

Dessie Wetzell
U of O Newspaper Library
Eugene, OR 97403

HEPPNER

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VOL. 121 NO. 5 10 Pages Wednesday, January 30, 2002 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Health district board turns down physician's request

The Morrow County Health District voted against paying for retirement benefits and a year-end bonus for the year 2002 for a physician's assistant employed by Dr. Robert Boss of Boardman.

Dr. Boss asked the district to pay a \$1,000 year-end bonus and a \$1,649.24 retirement contribution for the PA for 2001, which the board approved, and a \$1,000 bonus and \$1,919.23 retirement contribution for 2002. In denying the request for 2002, the board said that they had not received a request for payment of the PA's retirement contribution previously and also objected to the eight-percent salary increase the PA would receive in 2002. A PA employed by the MCHD received only a three-percent raise. The increase would have given the PA a \$500 a month raise over the previous year.

The district pays Dr. Boss \$50,000 annually for operation of his Boardman Clinic, plus a \$5,000 year-end bonus for the doctor and an additional amount for salary and benefits for Dr. Boss' PA. Dr. Boss submitted to the district a list of PA expenses amounting to \$71,964.29 for 2001; and \$78,396.59 for 2002. The board agreed to pay Dr. Boss

around \$126,964 for 2001, including monies for operation of the clinic, the doctor's bonus and the PA's expenses, including the bonus and retirement contribution. The amount which Boss requested for 2002 would have amounted to around \$133,396, including monies for operation of the clinic, the doctor's year-end bonus and PA's expenses, including the bonus and retirement contribution.

The board directed MCHD administrator Victor Vander Does to initiate negotiations with Dr. Boss.

The board also discussed plans for establishing focus groups in north county communities to determine what those communities want and need in terms of health care services. The board planned to hold separate focus group meetings in Irrigon and Boardman with emphasis on the Hispanic communities, senior citizens and emergency/health care workers. The board stressed importance of Spanish speaking health care providers.

Vander Does outlined a strategic plan for possible future operation of clinics in Boardman and Irrigon, which would call for one physician who would divide

his time between the two clinics, perhaps spending two days a week at each clinic; two physician's assistants, one at each clinic; and additional support staff. The district currently operates a clinic in Irrigon and has an empty clinic building in Boardman, while Dr. Boss operates a private clinic nearby. The district's contract with Dr. Boss is up in two years and the district has begun exploring different scenarios to ensure continuing health care in the Boardman community in the event that Dr. Boss retires or leaves the community. The board also discussed the possibility of employing Dr. Boss as a physician for the two clinics.

In other business, the board:

- heard a financial report from Nicole Mahoney, which showed a \$26,032 loss for the month of December. The financial situation, while not good, was an improvement over the previous month which showed a \$74,539 loss. Vander Does said that the district's bottom line will improve when the hospital receives designation as a critical access facility;

- discussed concerns about office hours at the Irrigon clinic. Vander Does said that the problems should be now be resolved. Board member Ed Glenn suggested, and the board agreed upon the use of call forwarding at the clinic in the event that staff there are called away for emergencies or are away during the lunch hour;

- approved for sale a list of surplus items;

- discussed the Oregon Health Plan's reduction in reimbursements for drugs for Medicaid patients and the resulting adverse effects on the patients and on small, independent pharmacies, especially in rural areas.

WWII vet speaks at UMW meeting

Vie Oliver, Heppner, was the guest speaker at the January meeting of the Heppner United Methodist women. Oliver was a lieutenant in the United States Army and served as a nurse in Europe during World War II.

"Her talk was humorous and heart-wrenching," said a spokesperson.

Peggy Connor served chicken soup with homemade noodles by Archie Padberg.

Committee gears up for St. Pat's Celebration

Just as the town of Heppner has put away their Christmas decorations, the St. Pat's Auction Committee is gearing up for the 20th Annual "A Wee Bit O' Ireland" Celebration to be held March 14-17. This year's Auction Committee is chaired by Kay Fowler and John and Ann Murray.

The weekend promises to be packed full of activities, delicious foods, music, history, a classic car show, and, of course, kinship.

The St. Pat's Annual Auction will be held on March 15 at 7 p.m. in the upstairs area at the Heppner Elks Club. The auction is the main fund raiser for the continual advertising and sponsorship of the weekend celebration. The committee will be focusing on the silent and regular live auctions featuring antique and collectible items as well as new items such as travel packages, gift baskets, service and or gift certificates. The "Country Store" which had featured used items and crafts, has been retired, so will not appear this year. Donations for the auction items are still being sought both locally and from other communities. Securing donations is the key source of ensuring a successful auction for the St. Patrick's celebration.

Entertainment by Joe Lindsay's group "Somebody Else" will be provided before the auction and during breaks. The committee is welcoming any volunteers to help with the auction. "Small" jobs are available and any help is greatly appreciated. It promises to be a fun filled evening. For more information about the annual auction, donations or volunteering to help out, contact Kay Fowler, 676-9109, or John/Ann Murray, 676-9631.

The 20th annual celebration schedule of events is available at local Heppner merchants or by calling Heppner Chamber at 541-676-5536.

Library/city hall surveys in mail

The Heppner Library/City Hall Survey Committee has completed the first of its tasks. This week a survey designed by the committee will be in the mail to registered voters. "The Heppner Library/City Hall Survey Committee was formed to develop a survey that will provide a clear indication of the people's views toward continuance of the Library/City Hall project," said Mary Nixon, a community development coordinator with Rural Development Initiatives.

