

Back to school!



Brian Rill (left) and C.J. Kindle, both seven years old and in the second grade at Heppner Elementary School, have fun during noon recess Tuesday.

HEPPNER

50¢



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Recall election set for Lex. mayor Edwards, councilwoman Taylor

Recall petitions against Lexington Mayor John Edwards and Lexington Council member Luella Taylor were filed at Lexington City Hall by Lexington resident Charlie Sumner on Monday, August 22, and were sent to the Morrow County Clerk for signature verification. Sixty-one recall signatures were submitted for Taylor; 57 were determined to be valid by the clerk. Sixty-two signatures were submitted for Edwards; 58 were determined to be valid. Eighteen valid signatures were required.

Once the signatures were verified by the clerk, then Edwards and Taylor had to either resign or submit a statement or justification. Both have submitted statements rather than resign, which set a recall election in motion. According to Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers, the recall election will be held Tuesday, September 27. Ballots will be mailed Friday, September 9. The last day any Lexington resident can register to vote in that election will be Wednesday, September 7. Ballots must be returned to the clerk's office by Tuesday, September 27, at 8 p.m. Ballots may be dropped off at the clerk's office or mailed to arrive at the clerk's office by 8 p.m. that day (Sept. 27). The clerk's office will not accept ballots that are postmarked September 27, but arrive after that day.

The Gazette-Times has received copies of the recall petitions that Sumner filed with the Town of Lexington against Lexington Mayor Edwards and Council member Taylor and has also obtained copies of rebuttal statements from Edwards

and Taylor filed with the clerk's office.

According to the recall petition, Sumner stated that "John Edwards fails to follow public meeting laws and the town charter. Meetings under his direction become derailed because he allows citizens to be disrespectful during council meetings. He verbally harasses and demeans other council members and town employees during council meetings and at other community contacts."

"John Edwards shows no interest in pursuing items brought up by certain council members for the improvements of the town. He fails to follow council's directions on certain projects. He directed the city recorder to write a letter turning down an approximately \$96,000 loan at four percent interest without the consent or knowledge of the council."

"John Edwards refuses to recognize petitions or questionnaires signed by the citizens (even a majority of voters) for the improvements or ideas for the town. He has said, 'If the people in this town were that concerned then they should be at the council meetings' and 'I don't care what the people in this town want.'"

"John Edwards does not represent the town in an appropriate manner at meetings or functions he has attended in or out of town for a person in the Mayor position."

In Mayor Edward's statement filed with the Morrow County Clerk's Office, he said, "How do I violate the town charter; our current charter has NEVER been signed by town officials and is doubtful if it is really legal. I don't believe you could elect a council person

legally according to it.

"If someone is over 21 years of age, they should act accordingly. There should not be the need to baby-sit at council meetings."

"Everyone council person in town shows little interest in other people's projects. I only get to vote in a tie. All council business should go through City Hall."

"To use a loan one should have plan on how to spend the money, BEFORE they get it. Not after. The town has been reprimanded before for trying to hold elections. Secretary of State Letter dated 11-01-1999 applies; you accept letters of intent not petitions."

"Please give the people the dates and places these functions took place, that you were at and know this for the truth! We have waited over three years, Charlie, for your list of all the good things you were going to list about a previous town mayor."

"I was elected to guide the town for the benefit of the majority and not the chosen few." (signed) John Edwards.

Mayor Edwards told the Gazette Tuesday that he did not believe that the petition had 63 signatures as stated last week in the East Oregonian and believed that "more than a few of them" were invalid. "I know the council meetings get loud," said Edwards, "but I think the community has the right to respond, because, after all, they are the ones who pay the bills. The citizens elected me and they will have to un-elect me. The process will go through one way or another. The people knew who I was when they elected me." Edwards also disputed the legality of the recall, but said that he believes that ORS rules are not enforced.

It was back to school time Monday, August 29, for Morrow County and Ione students.

The Ione School District (K-12) reported 161

students in attendance on the first day of school.

The Morrow County School District had a total of 2148 students in attendance

on the first day of school. Heppner Elementary (grades K-6) had 190 students; Heppner High (grades seven-12) had 232; Sam Boardman Elementary (K-four)-410; Windy River Elementary, Boardman (five-six) 148; Riverside High School, Boardman (seven-12)-435; A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irrigon (K-four)-320; Irrigon Elementary (five-six)-133; Irrigon High School (seven-11)-272; Morrow Education students-eight.

The first day attendance records were slightly below the unofficial enrollment figures which show 2284 students enrolled. MCS D Executive Secretary Julie Ashbeck said that more students are expected to attend, especially at the Morrow Education Center.

Last year 2291 students were enrolled on the first day in Morrow County Schools.

TV members say yes to merger

Heppner TV members voted 57 to 5 last Tuesday night to be taken over by Windwave Communications of Boardman. It was estimated that the merger would take place in 30 to 60 days.

Board members said the takeover was necessary because Heppner TV was going broke. The company lost \$18,000 last year, mostly because of people dropping cable for satellite TV.

Under the arrangement Windwave will acquire all of Heppner TV's assets and assume the delivery of TV signal to the 403 current subscribers. No money will change hands in the deal and it is expected that Windwave will keep Heppner TV

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In the recall petition against Taylor, Sumner stated, "Luella Taylor verbally harasses and demeans council members and town employees during council meetings and at other community contacts. She displays a negative attitude while working with other council members due to personality conflicts. (Example: Improvements of the Town water system) On one occasion Luella threatened to run over a council member with her car because they did not agree with her."

"On more than one occasion Luella Taylor has threatened to fire town employees without the council's consent or knowledge. She has at times tried to control who town employees could speak with, at the expense of their jobs."

"Luella Taylor only follows public meeting laws and the Town Charter when it suits her needs. She does not conduct herself in professional manner which her position requires. Many times Luella does not gather all the facts or consider all the angles before making important decisions. Luella is close minded about decisions that affect the Town today and for the future."

In Taylor's statement, which she filed with the Town of Lexington Monday, she said, "These allegations are false, libelous and the outcome of gossip and disagreement. I have never harassed or demeaned any councilor or town employee. I have defended myself as a private citizen against a councilor, and then only after I was threatened. I did not try or say I would

run over a councilor with my car. I have told employees that they should stand up for themselves and not bellyache their complaints and then do nothing. I did not threaten termination."

"I have worked within the council, made no unauthorized contracts or agreements and have never cost the town money, by my individual actions. I support the town water project, but not by taking out another loan, when grants have not been addressed or considered. If I disagree with an issue, I say so."

"My professional manner and knowledge base equals that of any other councilor. I have supported Lexington at the state, county and city level. I support the future of Lexington, and do not want to see it bankrupt and insolvent because of excessive dept." (signed) Luella Taylor.

Taylor reiterated her statement published in a letter to the editor to the Gazette-Times Wednesday, August 24. Taylor said, "I have devoted my time, efforts, money and even my health to the town. In return, I have had my property vandalized, trashed and egged. I have received hang up phone calls, threats, false allegations and even been physically assaulted. Last November, I was reelected for another four years and have done nothing to warrant these actions."

"In conclusion, there is no basis for these allegations, as they are false, malicious and libelous. I will not resign nor will any of my votes be controlled by individuals or by the local Lexington cult."

*We will be closed Monday, Sept. 5th
Have a great Labor Day!*

Morrow County Grain Growers

Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net

**THE HEPPNER G-T WILL BE CLOSED
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5th FOR LABOR DAY
ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
THIS FRIDAY, SEPT. 2nd
AT 5:00 P.M.**