

Judge's recommendation-Morrow County School District to give \$100,000 to Ione

The Morrow County School District is expecting to lose an additional \$101,000 to the Ione School District, MCSDD learned at its regular meeting Monday night in Irrigon. Judge Frank J. Yraguen, who was employed to assist in the division of assets and liabilities between the Morrow County School District and the newly-formed Ione School District, recommended in his final report that MCSDD pay ISD according to a formula whereby ISD is entitled to 7-3/4 percent of MCSDD's assets and liabilities. The 7-3/4 percent figure was specified in Ione's bill to form its own district, which was approved by the Oregon State Legislature.

According to Judge Yraguen's recommendation, MCSDD owes ISD \$55,050 from the Equipment/Operations Reserve, \$59,637.50 from the Contingency Fund, \$14,956.66 from the Interfund Transfers Fund and \$12,250 from insurance prepaid for the 2003-04 school year. Judge Yraguen also recommended that ISD pay MCSDD \$40,111.09 from the Capital Improvement Fund-Assets Evaluation. He further

recommended that the bond levies should be left where they are; that the two parties advise PERS to split the account and perform an actuarial study to determine how the split shall be accomplished, with each school district paying half of the cost of the study; that the furniture/equipment line item be handled as per the agreement between the superintendents; and that vehicles be divided on a 92.66/7-3/4 ratio. According to Bill Kuhn, MCSDD Board member, that means that MCSDD also owes ISD one vehicle.

The recommended payment to ISD prompted the MCSDD Board to revisit their earlier decision to allow Lexington area students to continue to attend Ione Schools if the student had already attended the previous year. MCSDD estimates that it will lose around \$100,000 to ISD each year, based on approximately 24 students who fall into that category. MCSDD plans to discuss the issue further in subsequent meetings, but has already committed to allow the Lexington students in question to attend Ione Schools for the current year.

In other business, the board heard testimony, both pro and con, concerning establishing a high school in Irrigon. Generally, Boardman residents spoke against forming an Irrigon high school, while Irrigon residents were in favor of the school.

In a related issue, the board, anticipating opening a high school in Irrigon, established a boundary for students to attend the proposed high school and consequently for students attending Irrigon elementary schools. The east-west division would be along the Bombing Range Road to the Columbia River, with students west of Bombing Range Road attending Riverside High School and students east of the road attending the proposed Irrigon High School. MCSDD Superintendent Dr. Jack Crippen said that the Bombing Range demarcation would facilitate the division, because the line runs through an unpopulated area in Port of Morrow and Wildlife Refuge territory. The eastern boundary would be the Morrow-Umatilla county line. The southern boundary would

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HEPPNER

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Gazette
Times

VOL. 122 NO. 37 8 Pages Wednesday, September 10, 2003 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Fires destroy two homes in Heppner



The remains of the home of Dale and Diane Munkers on Water Street in Heppner.



Firefighters work at extinguishing the fire at the Lupinacci-Brewer residence as smoke billows out from the back of the house.

Little League to hold annual meeting

Heppner Little League Committee will be holding their annual election of officers on Sept. 25, at 7 p.m., at GD's restaurant.

Anyone interested in becoming a Heppner Committee member or volunteer for Little League

should plan on attending this meeting. Present members will need to be at GD's by 6:30 p.m.

If you would like to volunteer and cannot attend the annual meeting, please contact Mindy Christianson at 676-5818.

Football scores to be on Internet

Scores of this Friday's away game with Umatilla will be posted on the Internet Friday night. The score of the game will be updated each quarter. To access the scores go to www.Heppner.net and click on the Mustang football scores link. Also on the site are pictures of Mustang team members and this year's football schedule. As an added

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Water issues still flood City Council

The Heppner City Council Monday continued to debate the size and cost of a proposed water system project that would overhaul and replace old and leaky pipes throughout the city.

Council members are still unsure how big they want the project to be, but are sure of one thing: they don't water rates to go any higher.

The recently enacted water rate increases will raise an additional \$143,000 per year (if usage stays the same) and council members, especially Tom Wolff, have repeated that they don't want the project to be any bigger or cost any more than the \$143,000 per year can pay for.

City manager Jerry Breazeale said Monday he felt the city could replace all of the pipes that need to be replaced in the city for \$3.7 million, the amount of debt the \$143,000 would pay off in 30 years. Wolff, however, said he didn't want the city to spend the \$3.7 million just because it had the money. "I don't want to spend the money just because we have it," Wolff said. He said the city should not replace pipe on Rock Street for instance if the pipe was still in good shape. Wolff said the city should prioritize what needed to be repaired and then spend only that amount of money. Wolff suggested that repairs might only cost \$1.7 to \$2 million.

Wen Jou of ACE Consultants, the engineers who studied the city's water system, was at the meeting and said he would do whatever the council desired, but asked the city not to completely scrap the original \$6 million water

project and start over. Jou said the city would be better off to implement that part of the city water master plan it could afford.

The original master plan called for the city to upgrade the water system with three new wells and a new 750,000-gallon water storage tank. The tank and wells would be needed to accommodate a proposed future population of 2,000. The wells and storage tank will apparently be cut from the plan now that spending is to be reduced and also the general public and council members don't feel Heppner will reach the 2,000 population mark.

Jou also urged the council to consider certain upgrades that will ensure the health of the community. Low pressure and "dead ends" in the water system can cause health problems, he said. The health issue was one reason the city was able to obtain low one percent financing on loans to finance the water project.

City manager Jerry Breazeale has said at times he "thinks" the city will be able to preserve the low interest loans even with the scaled down project, however, he is not sure.

After much debate the council agreed that the project should move ahead with replacement of the most critically damaged pipes being the top priority. The engineer will come back to the city with a priority list of the most needed areas of the city water pipes to be replaced. Bids for the project will then be asked for and the city will do the most

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