

HEPPNER

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## Gang activity, safety issues discussed at school board meeting

Gang-related activity in connection with the Morrow County School District's alternative school became the focus of the district's regular school board meeting Monday night in Irrigon.

The discussion on that and other safety issues, prompted by new district superintendent Mark Burrows, brought some concerns to the surface. Representatives of ESD, which is under contract to operate the alternative school, and district administrators in the north end of the county acknowledged some issues, but reminded the audience that the students who attend the alternative school were placed there because they

## Heppner boy takes time to enjoy Oktoberfest



Jordan Scott, age 4, of Heppner, had his face painted in a Spiderman motif while enjoying events at Oktoberfest held in Heppner on Saturday, Oct. 9.

had problems in regular classrooms. Board member Bill Kuhn said that he had been contacted by a parent concerning safety at the Irrigon alternative school.

Bill DeBoard, assistant principal for Irrigon schools, said that some students attended the alternative school because they had problems with discipline, drugs, gang-related incidents, weapons, violence or intimidation, while others fell behind because of "massive" lack of attendance, sometimes as the result of ill health, and yet others were pregnant or parenting teens. Some were also older students in the 18-20-year-old range and some were required to attend by court order. Of the 50 students attending the alternative school, 31 had Boardman addresses, 15 had Boardman addresses and four had Heppner addresses, which does not necessarily mean that those students attended those respective schools.

Board member Ken Matlack expressed concern of the possibility that students were placed in alternative school as a way to rid the particular school of discipline problems as a consequence of the district's "zero tolerance" policy.

Administrators said that so far this year, there had been no gang-related problems, probably due to the separation of two regional gangs since the opening of the Irrigon Junior/Senior High School this fall. Members of one gang, the Nortenos, whose color is red, primarily live in the Irrigon area, while the members of the other gang, the Surenos, whose color is blue, primarily live in the Boardman area. Joel Chavez, English Language Learners program director,

said that members of the Boardman-area Surenos may want to avoid trouble because if they were recommended for alternative school, they would be placed on hostile turf in Irrigon. Chavez later told the Gazette-Times that gang-related activity was a concern, but of far greater impact was the effect of "meth" on families.

The board explored the idea of obtaining a grant to fund a resource officer in the north end schools, the alternative school in particular.

The board also approved the first reading of a change in the interscholastic and co-curricular activities program in an effort to cut down or eliminate mid-week athletic games as follows: "In the event that a game is scheduled other than Thursday, Friday or Saturday, the following guidelines will apply: 1. No mid-week games shall be scheduled where the student returns home later than 10 p.m.; 2. No student shall lose more than seven hours of seat time per academic year; 3. The number of mid-week games must reduce from one year to the next to ensure the board's direction to move away from all mid-week games."

Also at the meeting, the board ratified a collective bargaining agreement with classified employees which provides a one and a half percent increase for 2004-05 and a one and a half to three percent increase each year for the next two years, depending on the consumer price index. The board had ratified the agreement in September and the union approved the agreement later.

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## Council hears proposal to take over city garbage service



The Heppner city council meets Monday night for the first time at its new offices on Main Street.

The Heppner City Council Monday night discussed the possibility of taking over city garbage service currently done by Heppner Garbage Service owned by David Green. A 10-year franchise agreement with the company expires at the end of 2004, and Monday the City Public Works Director Bruce Nelson suggested the city not renew the franchise and take over the service.

Because of what the city called "numerous complaints from customers," the council was discussing placing Heppner Garbage on a 90-day "performance review." The review will require Heppner Garbage to

maintain a business phone with response to customer complaints within 24 hours; maintain a regular pickup schedule; provide backup for days that may be missed because of sickness or vacation; provide adequate dumpsters in good condition for accounts that request them and maintain garbage trucks in a clean and sanitary condition. It also called for certain monetary requirements from Heppner Garbage.

City Manager Jerry Breazeale said the main customer complaints came from Heppner Elementary School, which told the city, dumpsters had been moved

and not returned and that garbage had piled up on numerous occasions.

