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HEPPNER 50¢
Gazette Times

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Heppner gets FEMA award and reduced flood insurance premiums

The city of Heppner was presented Monday with an award from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that recognizes the city's efforts managing its flood plain. According to a FEMA representative the good management will result in a 10 percent savings on flood insurance in the area.

Mark Carey of FEMA was on hand to present Mayor Tim Van Cleave with a certificate marking Heppner's efforts with the flood plain community rating service (CRS).

Carey praised former city manager Jerry Breazeale who did the majority of compliance work on the CRS reports. Carey said his efforts resulted in an average yearly savings of $54 off property owners flood insurance premiums. Carey said there was currently $45 million dollars of property within the flood zone.

Carey also said that new flood maps for the Willow Creek Valley should be coming out before the end of the year. The maps are expected to shrink the size of the flood plain and allow some property owners to discontinue carrying flood insurance. The smaller flood plain will also make new building and remodeling less restrictive in the area.

In other action, the council:

-tabled approving OLCC liquor licenses for seven Heppner businesses until the council heard a report from the county sheriff about any problems at these businesses.

-heard a report from Heppner Housing Authority Chair Judy Buschke, who said there were problems at the St. Patrick's Senior Center as the result of leaking rain water. She said three apartments are currently uninhabitable because of water damage. She said the city is waiting on an insurance adjuster to come and inspect the damage and determine how much the insurance company would pay. Buschke expressed displeasure with the insurance company over the long delay in settlement.

Mark Carey of FEMA (left), presents Mayor Tim Van Cleave with flood plain award.

Mayor Van Cleave painted a bleak picture for the Sr. Center saying it is not able at this time to pay its bills. "We are not making ends meet," he told the council.

After some discussion councilmember George Koffler agreed to investigate possible grants that might be able to be used to reduce the debt for the center and make the project financially viable again. "We need to show that it is a vital need in the community and we need to find a way to keep it here," added councilmember Tom Wolff

-heard from City Manager Dave DeMayo who said he had been contacted by Del Piper of Lexington and Dom Monahan of Eugene concerning bottles that had been discovered by a local man at the former Heppner Gazette-Times property that now belongs to the city. The men are apparently upset saying that the bottles belong to the State of Oregon because they are artifacts.

-discussed a Department of Transportation project to widen and add sidewalks to Court Street, which turns into Heppner Highway. ODOT plans to make upgrades from the courthouse to the fairgrounds.

-discussed a disagreement with Moore Contracting over the completed city water project. The city is withholding $50,000 in contingency payments contending that Moore damaged some of the city's sewer lines during construction. The claim is for $17,000 in damages and $1,000 in attorney fees. Moore has countered that the city did not adequately locate certain lines during construction.

-discussed the quality of the city water. Councilmember Glenn Baker said a recent water quality report sent out to all residents by the city had too much of a "positive spin" and that the city should "tell the people the way it is, that we do not have top quality water. Relatively few people drink water out of the tap," Baker added. "They drink water from Heppner Family Foods (the local market where Baker is an employee)."

Public works director Bruce Nelson responded to Baker by explaining that the report is accurate because it describes the condition of the water as required by government agencies. "That was a consumer confidence report and that is the way it is suppose to be," Nelson said. The report showed no violations in testing for eight different substances in the city water including: copper, lead, radium, uranium, nitrate and coli form. Last year the city was required to start chlorinating its water following testing that showed high levels of coli form. Nelson said that it is likely the city will continue chlorinating its water indefinitely. He said most cities are required to chlorinate and that it is unusual to find one that is not required. He admitted that the chlorination does change the taste.

Baker also said the city water turns white and fizzy sometimes. Nelson said he did not know why the water was in this condition, but it happens a "couple of times a year and is probably from air in the water.

4-H Camp held at Cutsforth Park

4-H members from Morrow County.

4-H camp leader Baillie Keithley (left) of Heppner and camper Emma Osmin get comfortable in their tent.

4-H members from Morrow, Gilliam and Wheeler held their annual 4-H camp June 25-28 at Cutsforth Park. The theme this year was Sports in the Forest. The group participated in daily sports type activities, as well as hiking and campfire time. They also had a dance on the last night of camp.

HLL not to meet

Heppner Little League will not meet throughout the summer. The next meeting will be on Nov. 16 at 7 p.m., with the place to be announced.

Articles needed for Fair Edition

Those wishing to put articles regarding the Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo in the Aug. 9 Fair special edition of the Gazette need to have the articles in by Monday, July 31 at 5 p.m. Articles may be mailed to P.O. Box 337, Heppner, OR 97836; faxed to 676-9211; or emailed to david@heppner.net.

Premium Books are available

Due to everybody getting their information in early, the Premium Books were out by the first part of July. The fair secretary appreciates everybody involved in the publication of the book.

Please remember to read the rules and instructions in the Premium Book, sometimes the instructions change or get more defined. Also remember to pre-register all Open Class animals by next Friday, July 21.

Baker takes over Chamber helm

Terry Baker at the Heppner Chamber of Commerce.

Taking over the executive director position at the Heppner Chamber of Commerce is Terry Baker of Heppner.

Baker, who moved to Heppner with her husband, Heppner city council member Glenn Baker, in October 2003, used to work as a legal secretary and planned many events and seminars for her employers. She also served as the senior center director in Cle Elum, WA, working with 60 volunteers.

Baker said she applied for the job because it sounded like fun and would be like "stepping from one job to another." She also said, "that after three years of being a housewife she needed to go back to work to get some rest."

The Bakers have been married for 10 years and moved numerous times due to Glenn's job with the Parks Service and have come to Heppner to stay. "We are never going to move," said Terry.

Baker is looking forward to the many upcoming events including Celebrate Heppner and Cycle Oregon. She will not be here during the Morrow County Fair and Oregon Trail Pro Rodeo as she had already committed to helping with her nephew's wedding, but is entrusting the event back into the capable hands of Hughes. Baker said she is also looking forward to the St. Patrick's Celebration as she is part Irish.

Baker is excited about the new job and diving in head first. She is already working on gathering more events and ideas for this year's Celebrate Heppner. If you have any ideas, give her a call at the Chamber office at 676-5536.

Baker is replacing Claudia Hughes, who served as director for 20 years.

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