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VOL. 122 NO. 14 8 Pages Wednesday, April 2, 2003 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## MCHD shows dramatic loss for February, but March outlook good

The Morrow County Health District Board learned at their regular board meeting Monday night in Boardman that the district suffered a particularly bad month in February, showing a loss of \$130,383 for the month. CEO Victor Vander Does and CFO Nicole Mahoney attributed the loss to a downturn in patient revenue and an increase in contractual adjustments, which are negative adjustments to Medicare payments, amounting to a loss of over \$148,000 in operating revenue from the previous month. January's financial report showed a loss of only \$1,724.

Vander Does and Mahoney say that so far March's financial report looks very good and revenues are expected to meet or exceed those reported for January. Operating revenues were \$432,911 in January with a non-operating gain of \$6,536, with operating expenses listed as \$441,172. Total operating revenues in February were only \$284,614, with an additional non-operating gain of \$6,667, compared to operating expenses of \$421,664.

In other business, board members discussed implementing a sort of tax rebate for homeowners in the district. Details of the plan have not yet been firmed up, but basically, a home owner living within the Morrow County Health District would receive a discount in the cost of medical services at MCHD facilities, proportionate to the amount of property taxes he pays, if he presents proof of home ownership and proof of payment of property taxes. The credit would be applied against the portion of the bill which is not covered by other payers, such as health insurance, health care payment programs, Medicaid or Medicare. MCHD directors believe that the

goodwill gesture may encourage district patrons to "shop at home" for their medical services.

Also at the meeting the board:

-discussed the ProShare program in which federal monies are distributed to the states and earmarked for reimbursement to Medicaid nursing facilities, such as Pioneer Memorial Nursing Home. However, with the dramatic shortfall in state revenue, more and more ProShare monies are being used by the state of Oregon to offset losses in other areas, such as education, for example. Vander Does said that the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, of which MCHD is a member, plans to tell the Oregon Legislature that unless the nursing facilities receive at least \$6 million of the ProShare funds, they will turn down the federal program and the state will lose an additional \$70 in ProShare monies.

-set a board goal-setting meeting for Monday, April 14, from 3-6 p.m. at the Bank of Eastern Oregon in Heppner.

-learned of a requirement by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) that all employees and board members attend training in protecting patient privacy and received notification of the training dates.

-held an initial executive session concerning upcoming union negotiations.

-received the following monthly report for February:

-The ambulance report showed that Heppner had 11 total ambulance runs, for \$9,044 in revenue and \$8,721 in expenses for a gain of \$322; Boardman had 17 runs for \$8,140 in revenue and \$6,139 in expenses for a \$2,000 gain; and Irrigon had

10 runs for \$643 in revenue and \$3,379 in expenses for a \$2,736 loss; Ione and Lexington broke even with revenues and expenses of \$232 and \$237, respectively.

-Pioneer Memorial Clinic had a total of 382 visits with providers (doctors, physician's assistants) for the month, with 16 new patients and 59 visits with a nurse for \$32,153 in revenues and \$44,315 in expenses for a \$12,162 loss; the Irrigon Clinic showed 166 visits with providers (physician's assistants), with 21 new patients and 20 visits with a nurse for \$12,834 in revenues and \$22,345 in expenses for a \$9,511 loss. No information on patient numbers, revenues and expenses is supplied for the Boardman Clinic, which is operated privately by Dr. Robert Boss and subsidized by the MCHD. MCHD paid Dr. Boss \$10,980 for the month.

-Pioneer Memorial Hospital had 14 in-patient admissions (compared to 23 in January).

### Softball Clinic rescheduled

The Heppner Softball Clinic has been rescheduled to Sunday, April 6, from 1-4 p.m., at Bob Kilkenny field.

The clinic is open for ages 8 to 18. Major and minor coaches are welcome.

