

The Official Newspaper
of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner GAZETTE-TIMES

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Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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David Sykes Publisher
Katie Wall Editor

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Holly Rebekah Lodge to resume bingo sessions

Members of Holly Rebekah Lodge met at the IOOF Hall in Lexington last Thursday to discuss several forthcoming money making events and to conduct its regular business meeting.

The fall-winter bingo sessions starts on Sunday, Oct. 26 at 2 p.m. at the IOOF Hall. Payouts are based on a percentage. The bigger the crowd, the higher the payout will be. Cards are 25 cents each and there is no limit on how many cards a player can have at one time. Ten games and a blackout game, plus one free game for those who have not won will be played. The public is invited to attend.

On Friday, Oct. 31, the members will be having a bake sale at Central Market in Heppner. Cakes, pies, cookies and other Halloween goodies will be available.

The regular monthly card party will be held on Saturday, Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the hall. The price is \$3 per person, with refreshments served. All card parties are generally held on the first Saturday of each month, except for June, July and August.

The members also discussed starting a monthly soup supper as a project.

Proceeds from all events go toward support of the lodge and improvements to the hall. Last year, the lodge was able to rewire the hall, with the help of grants and donations. A future need is to install a new heating system and energy-efficient windows. Public support is needed if the hall is to be available to the community, for funeral dinners, receptions, weddings, parties and other events.

Letters to the Editor

Editor's note: Letters to the Editor must be signed. The Gazette-Times will not publish unsigned letters. Please include your address and phone number on all letters for use by the G-T office. The G-T reserves the right to edit. The G-T is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. (Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$7.)

Do what's necessary to keep Pioneer Memorial open

To the Editor:

I want to use this forum to encourage the supporters of Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home to do whatever necessary keep the doors of Pioneer Memorial open. Ione seceded from the education district to save their school. It is time that the citizens of South Morrow County and the patrons and supporters of Pioneer Memorial to form their own financial district to protect and sustain the pioneer heritage the hospital represents. It is time to stop subsidizing the medical clinic in Boardman. It is time to separate from the Ed Glenn's of this world that have no compassion for our pioneer heritage or the welfare of our fellow man, essential components of Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home.

Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home must be protected and kept in operation for the following reasons.

If the Nursing Home is closed, the hospital will be next. The census at the nursing home may be down at present but in times past the Nursing Home has been full and operated in the black boosting the hospital.

The patrons of the nursing home are our precious parents and loved ones. Their care is without equal with a dedicated and committed staff and caregivers that cannot be found anywhere else. No one has the right to throw them out of the Nursing Home. It

dishonors our pioneer's heritage.

South Morrow County's future is as a retirement/agricultural/tourist center. Pioneer Memorial is essential to the future of South Morrow County. Without Pioneer Memorial there is little inducement for anyone to come to Heppner to retire.

When the citizens of South Morrow County pull together there is nothing they cannot accomplish. Look at your athletic teams for example. Are the Heppner football players or coaches afraid of anybody? If the governmental rules make the Nursing Home temporarily untenable, then gather our legislators together and change the rules. It's high time to stop subsidizing Dr. Boss and say good riddance to Ed Glenn anyway.

We must adapt to survive. Look at George Koffler and the growth of the Bank of Eastern Oregon. Remember how Jerry Gentry and friends turned the outdated Heppner Rodeo into one of the countries best.

I love the way Heppner and Ione athletic teams compete and never make the excuse they lack the strength in numbers to compete with communities much larger. If the politicians of this land can find \$87 billion to build up Iraq they will (by our uncompromising stand) support our commitment to keep and sustain what our forefathers gave to us—Pioneer Memorial Hospital and Nursing Home.

(s) Stuart Dick Pendleton

Excess tribal fishing causing problem

To the Editor:

When the Confederated Tribes were given the right of taking fish in the treaty of 1855 did that include nylon gill nets? The treaty reads in part:

"...the exclusive right of taking fish in the streams running through and bordering said reservation is hereby secured to said Indians and at all other usual and accustomed stations, in common with citizens of the United States."

The salmon are now running in the rivers, and it has been documented that on Sept. 23 of this year at the Port of Umatilla the Indians were selling salmon for \$1 per pound. It was also witnessed that said Indians put some of those fish into a dumpster at that site. It is my understanding that they were to fish for their subsistence and could only take what was needed to subsist. Why are they allowed to continue to leave these gill nets in place if they are going to sell the first or waste them? There are two groups who have eight gill nets in and around the Port of Umatilla.

How much longer is our government, marine fisheries, BPA, sportsmen and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife going to allow these intolerable situations to continue? How long are they going to continue to use our tax dollars to subsidize Native Americans, then allow them to take more than they need, then have them scream there is a shortage of fish? Is it the dams' faults? Do they need more grants and/or ranch land purchased for fish rehabilitation?

Many non-Indian fishermen have fished for several hours and haven't caught any fish. If the treaty reads "in common with the citizens of the United States," then I ask you shouldn't all of the fishermen be allowed to fish with modern-day gill nets, or should we change the laws to make us all equal and continue to use up all of our natural resources with all of this documents waste?

(s) Glenda Christian Ukiah

Health District *continued from page*

district and mileage logs are not utilized to track their usage.

Vander Does and Mahoney discussed ways to remedy those situations.

