

HEPPNER

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Gazette
Times

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Health district in the black this month

The Morrow County Health District ended up with \$6,052 to the black for October, ending months of sometimes-dramatic losses. The district lost \$149,871 in September and had a \$205,867 loss for the year. The district's decision to close the nursing home, at the recommendation of CEO Victor Vander Does, appeared to have an immediate positive effect on the district's bottom line as the district's total operating expenses were down to \$421,377 for October, from \$456,203 for September, while inpatient nursing home revenue was \$44,540 for October, down from \$62,810 for September. Vander Does told the board that the last three nursing home residents had relocated by Nov. 5.

Also at their Monday night meeting, the board discussed the establishment of a migrant health program. Vander Does, who had earlier attended a meeting on the subject with other health professionals, said that he believes the program must be a joint community-based project in north Morrow County and added that the Morrow County Health Department (public health nurse), not the health district, would most likely be the facilitating organization. The board discussed a story that had appeared in the East Oregonian concerning the same migrant health program that Dr. Robert Boss would like to implement through his private clinic in Boardman.

In other business, the board:

-discussed \$30,000 in donations previously earmarked for the nursing home. Board Chair Larry Mills suggested, and the board agreed, that those monies would be best suited if earmarked for establishing a program that may enable the hospital to provide some nursing home-level care.

-learned that the Willow Creek Terrace Assisted living facility now has 12 residents, with a potential for 16. Vander Does told the

board that with several former nursing home residents transferring to the assisted living center, it has become necessary to increase the level of care at that facility somewhat.

-learned that two candidates have applied for the position of director at the assisted living facility, to replace Nancy Vander Does who had agreed to act as interim director.

-discussed the food service provided at the hospital which employees say has improved since the hospital no longer has to provide meals (i.e., low salt, low fat, etc.) for nursing home residents, according to Vander Does. He said that the hospital has implemented a new punch card system for employee meals and meal prices may see an increase.

-learned from CFO Nicole Mahoney that the number of days billings remain in accounts receivable is under 60 days, which is extremely good in terms of collections. Board member Linda LaRue remarked that when she and Larry Mills came on as directors, the time in accounts receivable was over 100 days. Mahoney credited the automated billing system, whereby claims are submitted electronically, with the improvement.

-learned that Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 434 patient visits for October with 18 new patients and an additional 94 visits handled by a nurse; Irrigon Clinic had 175 patient visits with 37 new patients and an additional 65 visits to a nurse; Pioneer Memorial Hospital had 30 patients; the Heppner Ambulance had 16 runs, Boardman Ambulance had 25 runs and Irrigon Ambulance had 11 runs, with an additional two flights.

-received a monthly financial report for the Boardman Health Care Center from Dr. Robert Boss. According to Dr. Boss, his physician's assistant, Rich Hamblin, saw 308 patients and Dr. Boss saw 240 with the following: Private Pay-

\$11,384.09, Commercial Insurance-\$21,594.91, Medicare-\$17,017, Medicaid-\$5,128, Oregon Health Care Plan-\$2,696 and Charity Care-\$0 for a total of \$57,820.

-discussed ways to increase community awareness of the Irrigon Clinic. Board member Linda LaRue suggested that district personnel host coffee at the Irrigon Bank of Eastern Oregon and perhaps hand out pamphlets and discuss what the clinic offers during the coffee time.

-heard from board member Ken Matlack who was concerned about the shortened Irrigon Clinic hours on Fridays and lack of phone response during the noon hour. Vander Does and Mahoney said that the clinic employees should be staggering their lunch hours and added that business is very slow on Friday afternoons. The clinic closes at 3 p.m. on Fridays.

-approved Julie Mikkalo as a new Home Health Advisory Board member, and also approved the Home Health Advisory Board minutes and recommendations for policy changes by the Home Health Advisory Board.

-learned that the district has received a \$12,000 grant from the Office of Rural Health for purchase of a defibrillator, which is expected to be placed in the Boardman Ambulance.

-approved the audited financial statements for 2002-03.

-learned that taxpayers in Boardman contribute approximately \$34,000 a year toward the health district, taxpayers in Heppner, \$22,000, and taxpayers in Irrigon, \$21,000.

Five exchange students spending year in Heppner and Lone

by Kati Wall

Takorn Khempila, 16, known to his friends as "Ohm," on exchange from Bangkok, Thailand, says he is enjoying the country life of Heppner.

The United States has always been Ohm's favorite country and he has been very excited to learn about the culture. One of the most exciting things for him so far has been the many different holidays celebrated here. He enjoyed celebrating Halloween, and is looking forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas.

A sophomore at Heppner High School, Ohm says he enjoys biology, because he likes to study about living things, and pre-calculus because it can be proven. Outside of school he enjoys tennis. In Thailand, sports are not included in school and one must play in city teams after school. While here in Heppner, Ohm plans to play with the Lone tennis team.

Ohm is the youngest child in his family; he has two older siblings, a brother and a sister. His father is a mechanical engineer and his mother is a housewife. Here in Heppner, Ohm is enjoying learning about family life with Jamie and Rhonda Helfrecht.

Another big difference Ohm noticed between Thai and American kids is that American kids are a lot more independent and learn to do many more things on their own.

He was also very impressed with how friendly the people are.

Having left her small (45,000 people) hometown in Germany, Sandra Krotzek, 17, is adjusting well to the small town of Heppner.

A junior at Heppner High School, Sandra says she wanted to come to America to improve her English, and to learn about our culture and family life.

Some of Sandra's hobbies include volleyball, basketball and violin. Sandra has played classical violin for the past six years and is playing with the Willow Creek Orchestra while here in Heppner. Back at home, besides sports and music, Sandra is also active in her church youth group and working with the little kids as well.

