

The Official Newspaper
of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

**Heppner
GAZETTE-TIMES**

U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper

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Katie Foster Editor

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Health District has largest loss since August

The Morrow County Health District posted a \$102,614 loss for the month of April, almost three times the loss experienced in March, and the board of directors was told at its monthly meeting Monday night. The loss is the largest since August of 2004.

The deficit was blamed on a drop in patient revenue of over \$67,000 at the district's clinics and the hospital. Operating expenses were down slightly from last month, but not enough to offset the drop in income.

The district has an average loss of \$30,733 per month so far this year.

In a somewhat related matter, the board discussed complaints board members have heard in the community about the difficulty getting into see doctors at the clinic. District

Administrator Victor Vander Does said he would examine the problem and come up with some proposed solutions at the next board meeting.

The board also heard a report that Dr. Sam Datta's wife has completed her schooling back East and will be returning to the area as a partner at Blue Mountain Pathology in Pendleton. Dr. Datta, who lives in Heppner and sees patients at the clinic, has said he wishes to relocate to the Hermiston area but still see patients at the Heppner clinic. He has indicated he wants to see patients Monday and Tuesday in Heppner and also take emergency calls at the hospital. Vander Does asked the board to extend Datta's contract for 30 days to work out details of the days to be worked.

Nazarene Church to host Bible study on Israel

The Heppner Nazarene Church will be hosting a four-week Bible study video series entitled, "Israel in Crisis: What Lies Ahead?" The video series is based on a book of the same title by David Dolan. The study will begin Wednesday, June 8 at 6:30 p.m., with each session expected to last one hour. The study will conclude on June 29.

Dolan, born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, is a Jerusalem-based author and broadcast journalist who has been living in Israel since 1980. Dolan uses his "first-hand perspective" to answer some fundamental questions concerning Israel's reappearance on the modern

world stage. Some questions Dolan visits include: Will the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem be rebuilt; Will the missing Ark of the Covenant be found; Is Israel's physical rebirth really connected to Biblical prophecy and/or God; What about Jews living in the contested territories; Does the Bible have anything to say about them settling there; and If so, is it relevant to what is happening in the disputed zones today?

Dolan also discusses Biblical prophecy as connected to the Jewish Holocaust of World War II.

This study is open to all interested in the community. For more information you can contact the Heppner Nazarene Church at 676-5529.

Stone moving to Heppner High School principal job



Daye Stone moving to High School principal job

Daye Stone, vice-principal of Heppner Grade School, will be moving up to take over the job of Heppner High School principal.

Stone will be taking over the job vacated by Wade A. Smith, who is moving up to be Morrow County School District Assistant Superintendent.

"My wife and I have enjoyed living and working here in Heppner and we look forward to my new position as high school principal," Stone said.

Letters to the Editor

Editor's note: Letters to the Editor must be signed. The Gazette-Times will not publish unsigned letters. Please include your address and phone number on all letters for use by the G-T office. The G-T reserves the right to edit. The G-T is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. (Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.)

Rent raise was not an easy decision

To the Editor:

The letter to the Editor in the May 18 Gazette really upset me. I have listened as my husband and other Heppner Housing Authority members agonize over having to raise the rents on the Heppner Senior Center apartments. Believe me, no one thought having to raise the rent was funny and no one was uncaring about the plight of the current tenants. These Board members do this work as volunteers, out of a sense of duty to the community and do not receive one cent for their time and effort. I believe it is time people educate themselves regarding events in the community and attend the meetings that are open to all citizens, so that they know first hand what the facts are. Gossip is a vicious hurtful thing.

On June 29, 1988, the City of Heppner and the Heppner Senior Citizens Center Board, Inc., an Oregon non-profit charitable corporation, entered into a contract stating the terms of the purchase of the Heppner Hotel by the City of Heppner. The contract states the role of each entity and methods of paying for the conversion of the Heppner Hotel into apartments on the upper floors and leasing back to the Heppner Senior Citizens Center Board, Inc., the 4650 square feet of the main floor that the Senior Center Board still manages. It also states the purpose for the building is to be for the benefit of seniors and disabled; there is no mention of "low income" persons.

The City has named the Heppner Housing Authority Board to supervise the apartments and adjacent public areas and to work with the Senior Center Board for the main level of the building.

The Housing Authority Board is charged

Apartment tenant expresses concern regarding rent hike

To the Editor:

No matter what our age, we like to maintain some pride... and a lot of independence. But now that's even being threatened.

The powers that be are raising the rent at the Senior Center. In fact, it will be so high before they get through that we won't be able to afford to live here. Our "set income" is being "upset."

with setting the rents in the apartments and their public areas at a rate that there is no expense to the City. That is a part of that original contract. The "non profit" statement in the Heppner Senior Citizens Center Board, Inc.'s papers of incorporation is still honored. The City does not make any money from the building. However, by the contract, the City is not allowed to pay for anything over and above the income.

