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Gazette Times

VOL. 125 NO. 8 8Pages Wednesday, February 22, 2006 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Lexington water use, reports on track

The Lexington Town Council learned, at their regular meeting Tuesday, Feb. 14, that their water use and water use reports are on track.

Brad Baird of the Anderson & Perry Engineering firm told the council that their reports indicate that their current well can meet the town's demand, the "water right situation is in a great place" and the town has only 5.2 percent of unaccounted-for water. "You're in a great shape there," said Baird, who added that the state prefers that entities keep their unaccounted-for water under 10 percent. "You have low unaccounted-for water," he said. He also said that the town already reports "almost all of the mandatory items anyway and some of the extras."

The town hired Anderson & Perry to complete a required water conservation management plan. Baird said that creating such a plan would be "pretty simple because everything's in good order."

Baird, however, did say that the town's "water use is a little bit high compared to other communities" and "in the summer the well works awfully hard to keep up with the peak demand." He said that one deficiency is that the town has only one reliable well and commented that the town will have problems if that well should go out. He said that a second well with good water quality would be a good idea.

Also at the meeting, the council again discussed the issue of trees in the creek that could create flooding problems. Bob Steagall suggested that the town approach a different landowner than previously discussed to arrange for removal of the wood. The council directed town recorder Nicki Clement to write a letter to the second landowner asking permission to take out the trees.

In other business the council:

-was reminded by Mayor Val Doherty that budget time is fast approaching and set the first budget meeting for Monday, March 20, beginning at 7 p.m. The budget must be approved by June 15.

-learned from Doherty that the town had received a request to comment on a proposed wind power project in Arlington. The council tabled a decision until the next meeting in order to garner information on the project.

-learned from Doherty that the town had received a letter from Portland State University inviting the town to update the town's census information.

-learned from Doherty that the town had received a request from Morrow County Public Works to write a letter in support of the proposed Lexington Airport project. The council said that they had received no information on the project and opted to write a letter to the county seeking information before they decided whether to indicate their support to the project or not.

-heard from Lexington Fire Chief Charlie Sumner that the Ione Fire District has asked Lexington if they would like to join them. Sumner said it would benefit the town and Lexington residents. Sumner said that the Lexington Fire Department has lost one member due to moving from the area and expects to lose another.

-discussed the proposed fire hydrant project and asked Sumner and Dan Marshall, Lexington public works and maintenance, to prioritize needs for the project.

-heard a brief report on the town audit and learned that the auditor's report indicated that the town is in compliance. The audit also indicated that the town's TV fund is stagnant, which council members had already become aware. The council tabled action on the report until the next meeting.

-discussed bringing the town's paid holidays in line with federal holidays.

-learned from Marshall that he has replaced water meters at a residence, which had earlier shown a discrepancy between water used, according to the meter at the residence, and actual use. Marshall said replacing the meter dramatically reduced the difference from around 60,000 gallons to 6,000. He said the remaining difference will not be fixed until a new line is installed.

-received a letter from John Neys from Arlington who indicated that his company may be interested in taking over the town's ailing cable tv system. The council decided to send a notice to townspeople indicating Neys' interest. The town has 39 customers currently and, according to Clement, Neys would need at least 20 customers. Clement said that Neys said that the town's cable tv system is not in too bad of shape, but a few more receivers would improve the tv picture. She also said he indicated that he would not increase the cable rate until they increased the lineup offerings.

-approved a proposal for a credit card for the town. The council agreed to have one credit card account through the Bank of Eastern Oregon with three individual credit cards.

-discussed a local option tax, excise tax or fuel tax to provide the town with more revenue to complete needed town projects.

Ione teams head to state tournament

The Ione Lady Cardinals won first place at the 1A District Tournament in Umatilla. They now advance to the first round of the OSAA State 1A Tournament and will host Crane on Friday, Feb. 24. The game will start at 4 p.m.

The Cardinal boys came away from the 1A District Tournament in Umatilla with the third seed position. They will play against Damascus Christian at Boring in the first round of the OSAA State 1A Tournament. The game will start at 5:30 p.m.

The Ione Community Pep Band won the first place trophy for Outstanding Pep Band at the District Tournament. Jeff Eynetich (above) accepted the award. Photo by Donna Rietmann.

Health District launches new website

The Morrow County Health District has launched a new website to better inform the public about its facilities and services.

The address for the website is www.morrowcountyhealthdistrict.org and features pictures and information about the hospital, clinics, home health, emergency medical services and other services the Health District offers.

The new site was produced and is maintained by the Heppner Gazette-Times.

New 'Speedway Tax' proposed by county

Voters in Morrow County will be asked to approve a special "Speedway Activity Tax" at the May 16 election, county officials have announced. The sales tax would be levied only if a new speedway is built, and only on visitors to the raceway.

Although no final deal to locate a raceway here has been finalized, talks have been heating up recently between raceway developers and the Port of Morrow, which controls the property near Boardman where the NASCAR style track would be built. The county planning commission has also been working on rezoning the property to be more suitable for a speedway.

The special sales tax will be limited to the area of the proposed raceway, and proceeds would be used to pay for expenses incurred having the speedway located in the county. Since the sales tax would only be levied in the raceway area, only visitors using the speedway would pay the tax, one county official emphasized.

The county court is holding an open meeting March 1, 10 a.m. at the courthouse to discuss the proposed new tax, and the public is invited to attend.

Ione Community Church receives new minister

Ione Community Church welcomes Rev. Dr. Lori Wiley as its newest minister. She comes from New Hampshire, having spent some time in Boise, ID. A former teacher and teacher educator, she is ordained in the National Association of Congregational Christian Churches. She is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and the Congregational Foundation of Theological Studies.

Rev. Dr. Lori Wiley

Her field of interest is moral and spiritual development at all ages. In addition to being a minister, she is a developmental psychologist and nationally-known character educator (www.charactered.org).

Her husband, a retired law enforcement officer, will be joining her at the parsonage in March. Their two children are in college in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Ione Community Church has undergone a transition this year, changing its name back to Ione Community Church, which reflects its main value, that of serving the community.

There is an early morning informal service at 9:45 a.m. on Sundays, concurrent with Sunday School. The 11 a.m. service has a new worship team formed under the leadership of Beth Heagy. Youth group is held on Wednesday evenings, call Dave Heagy for details.

Guests and visitors are always welcome to church events. For further information, call 422-7530, or write Ione Community Church, PO Box 346, Ione, OR 97843.

South Pacific to be performed by RHS

The Riverside High School drama and music department is presenting Rodgers and Hammerstein's South Pacific, March 10 and 11. The performance will be held at the R.L. Bateman Auditorium at RHS. Performances will be Friday, March 10 at 7 p.m., and Saturday, March 11 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased through the school, from cast members and at the door. Cost for all seats is $5.

WCVEDG to meet March 8

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Developoment Group will meet March 8 at 8a.m. at Heppner City Hall.

Items on the adgenda include non-profit status, and Industrial park sale update.

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MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

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