

HEPPNER



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6X6 bagged bow hunting



Doug Smith (right), Mulino, shows off the 6x6 elk he bagged bow hunting in the John Day area. With Smith is his brother, Greg, Heppner.

School district shows small student growth; most schools decrease

The Morrow County School Board, at their September 10 regular meeting, heard a school attendance report that indicates an increase of 23 students county-wide.

As of September 10, there were 2278 students attending Morrow County schools, including alternative schools, compared to 2255 students on September 11 of last year.

Sam Boardman Elementary School (kindergarten through fifth grade) in Boardman showed the most growth, an increase of 25 students from last year. SBE had 476 students on September 10 this year, compared to 451 last year. A.C. Houghton Elementary School (K-five) in Irrigon increased 13 students over last year, with 409 students this year, compared to 396 last year.

All other schools showed decreases. Heppner Elementary School (K-six) lost the most students with 16. HES went from 226 last year to 210 this year. Heppner High School (seven-12) and Riverside High School (nine-12) in Boardman were not far behind with a 15-student loss each. HHS went from 207 last year to 192 this year, only seven students away from a 1A classification, according to Principal Dick Allen. RHS went from 452 to 437.

Columbia Middle School (six-eight) in Irrigon lost four students, from 367 to 363, and Ione Schools (K-12) lost three, from 156 to 153.

Superintendent Bruce Anderson said that the growth in

the north end is compounded by the large number of English-as-a-second-language students.

Thirty-eight alternative students were added to the total report. Last year alternative ed students were included in the individual school reports.

Two parents with Heppner Elementary School students spoke to the board concerning the loss of a kindergarten teacher at HES prior to the first day of school. A teacher was transferred from HES to SBE because of declining student population at HES and an increasing student population at SBE. The transfer left HES with 23 students to one teacher and SBE with 88 students to five teachers (approximately 1-16).

In other business, the board:

-heard a request from Diane Kilkenny to clarify the school construction bond measure title as to whether a proposal to locate the new gym in Heppner at the high school rather than at the elementary school and to leave the old gym at the middle school standing would be allowed under law. The board declined to take a stand on the issue, saying the Heppner community must decide.

-heard a curriculum report from Heppner High School teacher Lea Mathieu on an advanced placement language arts course at HHS;

-heard a report from Superintendent Bruce Anderson on the status of small school funding. The district, which took the initiative in organizing a consortium of small schools for

lobbying the state legislature, received a \$50,000 grant, which would fund approximately one additional teacher for the district. Anderson declined to say where an additional teacher would be placed. Only Heppner High School and Ione fall into the small school category. Anderson reported that some district's plan to challenge increases in small school funding.

-heard a report on student testing results from Assistant Superintendent Mike Keown, which generally shows a gradual increase in student test scores.

-heard a report from Anderson on the school bond account activity.

-awarded bids to low bidder for the RHS football field lights; for electrical upgrades at schools; and for a walk-in freezer at SBE.

-employed the NW Leadership Associates as consultant for the superintendent search. Anderson had previously indicated that he plans to retire in 2002.

-approved superintendent goals for 2001-02 to improve student performance, community relations and finance.

-appointed John Rietmann and Pat McNamee to the board's licensed bargaining team.

-accepted resignations/retirement for: Kevin Toms, RHS head custodian; Maya Phipps, CMS educational assistant; Becky Evans, HHS special ed assistant; Kelley Ellis, SBE office assistant/food service clerical assistant; Adam

Bridge failure leaves Heppner senior stranded



Betty Curnutt by collapsed bridge that had provided the only access to her property.

Most people have heard the expression "up the creek without a paddle." That just about sums up the situation for a Heppner woman who is basically up the creek without a bridge.

Betty Curnutt, 71, was in her home on South Main Street Sunday when she heard what sounded like a rifle shot. That was followed by what Betty describes as a "groan." No, it wasn't neighborhood violence. The bridge that provides the only access to her home had given way.

Curnutt called a local police officer who, in turn spoke to the Heppner City crew. According to Curnutt, the officer said that the city told him that it was not a city bridge and it wasn't their problem.

"I have no access to my property except for down into the (creek) channel and then climbing the bank on the other side," said Curnutt. "They say I can use the alley in the back, but there aren't any steps and I would have to climb a 20-30 foot bank."

"Last year I had a heart attack and I hurt my back," she said. "Before, I bought Round-Up and sprayed (the area around the former city swimming pool). After that I was unable to, but now I've decided I'm not going to do that anymore. They have a policy if you don't keep your yard up, they'll do it for you and bill you. I think it should apply to

them too. If they've got money to build a \$1 million city hall, they've got money to build a bridge."

Curnutt said that her home is located on the only property in the county that has no access. "I'm worried about getting oil delivered," said Curnutt. "And there's not access for fire or ambulance." Curnutt's daughter, Karen Curnutt-McMurry who lives in Beaverton, is plenty worried, too, and upset over the city's response.

Curnutt's property has a history of floods and washed out bridges. According to Curnutt, the area was flooded in 1969 and then again in 1971. She says that prior to 1971 the creek channel in front of her home was 12-20 feet wide and a city sidewalk existed which allowed access. After the 1971 flood, Curnutt says the Corps of Engineers dug the channel out to more than 60 feet wide and 20-40 feet deep. The city sidewalk, which allowed Curnutt to walk out of her property was mostly washed away. In late 1971 or early 1972, she says that the Red Cross came in and built a bridge to accommodate Curnutt's and her next-door neighbor's property. That bridge went bad in the early 1980s and then Curnutt's neighbor built the current bridge around 1989-90.

"As far as I can tell, it's totally their responsibility," said Jerry Breazeale, Heppner City

manager. "I'm trying to find out if there's someone to put some steps in. Her daughter was concerned about how she was going to get out. Looking the situation over, our emergency personnel says that they won't have a problem getting her out, the fire department would be able to access her property and the police would be able to get there." Representatives from all those agencies have visited the property, along with Oregon State Representative Greg Smith, Heppner.

"The bridge just wasn't maintained," added Breazeale. "It fell from old age. The neighbors put it in and quit using it. They have access from the back."

Breazeale told the Gazette Tuesday that he didn't have any idea how much it would cost to build a bridge, adding that it depended on the size of the bridge and materials used.

Curnutt said that she was told by her insurance agent that the bridge would not be covered unless it was mentioned specifically in the policy and even then, it would be only covered for fire.

Breazeale says that he believes Curnutt could have access in the front of her property from limited frontage to Main Street if steps were installed. Curnutt maintains that access is on to the sidewalk that had been previously washed out and is badly deteriorated with a section of it hanging.

For now there is no easy answer to the situation.

United we stand



A line of flags down Heppner's Main Street this week shows solidarity and sympathy for the victims of the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

LAST CHANCE FOR THE DANNER BOOT SALE!

Sale ends this weekend, September 22.

Morrow County Grain Growers

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