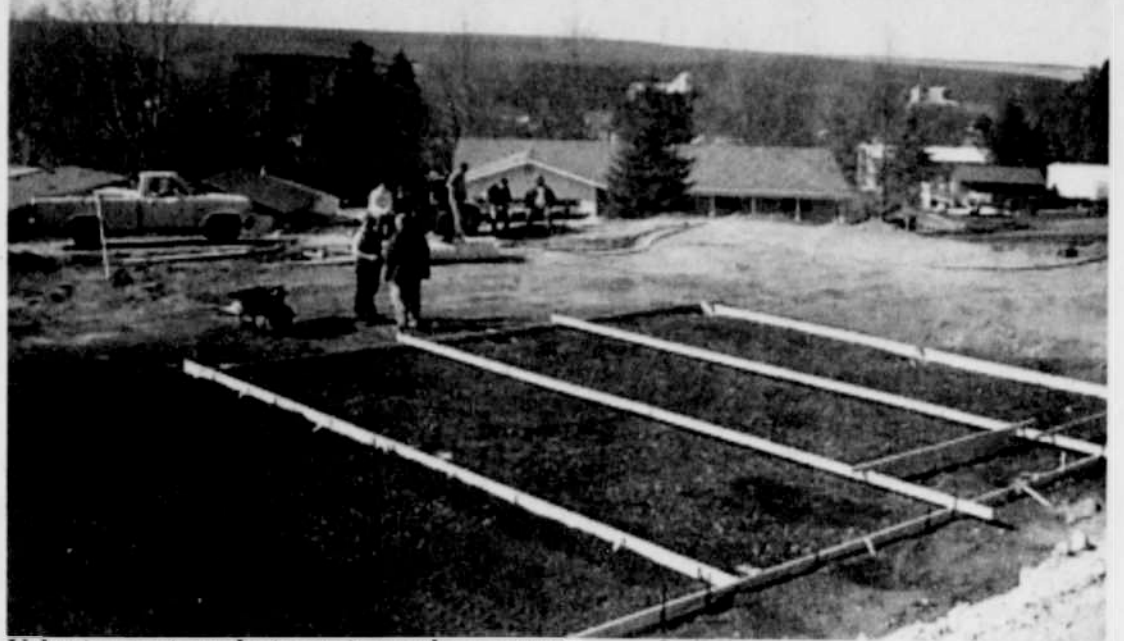
There will be a \$10 fee that goes to the Heppner High School softball program.

For more information contact Kim Gutierrez, 676-5052 or Petra Elguezabal, 676-5774.

### Girl Scouts to sell cookies again in Heppner

Heppner Girl Scout Troop #400 will be selling cookies again this Saturday, April 5, at Central Red Apple and the Post Office.

## Town of Lexington storage building now a reality



Volunteer get ready to go to work on new storage building

Lexington will finally get its new storage building. Several years ago, the council of the time asked through the Needs and Issues Inventory for a grant for an equipment storage building. The Town's equipment and supplies needed a home. The Baker-Morrow Regional Partnership and Morrow County Tippage Fees each granted the Town \$3,150 toward the project. The funds from the Baker-Morrow Regional Partnership are from a grant from Oregon State Lottery through the Regional/Rural Investment Fund administered by the State of Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. Last year's budget committee also agreed

there was a need and budgeted for the building. But come January 1, 2003, two new Councilors and a new Mayor came on board with the grants almost expired and the project on hold.

With determination and planning, Jim Nelson, a new councilor, wanted to make the building project a reality and the council gave him the go-ahead. Because the Town was showing progress, the Baker-Morrow Regional Partnership extended the grant deadline to April 30. Since then, the land has been surveyed and prepared for the 30'x30' expandable, steel building. The Town's people will be helping erect the building due to arrive this

week.

The Town's new maintenance person, Mark Andrews, will be a very busy person organizing the storage of equipment and supplies very soon.

Those who helped with this project financially and with volunteer labor are Lowbush Engineering, J & G Services, Miller Excavating, Roger Britt, Rusty Britt, Lexington Machine Works, Morrow County Grain Growers, Coppock Surveying and Simson Steel Buildings and the town's people who volunteered their time. The Town can be proud of this achievement located on Clay St. Clay Street will be improved soon.