Committee members represent citizens with "views on all sides of the issue," according to Nixon, and were selected during the public meeting about this project held on Jan. 3. Committee members include Grace Drake, Cyde Estes, Bob Ployhar, Ann Spicer and Tom Wolff. Nixon was hired to facilitate the committee meetings. The cost for the facilitation service was paid for with funds provided by the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department.

Survey responses will be tallied by committee members Feb. 11-15. To be included in the tally, surveys must be returned in the envelope that was provided in the mailing. Sealed envelopes may be returned to drop boxes located at Klamath First Federal Bank and the Bank of Eastern Oregon no later than Friday, Feb. 8, at 6 p.m. Sealed envelopes may also be returned by mail and must be postmarked by Feb. 8.

The Heppner City Council and the Oregon Trail Library Board are hoping to hold a joint meeting the evening of Wednesday, Feb. 20, to receive the survey results and report from the committee. For more information of the exact time and location of the meeting, contact City Hall.

Elks Hoop Shoot winners announced



Photo by Sandy Matthews

Eight-nine-year-old winners (left to right): front-Zac Orem, Jessica Hughes, back-Ian Murray, Sarah Kendrick, Justin Yocom, Kylie Sieler.



Photo by Sandy Matthews

Ten-11-year-old winners (left to right): front-Jared Huddleston, Whitney Matthews, back-Matt Holland, Jenna Bowman, Sean Murray, Jessica Heliker.

Zac Orem of Lone and Jessica Hughes of Heppner took first place in the eight-nine-year-old Elks Hoop Shoot Contest held Sunday in Heppner. Jared Huddleston and Whitney Matthews, both Heppner, were winners in the 10-11-year-old category.

Second place in the eight-nine-year-old category went to Ian Murray and Sarah Kendrick, both Heppner. Third place went to Justin Yocom and Kylie Sieler, both Heppner.

Second place in the 10-11-year-old category went to Matt Holland and Jenna Bowman, both Heppner. Third place was won by Sean Murray and Jessica Heliker, Heppner.

Assisted living facility receives donation

The Willow Creek Valley assisted living facility received a donation of \$900 in January from a small group of Hinton Creek residents.

The seven households represent a group who have continued the maintenance of a TV antenna, translator, and lines along Highway 74 and Hinton Creek. The seven current participants in the system have turned to satellite TV systems and recently agreed to dissolve the alliance.

A discussion among the Hinton Creek parties resulted in the equal distribution of their remaining funds among three worthy causes, one of which is the assisted living facility project.

The contribution comes as work at the construction site again shows progress. Suzanne Jepsen, who accepted the donation for the board of directors, reported that the facility's plumbing lines will soon be completed and sidewalk superintendents should begin to notice weekly advancements toward a late-summer opening of the 16-unit facility. "The donation from the Hinton Creek group reinforces the faith of the board members," Jepsen said, "that the remaining need for some funding will be met, and a quality facility will fill an important need in the Willow Creek Valley."

Heppner GazetteTimes
News Deadline
5 p.m. Monday

Square dance lessons set in Heppner

Square dance lessons will be offered in Heppner starting Tuesday, February 5. Lessons will be held on Tuesday nights from 7-9 p.m. at the Heppner Elementary School gym. The first two lessons are free; cost for 16 weeks of lessons is \$12.50 for adults. There is no charge for youth ages 10-18. Younger children may attend, but must be accompanied by their parents.

Those attending do not have to wear square dance clothes. Instructor is Dave Hughes. For more information, contact Jo Meligan, 676-5805.

St. Paddy's Cruz-In planned March 16

The second annual St. Paddy's Cruz-In will begin Saturday, March 16, at 10 a.m. in Heppner during the 20th annual St. Patrick's celebration. Pre-registration for the Cruz-In is \$10, due before Friday, Feb. 15. Those who pre-register will receive five free raffle tickets. After Feb. 15, the entry fee is \$15 and will include one free raffle ticket.

Each participant in the Cruz-In will receive a dash plaque, with winners in 25 categories receiving larger plaques. Participants are encouraged to "cruz" through town before coming to the staging area at 10 a.m. Shirts, hats, visors and other items will be for sale at the competition.

Entry into the parade will be optional.

For more information contact Dick Sargent at 676-9621.

Sheriff's office to honor heroes



Morrow County Sheriff Verlin Denton recently announced that the sheriff's office will be putting "Let's Roll 9/11/01" on the front fenders of sheriff patrol cars.

"Members of the sheriff's office wanted to pay tribute in some way to Todd Beamer and the passengers of Flight 93 for their heroic action on Sept. 11," said Sheriff Denton. "One of my deputies suggested having the words Todd Beamer's wife, Lisa, heard her husband say as they prepared to confront the hijackers, printed on our new patrol cars as a tribute to him and those who sacrificed their lives to save hundreds and maybe thousands of others that day. Rather than confine the tribute to the three new patrol cars, I decided to put it on all of our patrol cars. As long as America has these kind of people as our country's foundation, we will never submit to these terrorists acts and will only grow stronger in our resolve to wipe terrorism out," said Sheriff Denton.

**DON'T MISS OUR
CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY**
on Saturday, February 9th from 8 a.m.-12 noon
SEE INSIDE AD FOR MORE DETAILS
Morrow County Grain Growers

Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mccgg.net