During the discussion Public Works Director Nelson said garbage pickup could be a moneymaker for the city. He said garbage cans would have to be put out to curbside, but that two people could pick up the city in three days. He said there would be one person on the truck in the morning and one in the afternoon. "I think it would be a wise thing to do," Nelson said.

No action was taken, however, the council did vote unanimously to place

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## New Heppner business to offer high speed internet access

A new telecommunications company soon to open in Heppner will offer both high-speed wireless and high-speed fiber optic cable to homes and businesses in the area, a company spokesman said Monday.

Windwave Communications General Manager Nate Arbogast said the company is now signing up subscribers at \$29.95 per month plus set up fees.

Subscribers who have wireless capability installed in their computers will be able to be on the internet anywhere within a two mile area around Heppner. The company advertises the service as being "up to 27 times faster than dialup."

The company will also install fiber cable directly to the home. Cable provides even faster data transfer and will at some point most likely offer movies and other content on demand, according to Arbogast.

Windwave has been approved to construct a new 4760 sq. ft. building on North Chase Street in Heppner. The company has also been approved to offer service in Baker.

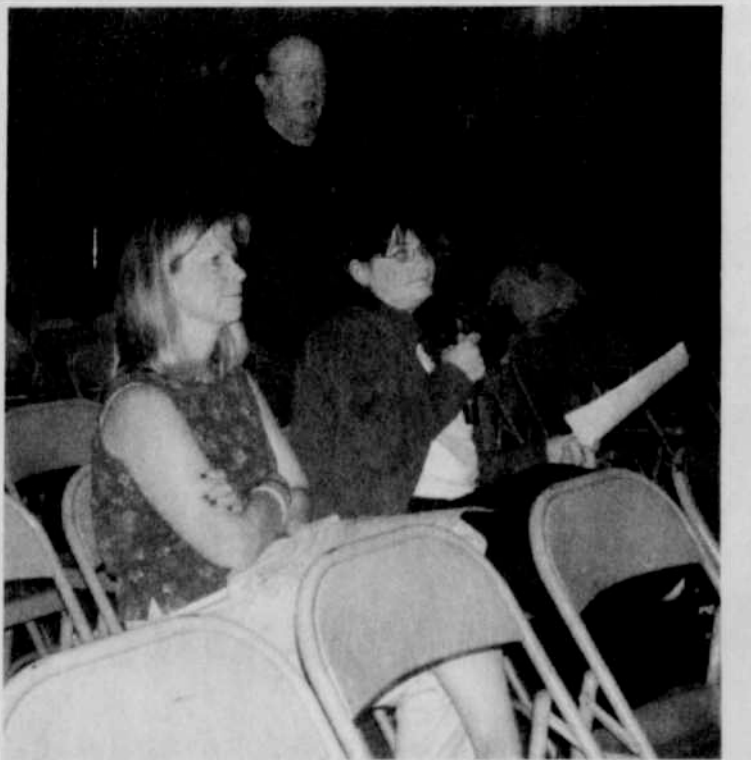
It was incorrectly reported that the business was affiliated with the Port of Morrow in last week's Gazette. Windwave is a wholly owned subsidiary of Inland Development Corporation and not

connected to the Port, Arbogast said. Windwave does, however, rent office space from the Port building in Boardman and Port Manager Gary Neal is on the board of directors. Windwave is a privately held company, Arbogast added.

"We are very excited to be providing this service in the Heppner area," Arbogast said. "It will help with the economic development of the area."

The company's number for information is 1 (800) 860-8508.

## Medical District to ask for tax levy



Elizabeth Peterson (right) asks a question at a town hall meeting in Ione Sept. 29 to discuss the proposed Health District tax levy on the ballot.

or \$39 per year for someone that owns a \$100,000 home.

The money will be used to keep the levy of service at the 3 clinics and the hospital in the county unchanged, and also to purchase new ambulances for an aging fleet in the district.

The health district has cut costs the past years by closing the nursing home, taking

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