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HEPPNER

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Continued Excellence For Heppner Schools

By Wade A. Smith, Principal

The 2001-2002 State Report Card was released to the public on Jan. 30. Again, both schools in Heppner have done extremely well, with the elementary school receiving an "Exceptional" rating and the high school earning a "Satisfactory" score. Needless to say, it doesn't take a number cruncher from the state to tell us what we already know: Heppner Schools, kindergarten through twelfth grade, are top notch.

Since the inception of the State Report Card, Heppner Schools have performed very well. In 2000-2001, the elementary school's Report Card was "Strong" while the high school's overall rating was "Exceptional." Many changes have taken place over the last year in how the state computes their school ratings. The overall rating is calculated by a weighted average of the following components: Student Performance, Student Behavior, and Improvement. A school can receive any one of the following ratings: Exceptional, Strong, Satisfactory, Low, and Unacceptable.

Overall Rating = Student Performance* + Student Behavior* + Improvement Rating*

*Student Performance is calculated using an average of previous year's statewide tests administered to the appropriate grades (3, 5, 8, and 10). To receive at least a "Satisfactory" rating a school must report a greater percentage of students that meet, nearly meet, or exceed the standards. In this category, Heppner Elementary received a "Strong" rating while Heppner High School received a "Satisfactory." Heppner Elementary received a "Strong" because our Reading Knowledge and Skills test scores increased by 5 percent while our Math Knowledge and Skills scores decreased slightly. Both sets of scores, needless to say, are well above the state average. Heppner High School received a "Satisfactory" rating because

our scores dropped a bit last year from the year prior. Interestingly, our scores are still at or above the state averages in three out of the four tests. However, because we did not improve on our already respectable numbers, we could not receive greater than a "Satisfactory" according to the state formula.

*Student Behavior is based primarily on the average of the attendance and dropout rates for the 2000-2001 and the 2001-2002 school years. Needless to say, both schools did extremely well; with Heppner Elementary receiving a "Strong" rating and Heppner High School earning an "Exceptional" score.

*Improvement is based on a four-year trend in assessment scores, attendance, and dropout rates. In this category Heppner Elementary received an "Improved" rating while Heppner High School's score was a "Stayed About the Same." The elementary school has seen steady growth in math and reading scores over the last four years, which resulted in the above mark. Although high school scores have increased in both reading and math, from 53 percent passing in 1998 to 66 percent last year, and 65 percent to 67 percent respectively, the scores did not increase enough according to the state to bump us up into the "Improved" category. An "Improved" rating would have boosted our overall school report card rating to "Strong."

After hearing the preliminary results a few months ago I was happy to discover that our elementary school has finally received the credit it deserves. The dedicated staff and truly outstanding students deserve to hang their State Exceptional Rating Flag proudly in their new gymnasium. It is exciting to see how hard work, staff development, and student performance can pay off.

To be honest, however, I was shocked to hear that the high school slipped two whole ratings in one year. We joined over one-fourth of the schools across the state that received a

lower score than the year before. After considerable research and phone conversations with a number of different people from the state department, it is clear that the state has put far more emphasis on the improvement of test results and the reflection they have on a school's overall rating. Despite an "Exceptional" behavior rating and high test scores, the high school did not improve enough in our scores and received no points in the Improvement category, resulting in a lower overall rating from the previous year. I find it hard to believe that a school such as ours, with test percentages in most cases higher than the state averages, is expected to improve every year to maintain an "Exceptional" rating.

Although I openly disagree with the State's methodology, I am confident that my staff and I in both schools are up to the task to improve our test scores. We have worked hard analyzing last year's results, modifying curriculum, and adapting lessons to insure that our student will continue to improve on our already favorable results. In both schools we have purchased the Stars Reading Assessment Program, which I am confident will help to improve our student's reading comprehension. Likewise, our high school English teachers have been working diligently emphasizing writing through creative and free-writing lessons. Similarly we have focused since day one of school in our math classes for students to explain and verify their answers on all problems. Needless to say, I am confident that when the 2002-2003 report card is released next January that our students, grade school through high school, will have improved their scores.

Please help me in celebrating our excellent schools. As you run into our teachers and students around town, let them know how proud you are of them and all of their hard work that they put into their teaching and studies every day.

Local army man heads to middle east

Army Sgt. E-5 Stacy Lauritsen of Heppner is "somewhere in the Middle East" according to his dad Carl Lauritsen also of Heppner.

Before heading to the Middle East Stacy served as a helicopter crew chief in Afghanistan where he received three air medals, one with a "V" for valor.

He is currently deployed with the 160th special operations aviation regiment (airborne) on a CH-47 Chinook helicopter.