Sandra has had a chance to enjoy the American culture by attending a Seattle Mariners game with her host family, Chris and Kathy

Rauch, before school started. She also said that they would be traveling to Disneyland for Thanksgiving.

Back home, Sandra's father is a banker and her mother is an assistant pharmacist. She also has three sisters, one of which is her twin. She also said that she has a dog named Casper.

Sandra says she is enjoying her time here in America and hasn't been too homesick. She says that everyone has been very friendly and she has been really comfortable.

Another small town

German girl on exchange at Heppner High School is Vera

Pawlowsky. Vera, 16, says she doesn't mind the change of pace Heppner offers compared to her hometown of 60,000.

Meeting new people and making new friends has been an enjoyment for Vera. One of the main reasons she wanted to come to the United States is because it has such an important role in the world.

Vera says her main hobby in Germany is vaulting, but that she also enjoys track. While here in Heppner she tried her hand at cheerleading, which she says was difficult but fun, and would also like to try softball or track.

Vera is the middle child, with a 19-year-old older sister and a younger brother who is 14. Vera's father is the director of a sea life center and her mother is in sales. Here in Heppner, Vera is staying with Jerry and Terri Gentry and their two boys.

One of the biggest differences Vera has seen between American and German young people is that in Germany you can drink but you can't drive and here in America you can drive but you can't drink.

While here, Vera has also had a chance to try her hand at rabbit hunting. She said this was quite a new experience for her as she had

never been around guns. She also explained that guns are a lot harder to get in Germany than they are here in the U.S.

Vera was also glad to say that she has been too busy to be homesick and that all the people have been really nice.

Simone Reisenbauer, 17, is having fun as junior at Lone High School. She says she even likes the small town atmosphere, a big difference coming from a German town of about 50,000 people.

Simone said she wanted to come to the United States to experience a foreign country and improve her English.

Skiing, track and basketball are just a few of Simone's hobbies. She was also hoping to play volleyball this year, but right before the season she dislocated her kneecap and couldn't participate. She said that her knee had healed and she will get to play basketball.

Here in Lone, Simone is living with Dave and Debbie Radie and experiencing being an only child. Back in Germany, she has an 18-year-old sister. Simone's father is a butcher, and her mother worked at city hall and was a housewife.

Taking part of the American holidays, Simone helped hand out candy to kids on Halloween and will be experiencing Thanksgiving in Salem with her host parents family.

Also joining IHS is Kristina "Tina" Tuzarova, 17. And although Lone doesn't have 200,000 people like her hometown in the Czech Republic and she can't quickly run to the store or shopping center to get what she wants or needs, she says she still really likes it.

Tina has been in the states before; her grandparents live in California, and she wanted to come back for school because she really liked learning English. She also had a good friend who participated in the exchange program two years ago and said it was the best experience ever.

Volleyball has already given Tina a chance to experience school sports, but she is also looking forward to

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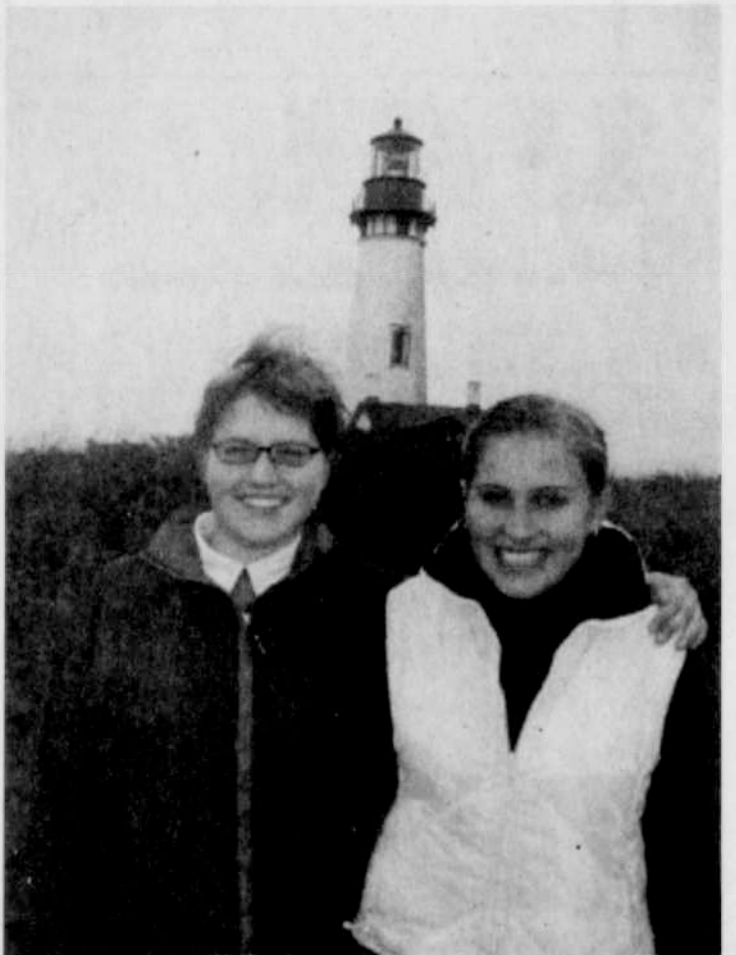
Takorn Khempila



Vera Pawlowsky



Sandra Krotzek



Simone Reisenbauer and Kristina Tuzarova at the Oregon Coast.

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



Happy
Thanksgiving!

We will be closed Thursday, November 27th

Morrow County Grain Growers

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