accounting coordinator/school master.

-approved attendance variances for two students to attend the Pilot Rock School District and two students to attend Hermiston schools.

-heard the following announcements: beginning inservice, Tuesday, August 28, district schools, 8 a.m.; district-wide inservice, Wednesday, August 29, Riverside High School, 8:30 a.m.; Labor Day holiday, Monday, September 3; first day of school for students, Tuesday, September 4; next school board meeting, Monday, September 10, Heppner High School, 7:30 p.m.

## Coles Bridge detour completed

Oregon Dept. of Transportation crews have completed a new single lane detour next to the Coles Bridge on Highway 26, near John Day. The detour is now open to traffic.

"The detour will accommodate loads up to 105,500 pounds as well as annual permit heavy haul and some single trip permit loads," said Tom Busche, ODOT District 14 operations coordinator.

The detour should safely accommodate a tractor and single trailer combination up to 85 feet overall length, and up to 12 feet wide. The detour also has sharp vertical grades of seven percent into and out of the detour. That means that some long loads will not be able to use the detour. Loads requiring a single trip permit will be allowed on a case-by-case basis. "Traffic will be controlled by flaggers 24-hours a day, seven days a week, until completion of the repairs on Coles Bridge," Busche said.

According to a news release, ODOT crews and local contractors took extensive measures to protect fish and fish habitat while building the bypass. Before work began, block nets were positioned on both sides of the work area to keep fish from being harmed. Fish that were between the two nets were stunned with an electric shock and then moved out of the work area. Crews then spread a tough fabric, used to hold rock in place, in the streambed, and along the river bank.

"We then set culverts in place, with the fabric underneath," said Chuck Howe, ODOT Region 5 environmental coordinator. Two 84-foot long culverts and one 80-foot long culvert were used. These were then covered by clean river rock. "Once we got enough rock above the culverts, we wrapped the fabric around it to keep it from spilling out," Howe said. The block nets were then removed to allow fish passage through the culverts. ODOT crews added coarse gravel and asphalt grindings to create a road surface.

The new detour eliminates the 113 mile truck detour that has been in place since last month.

## Cadet graduates

### from ROTC camp

Eric Schonbachler has graduated from the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Advanced Camp at Fort Lewis in Tacoma, Washington.

At the camp, cadets complete a five-week course of intensive military leadership training and evaluation exercises in communications, management, and survival training.

After successfully completing advanced camp and graduating from college, Schonbachler will be commissioned as a second lieutenant to serve in the U.S. Army, National Guard or Reserve.

Schonbachler is currently a student at the University of Wyoming, Laramie.

Schonbachler is the son of Gary and Donna Schonbachler of Heppner. He is a 1997 graduate of Heppner High School.

## Chamber Chatter

By Claudia Hughes  
Chamber Executive Director

Did you often feel like you were seeing twins or triplets this week? Take Wilbur Jackson, for instance. Everywhere you went, there he was, pulling his trailer, working on flowers, assisting with fair booths, and moving stoves. Saturday, one minute he was helping with the Masonic breakfast, the next he was carrying the flag in the parade, and later assisting with parking at the rodeo. That pretty much says it all for our small town when events happen. People meet themselves coming and going.

Congratulations to the Oregon Trail Pro-Rodeo Committee, Fair Committee, and Fair Board and Rodeo Board for pulling off a successful week. Those who didn't have a taste of the entertainment, exhibits and rodeos missed a good time. Volunteers all.

The Chamber phone is quieter today after a week of ringing off the hook with parade entry requests and fair and rodeo information. Craig Stroebel, Bert Houweling, Darrel Raver and crew put on a great parade with close to 70 entries. It's no easy task, especially when it's all new. There were some really unique entries. We understand "The Rock Saloon" is in demand around the state, thanks to the creative work of Lois Winchester. The variety of horses, wagons, floats and "political dignitaries" made for an interesting parade. Again, it's about volunteers.

Next on the agenda, the Chamber will be working with CAPECO and Willow Creek Economic Development to put together a job fair. There are jobs available in the area and the businesses will be getting together at the fair to talk with prospective employees about requirements and needs of the different businesses. There will be opportunities to fill out a job application on the spot. Stay tuned.

Next week the Chamber program will be Mary Nixon with RDI, Rural Development Initiatives, discussing leadership training, new tourism ideas, and explaining RDI to the Chamber membership. The meeting will be noon, Tuesday at GD's.

Thought for the week: "When the well is dry, we know the worth of water." -- Benjamin Franklin.

## Chamber raffle winners



Gene Doherty, winner of the Chamber recliner raffle, with Claudia Hughes, Chamber manager



Susana Stillman, winner of the Chamber of Commerce bike raffle, with Claudia Hughes, Chamber manager

Gene Doherty was the winner of the recliner raffled off by the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. Susana Stillman won the men's bicycle and Cara Osmin won the women's.

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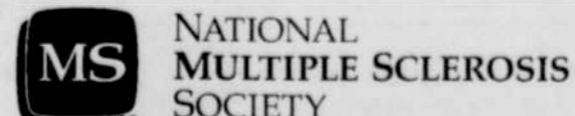
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