In a statement in the audit report supplied by Vander Does, he listed "issues facing the district that could result in material changes in its financial position in the long term." Listed were: low utilization caused by decreased population in hospital service area; technological advances that may reduce utilization and revenues of the hospital and nursing home; the State of Oregon's financial crisis, its reduction in reimbursement and reduction in health care services; the federal government's less than adequate reimbursement for health care services; a nursing shortage that has caused higher wages and resulted in the use of agency nurses at a wage significantly higher than the hospital's own staff; low reimbursement from commercial insurance payers; the district lost money in 2001-02 and 2002-03; pharmacy drug costs that continue to rise higher than inflation; loss of pro-share of MUPL monies from the state; low nursing home census; and need for additional tax support.

He also commented in the financial report that the "district's operating expenses increased by 8.5 percent due to increase in salary and benefits of 5.2 percent or 35 percent of the total increase. Depreciation is 18.8 percent of increase. Purchased services are 14.4 percent of the increase. Minor equipment is 12.4 percent of increase. Interest is 9.8 percent of increase. Cash increased by \$125,000 due to a \$300,000 donation, otherwise there would have been a significant decrease. Accounts receivable decreased by \$109,908 to 57 days in accounts receivable."

In other business, Vander Does outlined several possible scenarios in the event that a proposed tax levy (amount as yet undecided) designed to balance the district budget fails.

Scenario 1-Hospital ER, Heppner clinic, Home Health and Hospice and emergency services remain for a total revenue of \$963,000 and expenditures of \$983,231 for a loss of \$20,231. This scenario would see closure of the Irrigon clinic and cessation of a \$143,000 stipend (soon to be raised to \$147,000) to Dr. Robert Boss who has a private clinic in Boardman, loss of one doctor in exchange for a mid-level provider, such as a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant, and moving Pioneer Memorial Clinic into the hospital.

Scenario 2-Pioneer Memorial Clinic, Irrigon Clinic and subsidy to the Boardman clinic would remain, along with Home Health and Hospice and emergency services, for a total revenue of \$748,000 and expenditures of \$1,088,000 for a loss of \$340,000. In this

St. Pat's Church to hold mini-carnival

St Patrick's Church is inviting everyone to attend its annual mini carnival Sunday, Oct. 26 from 12-1:30 p.m. Children and adults can enjoy an assortment of games, prizes, Bingo, a cake walk, and a bargain hot dog lunch.

All proceeds from this event will go to the Children's educational fund.

(s) Glenda Christian Ukiah

scenario; the hospital would close.

Scenario 3-Home Health and Hospice and emergency services only would remain for a total revenue of \$612,500 and expenses of \$605,000 for a \$7,500 profit. In this scenario, the hospital, ER and clinics would close.

Board members said that if a levy fails, they would probably opt for scenario one, which provides for the most services with losses not much greater than in scenario three, with most services cut. The board, however, stressed that they want to continue providing all current services. The different scenarios are only examples of options in the event of levy failure.

Vander Does and the MCHD Board estimate that the levy, which would be sufficient to continue operation of all existing services, would be in the neighborhood of 32 cents per thousand assessed valuation. Prior to the closure of the nursing home, Vander Does estimates that it would have cost the taxpayers a little over 80 cents per thousand, an amount deemed likely to fail at the polls by Vander Does and the board. Board members offered varied opinions as to whether a 32-cent per thousand levy could even pass.

In other business, the board:

-discussed the upcoming closure of the nursing home. Board member John Prag estimated that the entire health district could have gone under in two years without the nursing home closure. "I don't think we could have gone a couple more years," said Prag. Bell commended the board for taking a difficult step before the financial situation became so dire the district could not have recovered.

-heard a suggestion from Prag to have the City of Boardman take over provision of health care services for that area. Vander Does said that he would only consider that if the City of Boardman went back to its original boundaries, before it annexed the Port of Morrow property.

-learned that eight residents still reside in the nursing home as of Monday. According to Vander Does, two out of 11 residents have moved to the assisted living facility in Heppner, with the possibility of two more transferring there. One resident has left the nursing home and another will be transferred to the valley. According to Vander Does, regulations stipulate that the last three residents must be transferred to other facilities at the same time.

-learned of the possibility of bringing some nursing home patients back at a later date under a long-term care plan mentioned by Bell. He said that law allows five nursing home patients in swing beds. The plan, which is federally funded, has not yet been established in Oregon, however, and could take some time to implement. "I don't think you can continue to incur extensive losses waiting for the state (to implement the program)," said Bell. But, he added, "I'm optimistic that five or six nursing home patients may be brought back."

-heard from Mahoney who anticipates losses of \$150,000 for the month of September.

-cancelled the regular meeting scheduled for Oct. 27, since business had been completed with the exception of the financial report.

DINNER SPECIAL

This Friday and Saturday
October 24th - 25th

PRIME RIB
AND
SEAFOOD SPECIAL
(with Fresh Oregon Coast Oysters!)



JOHN'S PLACE
MAIN STREET, HEPPNER

Heppner Booster Club would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their generous donations to the 2003 Steak Feed and Auction. Without their support, this annual event would not have been such a success!

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| Gardner's Men's Wear | Marcia Kemp |
| George & Debbie Koffler | Mark & Tami Rietmann |

Many others also contributed to the success of the Steak Feed and Auction:

Heppner Junior/Senior High School Students, Faculty, and Staff
Auction Committee • Dinner Committee • Decorating Committee
Ken Grieb, Auctioneer • And everyone who assisted during the night of the dinner and auction

Their hard work and dedication made it all possible!

Thank you, everyone! Heppner Booster Club