

HEPPNER

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Latino parents speak out to keep teacher

The circumstances at the Morrow County School District's Monday night meeting in Irrigon were regrettable, but those circumstances brought out the best of two worlds. For the first time, Latinos in the Boardman community spoke out—and the school board listened.

Latino women, fearing that a beloved teacher would not be rehired by the district, gave impassioned pleas in her defense. The board was able to listen—through the aid of an interpreter.

One by one the mothers came up to the microphone and Joel Chavez, director of the district's newly-formed English language learning program, translated their concerns, and told of their support of Boardman Elementary School second grade teacher Katie Dawson, her dedication, love of teaching, love of the community and connection with the Latino population.

Dawson, a 26-year teaching veteran, had retired in December under PERS and was rehired to finish out the current school year. She requested to be rehired for

the 2004-05 school year, but SBE Principal B.J. Wilson offered contracts to two other teachers for the second grade classes and employment of those two teachers was approved by the board at the Monday night meeting.

Catalina Torres, who spoke through Chavez, typified the mothers' concerns and their love for Dawson. Torres told the board that six of her nine children had Dawson as a teacher and credited much of their success to Dawson's encouragement. Torres'

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Alaskan couple buys Ione market

Coming from the northern reaches of Alaska, Marcus and Lisa Collier have purchased the former Ione Market, to be renamed Collier's Market and have begun to settle into the Ione community. Collier's Market held its official grand opening May 10.

The Colliers, who moved from Wasilla, AK, but have also lived in Nome, and other small Alaskan towns, were looking for a chance to be closer to family in western Washington and to own their own business. After searching via the Internet and a real estate agent, the Colliers looked at about 40 businesses in the Pacific Northwest before deciding that Ione would lend them the best opportunity.

Marcus, who has been in the retail business since he started working as a teenager, has also worked for Fred Meyer. Lisa also has retail experience and worked in a hardware store in Nome. They both felt that the market would be a great opportunity to use their retail and people skills.

Another reason Ione appealed to the Colliers is its



Marcus, Lisa and Annika Collier

close-knit family atmosphere and support of its school. These two qualities were important, as the Colliers wanted a good environment for their 10-month-old daughter, Annika.

"We couldn't have picked a better town," said the Colliers. They commented that many in the community have helped to make them feel welcomed. The Zellers, the former store owners, have also been very helpful and great to work with, added Lisa.

"We feel they [Zellers] had the business set up for us to take it to the next level," said Marcus. New inventory is being added, including food and

magazines, and in about two weeks video rentals will be available. The Colliers plan on continuing the take-and-bake pizzas as well, and hope to expand that menu.

The building, which is one of the oldest in Ione, will also be seeing some changes. The Colliers hope to restore the building and tell everyone to expect a new look by next year.

The Colliers were also excited about having purchased the former Radie home and enjoy its closeness to the store. They look forward to being active in the community and as Annika grows, look forward to being active in the school.

"We are very happy to be here and are excited about this new experience."

City Council decides to level BMX track at Hager Park



The two-year old BMX track at Hager Park will be leveled and grass planted following action Monday night by the city council. The Snoopy House (right) will also be removed.

Following multiple complaints from residents in the area, the Heppner City Council voted Monday to level the BMX track at Hager Park.

The track is a collection of various sized dirt mounds and was built with volunteer labor about two years ago. It was intended as a place for local kids to have a safe bike riding area. Residents around Hager Park complained Monday about dust from the track and also the location of a portable outhouse in the park and a large "Snoopy shed," which has fallen on disrepair.

Jo Anne and Joe Burleson, who live at 655 Hager Street, which faces the park, told the council that the BMX track "was a mess" and also dangerous. "It's an eyesore," said Jo Anne. "And that toilet needs to be moved." Her husband Joe said he has witnessed incidents of kids riding bikes out into the street in front of cars and also jumping over people who were lying on the ground.

Sherry Ewing, whose home also faces the park, said that the outhouse is not even camouflaged. "You drive up and there it is right there. If the BMX track stays we need to beautify it and make it safer."

Residents Jerry Healy and Kit George also expressed concern with the condition of the park. "Either take care of it, or level it and plant grass. That outhouse has to go.

Volunteers aren't going to step forward and take care of this place," Healy said. "It's an eyesore and there is dust," said George.

Apparently John Bowles had expressed an interest in trying to fix the park; however, he was not at the meeting.

Eventually the council concluded that volunteers were not going to step up and do the work. "I like the idea of the youth having a place to ride, but I don't like this idea of the city taking care of it for the next 100 years," said councilmember Tom Wolff.

City works director Bruce Nelson said it would take a lot of time for the city crew to weed eat the entire BMX track area. "I would like to see it leveled," Nelson said.

"We tried it, it didn't work. Let's level it," said council member Judy Buschke.

The council agreed and voted to remove the outhouse, knock down the dirt mounds, spread the dirt around and plant grass. They also encouraged park neighbors to tear down the Snoopy house.

Police discussion

In other business the city discussed the currently police situation. The city contracts with the county to provide deputies to patrol Heppner. Under the original agreement, the city was suppose to have three deputies patrolling the town. Recently, because of injuries



to two deputies and another deputy attending police academy, the city has been short on patrol officers.

"I thought the city was supposed to get deputies after they graduated from the academy," Wolff said. "The county has not reduced charges to the city. We are paying top dollar for three deputies. We understand they have had some problems up north (two deputies were recently injured), but that is not our problem," he added. A deputy at the meeting said he would report back to the council's police committee.

Accepted offer on city hall

The council accepted a counter offer from the Heppner Gazette-Times to purchase city hall. The final deal included trading the Gazette-Times property plus \$42,500 cash for the current city hall building. The city will in turn purchase the former Klamath First building now owned by the Bank of Eastern Oregon and move city hall there.

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We're talkin' turkey



Donald Mathews, left, took his first turkey and his dad, Skip, took his second in the mountain around Heppner recently.



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