

Committee formed to work on ATV project solution

By Doris Brosnan

At the January 16 meeting of the Morrow County Court, public works director Burke O'Brien reported on a meeting to further discuss the ATV-project grant with some landowners on Jan. 15. A subcommittee has formed to explore various related issues. O'Brien and Commissioner Dan Brosnan agreed that the meeting was a positive event, with interested persons now working on a solution.

O'Brien also reported on a meeting with homeowners at the Wagon Wheel Addition. The landowners are working to form an association to cover road maintenance. The Court agreed with O'Brien that the homeowners are to be commended.

O'Brien informed the Court of a break-in at the 4-H building at Cutsforth Park, damaging the hasp lock and a light bulb.

O'Brien also reported the following work of the road crew: grading of Grieb, Melville, and Wheatland Lanes, Petty's Canyon, and Lower Sandhollow and Crum Roads; work on downed road signs, installation of culverts on Bunker Hill Road; brush mowing - with ODOT's tractor and flail mower attachment - on Upper Rhea Creek and Willow Creek Roads. They have burned weeds on Social Ridge Lane, Piper Canyon, and Nolan and Baseline Roads. The Valby-Road project continues.

Judge Terry Tallman shared that the city of Boardman is finalizing its transportation system plan. One issue is an ODOT requirement for a variance at Laurel Lane, a county road, because businesses are not to be located within 1320 feet of the off-ramp. Existing businesses are to be grandfathered in. Also being considered for the plan is an overpass near Olsen Road.

Judge Tallman also reported on the preliminary-design cost to the county if it were to include space for county planning and emergency management in this stage of the city of Irrigon-library district-Irrigon Fire District's joint building project. After discussion on other options and the departments' need for space at the north end of the county, the Court agreed to pay \$1250 from the miscellaneous professional services budget. The emergency management director agreed to pay an equal amount from that budget.

Representing the Heritage Trail Celebration Committee, Carol Michael shared with the Court brochures describing the North Morrow Community Foundation. In the process of becoming a 501C-3, the foundation will accept donations for the trail. She further suggested that the Court consider a future movement of funds now administered by the planning department to this fund, in a fashion similar to the Museum Foundation, and promoting it as tax deductible for individuals. The Court agreed to examine the mechanics of such a transfer and the amounts involved.

Morrow County Sheriff, Verlin Denton, reminded the Court of the agreement to hold over replacement of one of the patrol units for another year and reported that the vehicle now has 120,000 miles on it and has thrown a rod. Examining the repair estimate, the Court agreed that the vehicle be removed for auction. Denton also reported the repair costs on the copy machine in the department and informed the Court of 911 budget money that would pay for the lease/maintenance agreement on a new machine. The Court approved the lease.

The Sheriff shared the department's 2001 statistics that show a 42 percent reduction in prisoner transportation costs that result from the new video-arrestment system. Juvenile transports to The Dalles, a new responsibility in 2001, contributed to the reduction's not being greater. Denton answered several questions from the commission-

ers on other statistics.

Denton also informed the Court that one deputy has suggested adding the phrase "Let's Roll" to the side of the patrol units in remembrance of the last words spoken by those who lost their lives in the Pennsylvania September 11 crash. Commissioner Brosnan suggested Denton issue a press release on that suggestion.

Morrow County Behavioral Health director Kelly Sager introduced two staff members to the Court, Mary Elsethagen, a "qualified mental health professional", and Courtney Hesla, the newest employee who is working on case management and alcohol and drug cases.

Sager presented, and the Court approved, after some discussion, a short-term contract with Woody Koenig, LCSW, for a project, and an agreement with Mary Morehouse for "self-directed services."

Sager shared a proposal from Gail Sargent, architect, for an addition to the Boardman Annex. The commissioners examined the proposal and questioned Sager about many related details. They asked him to speak to the emergency management and public health directors about their needs and plans, and they agreed to delay discussion for two months, until the state special session has concluded and the state budget has been determined.

Sager offered the Court a draft policy for reimbursement of educational expenses, asking the commissioners to review it. He informed them of the installation of a T-1 line to the Boardman Annex and reported that a technician would be evaluating the department's computer system. He emphasized to the Court the department's dependence upon computers and requested assurance of quick response time from ESD in emergency situations.

Director of the Commission on Children and Families, Barbara Hayes, shared with the Court the department's plan to replace, with a leased machine, the copy machine for the Gilliam and Bisbee Building. She explained features of the machine they have in mind and noted that it would be for use by all departments in the building. She also described some additional work needed "to polish up" the Comprehensive Plan Phase II.

