Bessie Wetzell Newspaper Library
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

HEPPNER 50¢

Gazette Times

VOL. 124 NO. 5 10 Pages Wednesday, February 2, 2005 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Rural Alliance founder hopes to influence legislation

Meg Murray (left) discusses an issue with Judge Pryor

Gilliam County Judge Laura Pryor said last week that much of the legislation detrimental to rural areas of Oregon comes out of Salem by "accident."

As the founder and recently appointed chairman of the Eastern Oregon Rural Alliance, Pryor said that urban legislators in Salem who produce laws that damage rural Oregon do it by accident. "They don't set out to hurt us," she told the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group annual meeting last Thursday. "They just don't understand us."

Pryor said this misunderstanding is one of the reasons she started the Rural Alliance. The Alliance's purpose is to review legislation for rural compatibility before it becomes law. "This legislature needs solutions," and she said the Alliance will help them find those solutions. She said the Alliance meets around the state six times a year, and even suggested that the group may schedule a meeting in Heppner.

Pryor also talked about economic development in Gilliam County. She pointed out research that is being done for new uses of wheat grown in the county, and also the waste disposal business located near Arlington provides good paying jobs. She encouraged WCVEDG to keep trying to establish new business in south Morrow County. "Take risk within reason, but most of all I encourage you to keep going. Stick with it," she said.

In other business, WCVEDG elected Heppner Gazette-Times publisher and real estate agent David Sykes as 2005 president. Sykes was also last year's president and at the meeting he laid out last year's accomplishments and the coming year's goals.

"We really only have two goals," Sykes said. "Attract new business into the Willow Creek Valley, and help the businesses that are here remain viable and grow." He then spelled out the "tasks" the board had adopted to accomplish those goals.

Task #1: Market the area to potential new businesses.

a. Maintain solid relationship with Port of Morrow and work with the Port when a business is "looking" at the valley.

b. Continue web page updates marketing livability and available industrial land.

c. Continue with mailings and other advertising.

Task #2: Complete the planning and construction of new 5,000 sq. ft. metal building at industrial park. Have the site ready when a new business is looking at the area.

Task #3: Develop advertising materials for new metal building. Print flyers and construct new web site pages.

Task #4: Re-contact all of the businesses that have responded to mass mailings and contacted us over the internet during the past several years. Approximately 127 businesses have answered mailings or responded on the internet in the last three years. Attempt to find funding for paid staff to follow up on business leads and contacts.

David Sykes
WCVEDG
2005 president

Task #5: Attend at least one trade show to hand out advertising about the Willow Creek Valley and the industrial park.

Task #6: Place advertising in trade magazines and newsletters of targeted business types.

To help businesses already here, the WCVEDG board of directors adopted the following tasks:

Task #1- Help Sell or Keep Local Businesses

a. Board member will personally contact local businesses that would like to sell or need finances to continue to operate.

b. WCVEDG will help with a financial package and/or develop business plan

c. Pursue funding to help prospective "new"

continued page 2

Lexington Grange donates dictionaries to HES

Clarence Buchanan (right), with the Lexington Grange, hands out dictionaries to HES teacher Cara Osmin and the third grade students.

The Lexington Grange recently donated dictionaries to Heppner Elementary School for their third grade students. The dictionaries were presented to the students and HES teachers Cara Osmin and Sue Gibbs by Clarence Buchanan of the Grange.

Health District approves funding Boardman Migrant Clinic

The Morrow County Health District Board Monday night approved a request by MCHD CEO Victor Vander Does to give him two additional months unpaid vacation time with the stipulation that he not take two months off consecutively.

Vander Does told the board that he was considering retirement, but would agree to remain on as CEO of the district if he could increase his time off. Vander Does already has four weeks paid vacation through the district.

Vander Does and the board agreed that Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney and Director of Nursing Services Molly Rhea would be able to conduct operations in Vander Does' absence. The board asked Vander Does to inform them of increased compensation for Mahoney and Rhea.

The board credited Vander Does with the survival of the district, which was in extreme financial distress and near closure when he took the helm around five years ago. The district, while much more stable financially, still faces financial problems, with a loss of $14,168 for December and an average year-to-date loss of $21,771 per month, for a $130,624 loss for the year.

In other business, the board approved giving the newly-established Boardman migrant clinic $70,000 for operations for the year to be paid in monthly installments by June 30, the end of the district's fiscal year. The board earlier agreed to the expenditure to support continuing health care in the Boardman area. MCHD had previously been in a $140,000 per year contract with physician Dr. Robert Boss to provide Boardman area-health care through his private clinic, however Dr. Boss and the district agreed that that contract would be dissolved once the Boardman migrant clinic was established.

The new clinic serves the general population, not just migrant workers.

Some initial problems with the new clinic's cash flow, billing and clinic-patient relations were also discussed.

Also at the meeting, the board appointed Leann Rea, Boardman, to board position number three, replacing John Prag who resigned as he moved out of the district. Rea said she has lived in nearly every community in Morrow County. She was born and raised in Ione and has lived in Heppner, Lexington and the Boardman areas and added that she has a cabin in Hardman. Rea indicated that she plans to file for the position.

Board member Ed Glenn, who was recently elected Boardman mayor, said that he definitely will not run for re-election to the health district board. Board member Ken Matlack, Irrigon, indicated that he does not plan on running for re-election. Matlack was recently elected Morrow County Sheriff and is a member of the Morrow County School Board and numerous other boards. Both Glenn and Matlack said they would search for board candidates from their respective areas. Matlack said that he plans to remain on the school board.

In other business, the board:

-learned from Vander Does that Heppner physician, Dr. Kenneth Wenberg, has located malpractice insurance for his private Heppner clinic and will fax proof of that coverage to the district. Dr. Wenberg's hospital admitting privileges were suspended until he provided proof of coverage. His reinstatement as a member of the medical staff is pending, however, he is still covered by the district's malpractice insurance when he provides emergency room coverage at Pioneer Memorial Hospital.

-approved a request from Vander Does to go out for bids for a new x-ray machine for PMH. Vander Does said that plans are to purchase a standard x-ray machine that could be adapted to provide digital x-rays. The machine, which would require no x-ray film, would enable x-rays to be sent via computer to physicians and other facilities. Vander Does said that around $190,000 has been budgeted for the machine, which is expected to save the district money on x-ray film. He said that a purely digital machine,

continued page 2

Embezzlement case proceeds with pre-trial conference

The case against Sandi Day, of Heppner, who has been charged with embezzlement, will be entering into the pre-trial phase within the month, according to Morrow County District Attorney David Allen.

The District Attorney's office has presented Day and her lawyer with a plea agreement and will hear their decision at the pre-trial conference. If the agreement is not accepted, trial arrangements will be discussed, said Allen.

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

10% OFF ALL WRANGLER MERCHANDISE
COMBINE CLINIC on February 4 at 10 a.m.
plus MCGG OPEN HOUSE
Hot Dogs & Hamburgers provided • Lunch at 12 noon
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net