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HEPPNER 50¢ Gazette Times

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Web site ranks Heppner number one for manufactured home living

Upwardly Mobile Homes

Where are the best towns to live in a mobile home? We looked for 10 places with plenty of people age 50 and older and lots of upscale manufactured housing. Here they are, with the corresponding median values.

1.	Heppner, Ore.	$60,900
2.	Warsaw, Ky.	$58,800
3.	Thompson Falls, Mont.	$47,900
4.	Fanning Springs, Fla.	$44,000
5.	Ripley, Ohio	$43,800
6.	Centerville, Tenn.	$42,400
7.	Friendship, Wis.	$39,500
8.	Fort Motte, S.C.	$39,400
9.	Troy, Mo.	$38,200
10.	Bethany Beach, Del.	$38,000

SOURCE: EPODUNK INC

Article in January issue of AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) magazine ran the above article about top ten places for manufactured homes in USA. Heppner is ranked #1.

Bringing in a median value of $60,900 for manufactured housing, Heppner was recently listed as the number one place to live, if over 50 and into "upscale manufactured housing." This listing was published in the January 2005 AARP Bulletin from ePodunk, Inc.

EPodunk, Inc., is a privately owned company, started by three journalists and based near Ithaca, NY, that publishes in-depth community information on the Internet at www.epodunk.com. The company gathers statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, US Forest Service, NASA, United States Postal Service, National Center for Education Statistics and many other government agencies, as well as from state and local governments, newspapers and organizations. From this gathered information, one can find information about a community's population, growth rate, school districts, local attractions, newspapers, etc.

EPodunk, Inc. believes in "the power of place" and that "there is no such thing as an unimportant community." With this philosophy, ePodunk publishes information not only about big cities such as Los Angeles, but also about rural communities, such as Heppner or Podunk, New York.

Besides the statistical information, ePodunk.com offers visitors a chance to brag about their towns through its "Claims to Fame" and provides Top 10 lists for a variety of subjects.

While we have already made number one on one their list, it might be worth taking the time to visit their site and brag a little on Heppner. We might just make their "Claim to Fame" with our great St. Patrick's Day celebration or even start a list of "The Friendliest Small Towns."

Heppner seats new mayor and four council persons

City manage Jerry Brazeale (left) swears in council members Cindi Doherty, Kay Roibinson and Glenn Baker.

For the first time in 12 years a new mayor will preside over council meetings at Heppner City Hall. Bob Jepsen turned over the gavel to Tim Van Cleave Monday night and formerly stepped down from the city's top elected position.

Before handing over the gavel to end his reign, Jepsen gave a farewell talk to the incoming council... He urged them to be flexible and compassionate in their decision making, relating how he had at times personally paid for or arranged to be paid water bills of families whose service was scheduled to be terminated. "I would hope you would still let me know if there is a family, especially with small children, who may be going to have their water shut off, because I still want to help them out," he told the council.

City Manager Jerry Breazeale then swore in Van Cleave, new councilperson Glenn Baker, and re-elected members Cindi Doherty and Kay Robinson. Later, the newly seated council voted unanimously to appoint George Koffler to fill the seat vacated by Van Cleave.

Koffler will serve until November of 2005, when he will then be required to stand for election. Koffler is the president of the Bank of Eastern Oregon and has lived in Heppner with his wife Debbie since 1974. His community service includes, among other things, past president of the Willow Creek Economic Development Group, a member of the Elks Audit committee and past board member of the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corp.

On his application for appointment to the vacant council position, Koffler said he is interested in "delivering water and sewer services at an affordable rate; quality streets; city economic development; and quality police coverage."

After seating new members and mayor, the council:

-heard a report from public works director Bruce Nelson, who said the soil samples from the city yard under a buried paint barrel are being analyzed to see if further digging and how much excavation will be needed. The paint is considered a hazardous waste and the Department of Environmental Quality is studying soil from the burial area.

George Koffler was sworn in to fill out Tim Van Cleave's council position

-heard a report from Breazeale that a study by the Federal Emergency Management Agency is proceeding, which will most likely reduce the flood zone in the Willow Creek Valley. He said many of the "numbers are in" on the new study, but he is working with FEMA to possibly get the flood zone reduced even more in the South Morrow Industrial Park and the Ione area.

-agreed to refer to the utility commission a proposal to add gravel and

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School Board reviews proposal for Irrigon shop building

The Morrow County School District Board heard a presentation concerning architectural plans for a new shop building for the Irrigon Junior/Senior High School at their regular board meeting Monday night in Irrigon, but deferred a decision until they are able to further study the proposal Jan. 19.

The proposal consists of three options, depending on the board's decision and funding available. The first option would be to build the shop building only, the second would be to build a shop building and an uncovered commons area and the third option would be to build the shop, construct the commons area and provide a cover, uniting the new facility with the old building.

The board and superintendent Mark Burrows had been lead to believe that the construction could be completed by the start of school this next year, but learned from the architect that construction will probably not be completed until around December or January 2006.

Also at the meeting, the board heard a presentation concerning costs of outfitting for the shop building, including tools and other equipment, and curriculum options.

In other business, the board approved purchase of the alternative school building from the troubled Union Baker ESD. The board sold the building to Union Baker ESD last year for $146,000 and repurchased it for the same amount. MCSD will begin operating its own alternative education program.

The board also reviewed Burrows' job performance during executive session. Following executive session, board member Barney Lindsay gave Burrows "high praise for the short time he's been here."

In other business, the board:

-adopted the 2005-06 budget calendar as follows: March 1-budgets due from buildings and departments; March 30-publication of notice of budget meeting; April 6-second notice budget hearing; April 11-regular board meeting, distribute budget document; April 18-first budget meeting, budget message, with additional meeting dates to be set by the budget committee if needed; May 9-deadline for budget approval; June 1-publication of notice of budget hearing; June 13-regular board meeting; July 1-beginning of 2005-06 fiscal year; July 15-deadline to certify levy to assessor.

-heard a statement of assurances from Burrows that the district is in compliance with standards for elementary and secondary schools.

-approved employment for Elizabeth Melendez, Boardman school-family liaison; Laurie Hoffman, Irrigon High School part-time assistant cook; Christina Chavez, Riverside High School English as a second language educational assistant, replacing Elizabeth Melendez; Hollie McGill, RHS Title III ed assistant; June Dabling, Windy River Elementary Title I ed assistant; and Jarrod Pearce, A.C. Houghton Elementary Title I ed assistant.

-approved extra duty contracts for: Randy Barton, RHS head softball coach, replacing Tom Jensen;

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Health District position open

Due to the resignation of member John Prag, who is moving out of the Morrow County Health District to the Tri-Cities area, one at-large position has been made vacant on the MCHD board.

The appointee will serve through June 2005, with an election being held in May. According to Victor Vander Does, MCHD Administration, two other positions will also be on the May ballot. Those positions are currently held by Ed Glenn, of Boardman, who will be resigning at the end of the term (June 2005) and Kenneth Matlack, who has not indicated whether he would run for re-election or not.

For those interested in the current opening, a letter of interest should be provided by 1 p.m., Jan. 26 to: Victor Vander Does, Administrator, Morrow County Health District, P.O. Box 9, Heppner, OR 97836. Interested parties should then attend the next regular meeting of the Board, Jan. 31, 7 p.m. in Ione at the Ione United Church of Christ, for an interview.

For any additional information, you can contact Vander Does by phone at 676-2915.

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