Other actions of the Court included the following:

- appointment of Kim Carmine to the Commission on Children and Families;

- extension of the tipage fee grant to the town of Lexington for completion of the comprehensive plan;

- approval, contingent upon approval by the finance department, of the purchase of a replacement computer monitor and printer for the Commission on Children and Families;

- approval of the purchase of some office equipment for the Fossil Behavioral Health Office;

- approval of an agreement with Wilbur-Ellis for the purchase of weed chemicals for the road department;

- approval of a quitclaim deed with Loyal and Betty Burns and Diamond Properties Investment Company/Cricket Flat Development Company;

- approval of the modified Farm Agricultural Building Agreement;

- approval of an agreement with the Port of Morrow for retention of a land-use attorney to assist in the review of the speedway application;

- approval of a contract between the Morrow County Fair and the Oregon Department of Agriculture;

- approval of \$500 from discretionary tipage fees as a retainer for the Trail Band's performance at the Heritage Trail event;

- request that executive secretary, Andrea Denton, procure from other counties sample policies dealing with expenses such as meals, refreshments, hotels, and vehicles.

Heppner Chamber installs new officers

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce installed new officers during their annual luncheon held last week. Leading the chamber in 2002 will be President Jerry Breazeale, Heppner City manager; First Vice President Darrell Raver, Bank of Eastern Oregon; and Second Vice President Victor Vander Does, Pioneer Memorial Hospital administrator.

New board members, Nancy Snider, Wheatland Insurance, and Larry Lucher, County Extension agent, join continuing Heppner Chamber Board of Directors Dave Sykes, Heppner Gazette-Times; Dick Allen, Heppner High School administrator; Cliff Green, Heppner Hardware; and Bert Houweling, Red Apple Market. Barbara Hayes continues to serve as treasurer. Heppner High School Representatives are Julie Proctor and Ashley Ward.

Claudia Hughes, executive director, pointed out that "the heart of Heppner is its people" as she presented a surprised Jim and Cam Wishart with the annual Hats Off Award. The Wisharts were honored for: "the clerk behind the counter who makes the customers feel important because

she truly enjoys doing so; the painter of shamrocks and volunteer greeter of visitors and for keeping Heppner clean on their daily walks." "They exemplify people putting their energy to positive use," said Hughes.

Sharon Harrison was presented a plaque and a collage of photos in appreciation of her two years of leadership as Chamber President. Trish Sweeney was recognized for her service on the board of directors and as secretary of the meetings. Shelley Rietmann leaves the board as youth representative.

New president Jerry Breazeale encouraged all to work together as the Heppner Chamber enters into 2002-a time of "challenges, change and compromise." The Chamber Board will be working on goal setting in the coming week and encourages input from the membership, said Hughes.

Fifty-six attendees were served a lunch catered by Chamber member "Puddin' On The Ritz" and served by Willow Creek Valley Service Club. Joe and Leann Lindsay entertained Chamber members with a medley of songs.



Jim and Cam Wishart received the Chamber of Commerce Hats Off Award from Chamber President Sharon Harrison.



Outgoing President Sharon Harrison was presented a plaque for her service by incoming President Jerry Breazeale.



New Chamber officers (left to right) Treasurer Barbara Hayes, President Jerry Breazeale, First VP Darrell Raver and Second VP Victor Vander Does were installed at the Chamber's annual luncheon held last Tuesday at the Episcopal church.



Last year's Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trial Pro Rodeo Queen Tracy Rankin (left) introduces this year's court (l-r) Queen Salli McElligott and Princesses Julie Proctor and Genia Grant.



Heppner Mayor Bob Jepsen presents a plaque honoring the Heppner Garden Club to Chuck Bailey.

Heppner TV rates increase

After discussing the financial situation for several months prior to making the final decision, the board of directors of Heppner TV decided on rate increases that went into effect Jan. 1, 2002. The decision to raise rates was a difficult one, but it was necessary to pay for increases in programming costs, to save toward rebuilding an aging system and to pay for the Emergency Alert System that must be operational by October 2002, according to a news release from the board.

