

Rec district board discusses relationship with school districts

The Morrow County Unified Recreation District Board has decided to issue a press release to counter statements made about the recreation district at a Morrow County School Board meeting and clarify MCURD's position. The release is pending board approval.

MCURD Chair Cyde Estes became concerned about statements made by MCSD Chair John Renfro at the MCSD meeting in Irrigon Jan. 21 and brought the issue before the MCURD Board last week. According to MCURD Board members, MCSD Board members told them that school board members have a right to express their opinions, but do not necessarily represent the entire board.

MCURD Board members stress that the reason they budgeted \$94,000 for the newly formed Lone School District's co-curricular program was because that amount was earmarked for Lone in the budget MCSD presented to MCURD, if Lone had not seceded. MCURD also pointed out that the budget for the upcoming 2004-05 year has not yet been decided.

The first MCURD budget meeting is planned for Thursday, April 29, at 7:30 p.m. at the Irrigon Annex building. Public hearings will be held May 27 in Lone and June 24 at Boardman. Each year, MCSD and other involved entities have presented their budget requests to the MCURD Board. This will be the first year that Lone will present its budget as a stand-alone entity.

The MCURD Board said that their initial goal is to fund the same co-curricular program at each school and then, if money is available, MCURD could go beyond the basics and fund additional programs, such as soccer, for example, which has become an important activity at Riverside High School.

The MCURD Board also took issue with the way Renfro calculated the amount of money MCURD spent per student. Renfro included all students in each district to arrive at MCURD's per student expenditures. He estimated that students in the Lone School District would receive \$604 per student, \$94,000 for the entire district, while students in the Morrow County School District would receive only \$140 per student, amounting to \$318,000 for that district. However, says Estes, MCURD funds co-curricular activities at the junior high and senior high level only, not at the elementary school level, so the figures quoted by Renfro are inaccurate.

MCURD expressed concern with the amount MCSD had earlier budgeted for cash carryover in their MCSD co-curricular budget. MCURD maintains that the carryover had increased dramatically, while at the same time MCSD was asking for additional funds from MCURD.

"It appears that MCSD was over-inflating its budget," Estes said. "We have encouraged the school board

to spend some of their cash carryover," she added. She said that MCSD previously had asked for \$318,000 when they had a \$160,000 cash carryover.

Columbia Middle School Principal Ron Anthony said that the school district had increased its carryover during the time of Bruce Anderson's stint as superintendent to prepare for the opening of the Irrigon Junior/Senior High School, which could occur this fall. The opening entails turning Columbia Middle School into the junior/senior high facility.

The MCURD Board stated that they typically received a budget request from the school district, but did not have specific information such as what costs are involved in running a football program, for example.

"We didn't realize that you guys (principals and athletic directors) were asked to cut programs and funding . . . and we were asked to increase our budget," said Estes.

Estes said that MCURD is also suggesting that the school districts increase their co-curricular income by raising pay-to-participate fees from students and gate receipts.

MCURD reiterated that they did not want to micromanage MCSD's co-curricular program, as alleged by Renfro, but instead had offered to help MCSD get out of a sticky political situation. "We do not want to dictate what activities the schools have," said MCURD Board member Del LaRue, Ione.

Lisanne Currin, the recreation district's budget officer, who was present at the meeting, told MCURD that they could not continue to spend at their current level without consequences. "Everyone has to realize we have only so much money and when it's gone, it's gone," said LaRue.

School district principals and athletic directors at the meeting concurred that MCURD provided a valuable asset to Morrow County and expressed a desire to work through the situation. "There's not a conversation with my colleagues from other school districts where I'm not thankful (for MCURD) and we want to be protective of what we have," said Heppner High School athletic director and teacher Greg Grant.

Estes summed up the situation by saying, "We all have to play nice in the same sandbox."

HEPPNER

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Wind storm causes local damage



Thursday night's wind storm caused a tree next to George and Anna Mae Steagall's home to split in two and come crashing down upon their house. No injuries were reported.

Three Morrow County boys chosen for Shriners' game

Three Morrow County football players were chosen to play in the 52nd annual Shriners Hospital Oregon East-West All-Star football game.



Chuy Elguezabal

Chuy Elguezabal, a Heppner High School senior and Paul Neiffer, an Ione High School senior, were selected as East team players. Kyler Lovgren, a HHS senior, was selected as an East team alternate. Players were chosen in The Dalles on Saturday, Jan. 17 as the 2004 season got underway.



Kyler Lovgren

Approximately 150 high schools participate in this activity contributing 120 high school graduates. The selected players are considered on their athletic ability, grade point average, the absence of any juvenile criminal record and graduating senior status in the year he was selected. Each team will consist of a 30-man player squad and a 30-man alternate squad, each of which is comprised of 14 players from the 3A schools, 12 from the 2A schools and 4 from the 1A schools. Should any one of the starting line-up be disqualified or for any reason cannot attend, he will be replaced from the alternate line-up.

Player selection is conducted solely by the coaches. The coaches are selected on a rotating basis, each coach having had a league winning season. Ben

Buchanan, Forest Grave, COWAPA League will be head coach for the West team. John Mattila, Warrenton, Northwest League and Todd Shirley, Powers, Skyline League will assist him. Tim Dodson, Florence, Skyline League will be head coach for the East Team. Assisting him will be Bill Yester, Myrtle Point, Big Fir League and Dan Taylor, Wamic, Big Sky League.



Paul Neiffer

Team personnel manager for the East Team will be Dave Courtney, Burns, Al Kader Shrine Center. Gary Tate, North Powder, Al Kader Shrine Center is team personnel for the West Team.

The Shrine of North American is the world's largest philanthropy, supporting 22 hospitals throughout North America. The sole purpose of the Shrine is to improve the lifestyles and abilities of orthopedically disabled and burned children. The East-West game in Baker City has

continued page two

Local students selected for all-state



(L-R): Kelsey Wolff, Whitney Smith and Wendy Appleton.

Two Heppner Junior High students recently attended the Oregon All-State Music Festival held recently at Springfield High School in Springfield. Kelsey Wolff was selected for the Honors Band section. Whitney Smith was selected for the Honors Choir section.

The Honors Music Program is sponsored and run by the Oregon Music Educators Association, and involves those students who show extraordinary aptitude in the music arts. The program involves two days of technique clinics and intense practical applications. The culmination of the clinic is a formal concert with all three sections demonstrating their skills.

Sections included Honors Band, Honors Orchestra and Honors Choir.

Head clinician and guest conductor for the Honors Band section was Dr. Jay W. Gilbert, chair of the music department at Doane College in Crete, NE. Dr. David Childs, director of the Vanderbilt Symphonic Choice and assistant professor of choral studies at the Blair School let the Honors Choir section.

The Heppner youth were able to interact with other music students from across the state and from various sizes of junior high schools. Local music educator, Wendy Appleton, referred the students to the program.

SMCST announces 2004 board members

Bill Rietmann of Ione was elected president of the South Morrow County Scholarship Trust for the 2004 year at the SMCST's annual meeting held in Heppner, at Bank of Eastern Oregon, on Jan. 26. Del La Rue was elected treasurer, Sharon Harrison, secretary and Barb Hayes, Vice President. Martha Munkers and Bill Rietmann were re-elected for a three year term. Other board

members include Carri Grieb and Missy Cutsforth.

The South Morrow County Scholarship Trust was established several years ago to provide funds to grant scholarships to graduating seniors from Heppner and Ione High Schools and to take the place of the Troedson Scholarship Fund, which will be discontinued in the year 2023.

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