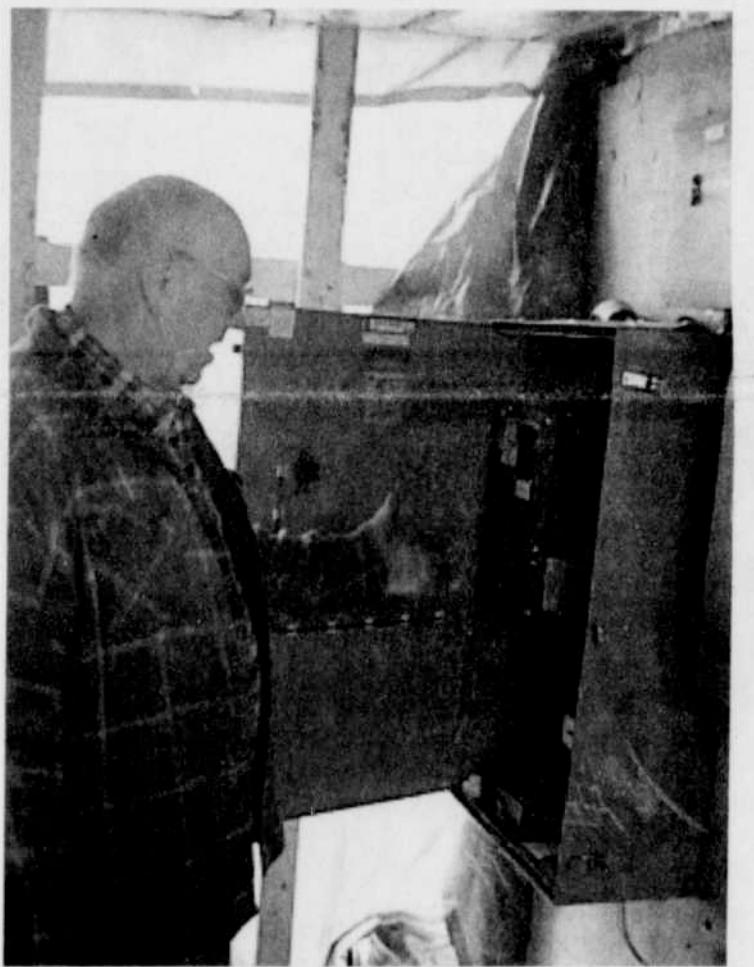
## Lexington well receives needed improvements

Lexington has been working on updating its water system for several years. However, when the Safe Drinking Water inspection was made last year, stating the airport reservoir needed to be taken off line for potable water, things got even more critical.

Earlier councils had requested financial help through the Needs and Issues Inventory for water updates. The Baker-Morrow Regional Partnership and Morrow County Tippage Fees granted monies for the water system updates and the budget committee made certain there were matching funds. The Baker-Morrow portion of the grant is funded in part with a grant from the Oregon State Lottery through the Regional/Rural Investment Fund administered by the State of Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. The time for making the plans and using the grants was running out.

Jim McElligott, PE, was contacted for help with the plans needed and bid proposal. Lexington Pump was the accepted bidder for the cemetery well update. Town's people helped prepare the well house and grounds for the project. Sam Bellamy orchestrated a successful one-week well renovation. The building walls were removed where needed; the pump was pulled; the well reamed and flushed; new electrical wiring installed, inside and out; and a new 60 hp pump and pipe installed in the well. Building restoration will be completed soon. The Town's people did an excellent job of conserving water during the week-long process.

The Town is very grateful for the financial help from the Baker-Morrow Regional Partnership and for the Morrow County Tippage



Roger Schoonover puts the final touches on the electric work he did on the Lexington well



Sam Bellamy (right) and Mark Andrews work on the pump

Fees so the water updates can be accomplished. There is still more to be done, including a possible backup well, but plans must be made and accepted before the projects can go on. It is people working together that make these projects happen. Remember, in small towns, if the council doesn't do it no one does, as

most small towns can't afford city managers.

The following contractors and suppliers who helped make this a reality include: Lexington Pump, Larry Burd Well Drilling, CBEC, Roger Schoonover, Grain Growers, Pettyjohn's Builders Supply, Lexington Machine Works and Lowbush Engineering.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:  
MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

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