Lauritsen graduated from Heppner High School in 1997. He joined the Army guard in March of 1996 and went to basic at Ft. Jackson, SC in the summer of 1996. He took advanced individual training at Ft. Eustis, VA in the summer of 1997 for helicopter crewchief.

In September of 1998 he went on active duty at Hunter Army Air Field in Savannah, GA, and in Dec. of 1999 was transferred to Camp Humphries in Korea.

The schools he has attended are:



Sgt. Stacy Lauritsen with his helicopter somewhere in Afghanistan

Primary Leadership Development Course, Survival evasion resistance and escape, dunker training and green plt.

Anyone who would like to write to Lauritsen can address letters to: Sgt. Lauritsen, Stacy L, JSOAC-W-FWD, APO 09370.

Election to be held for Morrow County districts

On May 20, 2003, an election will be held for the purpose of electing board members to fill the positions and terms for the following districts in Morrow County, Oregon.

Boardman Cemetery District: Two positions at-large: One position is a four-year term ending June 30, 2007; the other position is a two-year term ending June 30, 2005.

Boardman Park & Recreation District: Three positions at-large: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Boardman Rural Fire District: Two positions at-large: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Heppner Cemetery Maintenance District: Two positions at-large: One position is a four-year term ending June 30, 2007; the other position is for a two-year term ending June 30, 2005.

Heppner Rural Fire District: Two positions at-large: One position is for a four-year term ending June 30, 2007; the other position is a two-year term ending June 30, 2005.

Heppner Water Control District: Three positions at-large: each is a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Ione-Lexington Cemetery District: Two positions at-large: each position will be a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Ione Rural Fire District: Two positions at-large: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Irrigon Cemetery District: Two positions at-large: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Irrigon Park & Recreation District: Two positions at large: each position will be a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Irrigon Rural Fire District: Two positions at large: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Morrow County Health District: Two positions, Position 4 and Position 5: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Morrow County School District: Five positions, Position 1, Position 3, Position 4, and Position 5: all four-year terms ending June 30, 2007; Position 6 is a two-year term ending June 30, 2005.

Oregon Trail Library District: Two positions at-large: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

District: Two positions, Position 2 and Position 4: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Port Of Morrow: Two positions, Position 4 and Position 5: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Unified Recreation District: Three positions: Zone 3, Zone 4 and Zone 5: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Willow Creek Park District: Three positions at-large: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Heppner Community Education Committee: Three positions: Position 3, Position 5 and Position 6: each is a four-year term ending June 30, 2007.

Boardman-Irrigon Community Education Committee: Four positions: Position 1, Position 4 and Position 5: each a four-year term ending June 30, 2007; Position 6 is a two-year term ending June 30, 2005.

Ione to decide on independent school district

Ione will be holding a community meeting, Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Ione School cafeteria and will be to decide whether Ione stays in the Morrow County School District or forms an independent school district.

Al Meunier, an administrative consultant, will be at the meeting to discuss the proposed budget, curriculum and

administrative plan for an independent Ione School District. The Self Determination Committee will also be ready to discuss the process and the anticipated costs involved in separating from the MCSD.

If community members decided to secede, a petition will be available to be signed by any and all registered voters of the MCSD who are present.

Childcare will be available at the school.

Consolidation school board topic

The topic of consolidation of Heppner and Ione schools will be included on the agenda of the Morrow

County School District Board meeting this Monday beginning at 7:30 p.m. at Sam Boardman Elementary School in Boardman.

Measure 28 voted down in Morrow County

In a special election held Jan. 28, voters in Morrow County decided against a temporary tax increase. The same feeling was reflected throughout Oregon as Measure 28 was voted down.

In Morrow County, 3041 people voted, with 1579 people, 51.92 percent, voting no and 1459 people, 47.97 percent, voting yes. There were three under votes, making up .09 percent of the vote.

A breakdown of the following Morrow County precincts is as follows:

Precinct 1- N. Boardman: Yes: 89, No: 86;
Precinct 2- S. Boardman: Yes: 201, No: 248; **Precinct 3- Hardman:** Yes: 11, No: 16;
Precinct 4- Ione: Yes: 184, No: 135; **Precinct 5- N. Irrigon:** Yes: 171, No: 274, and 1 under vote; **Precinct 6- S. Irrigon:** Yes: 167, No: 263; **Precinct 7- Lexington:** Yes: 108, No: 122;
Precinct 8- N.E. Heppner: Yes: 119, No: 124; **Precinct 9- N.W. Heppner:** Yes: 130, No: 100;
Precinct 10- S.E. Heppner: Yes: 113, No: 96; and **Precinct 11- S.W. Heppner:** Yes: 107, No: 73, and 2 under votes.

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MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

You Are Invited To Attend Our
CUSTOMER APPRECIATION DAY
Saturday, February 15th
CHECK OUT ALL OUR SPECIAL BUYS!
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgj.net