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HEPPNER 50¢
Gazette Times

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Heppner City Council votes for reduced police coverage

The Heppner City Council voted last Monday to cut police coverage in Heppner from 120 hours per week to 80 hours. The city is under contract with the county sheriff, which provides the coverage.

New sheriff Ken Matlack had asked the city for substantial changes in the contact over previous years. The city will pay about $155,000 per year for the coverage. The original contract in 2002 called for 120 hours of coverage per week for about $150,000. The cost would have risen to $210,000 for the same coverage the coming year.

The city has been in negotiations with Matlack for the past several weeks hammering out a new agreement and last week the sheriff was at the meeting to express his views on the county's relationship with Heppner.

Matlack asked for more latitude in assigning officers to patrols throughout the county. In the past, three officers were assigned to patrol the Heppner area. Under the new agreement the sheriff will be able to move officers easier.

Citing the low crime rate in Heppner, Matlack said it is difficult to keep officers to patrol Heppner. He pointed out one month where an officer on patrol in Heppner received 14 calls, and nine of those were for dog problems. He said under those circumstances it is difficult to keep morale high in the department. "Part of the reason people leave Heppner patrolling is because of boredom. We don't want to do a lot of recruiting," Matlack told the council.

Under the agreement there will be two deputies to cover Heppner during a 24-hour period. Matlack said although there may not be someone patrolling all the time, most of the deputies in the department live in Heppner and he told the council that "you might not have someone to respond to a barking dog, but if you had something substantial happen you would have someone there." He said since the sheriff's department is located in Heppner with deputies coming and going that he was sure the city would end up with more than 80 hours per week in coverage.

The council debated whether or not to cut back coverage and in the end voted 4 to 2 to approve the 80-hour contract.

Council member Glenn Baker, who served on the police commission that negotiated the sheriff contract, said he was "uncomfortable" with 80 hours (see this week's letters to the editor) saying police protection is the most important thing a city can provide for its citizens. Baker voted against the contract.

Council member Judy Buschke said the reason Heppner doesn't have a lot of police calls is because "the people who make the trouble know they (the deputies) are out there." She also voted against the reduced hours.

Other council members Cindi Dougherty, George Koffler and Kay Robinson, along with Mayor Tim Van Cleave voted in favor. Council member Tom Wolff was not at the meeting.

"I don't want to go to 80 hours," Mayor Van Cleave said. "But if we go on our own (set up a city police department again) we would have recruitment and all the other problems that go with a department."

Local teacher meets Rumsfeld in Afghanistan

David Melville, Heppner Jr/Sr High School math teacher, with Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on April 13, 2005. Rumsfeld was on a trip to Afghanistan where Melville is stationed as a Chinook helicopter pilot.

New women's group organizes benefit dinner

Diva Club planning benefit for Coil family

An elegant evening of fine dining and live entertainment has been planned as a benefit for the Darcy Coil family. The semi-formal event will take place on Friday, May 6 at the Elks Lodge in Heppner. There are two seatings available– one at 5:30 p.m. and one at 7:30 p.m.

The menu includes Tuscan style pork chops, penne pasta with a putenesca sauce, Italian style vegetables, tossed mixed green salad, garlic and herb bread and dessert.

Dinner, dessert and entertainment tickets are $25 for adults and $15 for children 12 and under. You may also purchase dessert and entertainment only tickets for $10. Seating time for dessert only tickets will be at 7 p.m.

Tickets may be purchased at Murray's Drug or the Bank of Eastern Oregon in Heppner. This event is being planned by the "Diva Club" of Heppner, a newly formed women's group. For more information about the event or to become a "Diva," contact Marianne Smith, Ann Murray or Carri Grieb.

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

Ione superintendent receives board praise

The Ione School Board praised school superintendent Bryn Browning at the regular board meeting Monday night.

"The Ione Board of Education is firmly convinced that they made an excellent decision to employ Mrs. Bryn Browning as superintendent of Ione School District," said a board release. "Mrs. Browning has exceeded the expectations of the board during her first year. She is a constant presence in the classroom and the district. She has done a superb job of integrating the district with the school community. She collaborates with staff to design programs that increase student achievement. The district is currently on a fiscally sound basis despite a difficult funding atmosphere for education in the state of Oregon," the release concluded.

Browning, who has been with the district this past school year, is the daughter of George Murdock, head of the Morrow-Umatilla ESD, who has contracted for many services with ISD since the Ione Schools' split from the Morrow County School District. Murdock also served temporarily as Ione superintendent prior to Browning's employment with the district.

The district shows $1,632,059 in total resources and $940,479 in total expenditures since the beginning of the fiscal year. According to the district's financial update, property tax payments have increased since the second property tax billing with $20,082 collected in March. The general fund received $93,451 in Basic School Support, with two additional payments expected this year. ISD is eligible for $22,000 in Title I reimbursements which will be billed in April.

ISD had no large expenditures in March, but large expenditures in April include a compressor and pool expenditures.

The board received an administrative report from Browning as follows:

-Local artist Bonnie Wenberg, assisted by members of her family, conducted a two-week artist-in-residence program at Ione Schools, funded through the Ione Education Foundation. Students in grades one through four wove baskets and made wall hangings while middle school students made baskets.

-ISD received two grants promoting early literacy for kindergarten-grade three students, the first from the Oregon Reading Foundation for $2133 to fund two thirds of the start-up costs for a SMART (Start Making a Reader Today) reading program and the second for $1067 from the Ione Education Foundation to fund the remainder. Michelle Stone, a new teacher at Ione who is a trained SMART coordinator, will assist with the program.

-Twice a month the school holds "Read-n-Play," a reading program for children from birth to five years old, their parents and

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Ione annual TV shoot to be held

The annual 1000-yard TV Shoot will be held on Saturday, April 30 at the Frank and Joe Halvorsen Farm. Registration is from 8:30-9:30 a.m., with the shoot beginning promptly at 9:30 a.m. The fee is $20 per person per shot. An "all you can eat" lunch will be available for $6 for adults and $3.50 for kids 10 and under. The menu will include BBQ chicken and ribs, hot dogs, baked beans, potato salad and beverages. Lunch price includes breakfast pastries, juice and coffee in the morning.

All proceeds will be used to purchase children's prizes for the Ione 4th of July Celebration. Children's activities funded in the past included a fish pond, balloon race, bicycle drawings, straw money pile, frog jumping contest, talent show prizes, free swimming, bouncy castle, poster contest and many other activities.

The prize is $100 for hitting and breaking a 27-inch TV tube at 1000 yards. Lindsay Kincaid is giving a $100 prize for hitting a small TV tube 10 to 12 inches at 1000 yards.

It is also asked that participants please leave their dogs at home.

This is the fourth annual TV shoot. Also clay pigeons will be available too. If you would like to help sponsor this event and get your company's name on our reader board, a donation of $100 or more would be appreciated.

For further information contact Tanna Padberg at (541) 422-7276.

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