The tenants receive much for their rent. A secure, clean building, their electricity is paid and that includes their heat and air conditioning. Their water, sewer and garbage are also included in their rent payment. And, when something doesn't work a call brings repairs and maintenance people. June 1, 2005 the rents will be \$371 to \$424, based on apartment square footage. This is only the second rent raise that I could find since the building opened.

The City now has no choice but to raise rents because the Reserve Fund to pay for repairs and maintenance is now very low. They must maintain a Reserve Fund to handle unforeseen emergencies. It costs nearly \$5000 to refurbish an apartment when someone moves out. Have you checked the cost to recarpet or lay new linoleum, replace countertops or paint and the cost of the labor to have the work done? The roof is also having a problem, with a leak in one of the apartments and the man hours to find the leak is expensive. The money from the rent raise will go into the Reserve Fund for all of those things and more.

Please know that I feel very badly for the tenants who are having a problem with paying the additional monthly rent.

(s) Jeanette Padberg
Heppner

Here are few of their suggestions to us:

- 1.) Sell your car. You don't need it. You have everything you need- post office, grocery store, drug store, bank, great doctors, wonderful town.
- 2.) Get the extra money from your kids. They would do it, but you really don't want them to have to. Independence again.
- 3.) You need to budget your money better. Let's see, \$700 minus \$800. How does that work?
- 4.) You can't move, you don't have any place else to go. Whatever happened to respect your elders?

(s) Bonnie Gates
Heppner

Apology to the City Council

To the Editor:

This is a letter of apology to the Heppner City Council.

In my letter last week, I addressed the council and learned later my questions and concerns should have been addressed to the Housing Authority Board. Most of my questions have been answered. It seems that the rent will be raised. There is no way for this to be prevented. The board has considered all the options, I was told.

Also, what was said in the meeting was said. But it was explained to me that things were said in haste and without thinking. I can understand that. We all say

things on the spur of the moment that we regret.

I am still concerned that some of the people will not be able to pay the additional rent. Twenty dollars a month additional expense would be hard on our budget. But, it seems that the apartments were not intended to be low rent apartments.

So, City Council, you have my apology. I hope I have not inserted "foot in mouth" again with something I have written in this letter, because I sure don't like writing apology letters.

(s) Ruth Donohoe
Heppner

Rent increase upset tenants & families

To the Editor:

Heppner, we need to be concerned about the residents of St. Patrick's Senior Center apartments.

Recently they were notified that their rent was being increased by \$20, effective June 1, 2005. According to the minutes of the Housing Authority Board, who made this decision based on the city manager's report that they were going behind \$1500 a month and it would take an increase of \$78.95 per month, based on full occupancy. It was voted on and passed that the rent would be increased every six months until the sum of \$80 increase was reached and a letter would be sent out to tenants. (The additional increases were not mentioned in this letter.) The motion was carried by a unanimous vote.

Some of the residents and their children met and approached the board, the city manager and the mayor. They explained that an increase in rent would force some of the tenants to move out, since being on a fixed income left them no room for increases.

The affect this is having on them cannot be counted in dollars. Many moved to the Center's apartments thinking it would be their home as long as they could live independently, yet be near their families. Living with their children or 60 miles or more away from their families was not part of their plan. However, that is what is facing the fortunate ones who even have a family, now.

After looking into the financial dilemma of the Housing Authority, we, the

families, found that the loss was due to four empty apartments since November of 2004. So, the increase is to make up for the empties. Although the apartments were originally budgeted to run with three empties. (One has filled since November.)

The city manager argues that there is maintenance that could require added financial burden. The roof and the heat pumps being the ones he was concerned about. In 2000, the Housing Authority borrowed \$150,000 to spruce the place up and those items didn't seem to be in their plan. The Board has, according to their April financial statement, \$21,017.54 in the Center fund and \$8972.41 in the reserve fund and \$12,000 budgeted in a contingency fund. We suggested that the \$80 rent increase be applied to the empty apartments and the tenants rent stay the same until they moved out. Allowing the Board to see if the apartments would rent at the increased amount and keeping them from having added vacancies, which is a real possibility. Our suggestion was ignored and when faced with having even more vacancies, the response to the tenants was that they would just "close the doors."

Unfortunately, it may be too late when this does happen. As a community we need to put our heads together. If you have any suggestions, please contact Corol Mitchell, 676-5596, Linda Schultz, 676-5010 or Joann Weisler, 676-8702.

(s) Corol Mitchell
Linda Schultz
Joann Weisler
Heppner

**Ione Community Church
43rd Annual
Auction and Barbecue
Something for everyone!
Saturday, June 4, 2005
Willows Grange Hall
Ione, Oregon
Country Store and
Silent Auction, 10 a.m.
AUCTION, 10:30 a.m.
Pit Barbecue Dinner 12:30 p.m.**

Together with their parents,
Lena Gossett & Benjamin McMilligott
invite you to join them
in the celebration of their union
Saturday, June 4 at 1 p.m.
St. Patrick's Church in Heppner
Reception to follow at the Fairgrounds

Peterson's Jewelers
Heppner 676-9200

**We will be closed Monday, May 30th
for Memorial Day**