Heppner TV pays for the right to rebroadcast every channel on the system. These costs go up each year, sometimes dramatically. And some channels attempt to increase their own revenue by dividing their programming, and also by asking for extra payment for special packages. "The board has resisted pressure to pay for additional channels from one provider and extra packages (that's why not all Seattle Mariner games were received last summer)," said the release. "It is simply too expensive to buy the additional equipment and to ask subscribers to pay for each new channel."

"For a town the size of Heppner, the range of channels and the quality of television signal is exceptional," says the release. "The addition of Channel 3 has been a popular service to the community." Although the current television signals are adequate, Heppner TV is an old system. The co-axial cables, which are the original ones installed in 1965 and which usually last about 25 years, are still in place 37 years later. These cables have been maintained well by technicians Tom Springer and Tom Rawlins, but they will wear out.

Several years ago, when fiber optic cable became available, the board started to save toward the need to rebuild the system. The first step in this rebuild was to run a fiber optic cable from the location of the satellite dishes on a hill a few miles from downtown to the office on Main Street. This allowed instrumentation that had been at the head-end to be relocated to the TV office. It is a safer location and makes reception problems easier and quicker to correct, said the release. Because of savings, the company was able to pay for the materials for this first step of the rebuild process without a rate increase. Tom Rawlins, the current head technician, is working on plans to gradually change the main trunk line and neighborhood extensions from the old co-axial cable to fiber optic lines.

Ten years ago, the FCC warned cable TV providers that by October of this year, all cable TV systems, no matter what size, must develop the ability to receive emergency signals and generate warnings to subscribers through the Emergency Alert System (EAS). This system receives national, state and local emergency information. People are familiar with this system's tests, which interrupt programming and give instructions to turn to a designated station for instructions in case of a real emergency. Heppner TV's equipment will allow both auditory and visual warnings.

Heppner TV's cost for the

EAS equipment was about \$6,500, and did not include installation, which was handled by company personnel. The costs were paid out of the savings for the system rebuild project. Some small systems might attempt to obtain a waiver of the FCC requirement to install EAS equipment, but the board felt that the company has a responsibility to its subscribers to provide emergency information, said the release. The town of Heppner has a history of emergencies, especially floods. In addition, many Heppner citizens work or do business in north Morrow and Umatilla counties (or the Tri-Cities area in Washington), and would need information about any emergency regarding nuclear or chemical weapon stockpiles in those areas.

"Ironically, viewers who do not have cable and who receive TV only through direct satellite broadcasts, will not receive such warnings, as direct broadcast systems are not required to have EAS systems," said the board.

The board of directors meets at the Heppner TV office on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Current Board members are Jackie Allstott, president, Doug Dubuque, Bob Ployhar, Linda Shaw and Greg Sweek.

Chamber Chatter

By Claudia Hughes
Chamber Executive Director

Heppner Chamber kicked off the new year last week with the annual Chamber luncheon and Town and Country Banquet. Well-deserving citizens were honored both during the chamber luncheon and at the banquet. Honorees are chosen through nomination forms and verbal suggestions, with a committee of past recipients making the final elections. The committee works hard to see that honorees are surprised. It's the only time of the year that a few little fibs are acceptable. Congratulations to one and all.

Now comes the hard work. The board of directors, with input from the chamber membership, will devote a half-day to defining goals of the organization, a plan of work and some creative ideas for leading the chamber into the future. It's also a time to visualize where the community wants to be in five years and how the chamber can work with the community and other organizations to make this happen.

As we move into a future of challenge, change and diversity, we need to work especially hard to come to the table together, to encourage new faces, to work with people with different opinions and learn to compromise. It's an explosion of change and it will take hard work to keep the "Heartbeat of Heppner" strong.

We need to remember to celebrate our successes and laugh at ourselves along the way.

Thought for the week: "One hearty laugh is a bombshell exploding in the right place."

We Print
Business Cards
Heppner Gazette-Times

WEIGHT WATCHERS IS BACK IN HEPPNER

We will be meeting Thursday, Jan. 24th
Heppner Methodist Church
175 West Church Street

Weigh-in and Registration: 6:00 p.m.
Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

For more information,
call Evie Chestnut
1-800-326-8450 ext. 2043
(Minimum of 20 participants)

LEARN TO SQUARE DANCE!

Tuesday nights starting Feb. 5, 7-9 p.m. (16 weeks total)
at the Heppner Grade School Gym

For anyone 10 years and older (younger children welcome to accompany parents to lessons)

Cost: \$12.50 singles; \$25 couples; ages 10-18 free (First two lessons are free!)

For more information, call Jo Meligan, 676-5805