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County says 'no' to cities' tippage demands

The Morrow County court said "no" last Wednesday to a demand by the county's five cities that would give more tippage fee funds to the cities.

"This money goes to the county fund and the county is going to keep control of those funds," Commissioner John Wenholtz said.

Over 40 people attended the county commissioner meeting, which was moved from the commissioners'

normal office to the courtroom up stairs to accommodate the crowd.

The mayors have been meeting since August in an attempt to cooperate on various issues, and had concluded they would seek more of the nearly \$1 million paid to the county this year in fees collected each time garbage is dumped at the large Finley Buttes Landfill on Bombing Range Road in North Morrow County.

Boardman Mayor Ed Glenn represented the cities at the meeting, and he told the court that they wanted 42 percent of the funds distributed equally to the cities, 33 percent distributed to the cities based on population, and 25 percent left for the county.

He also said the cities wanted \$500,000 in the current cash balance of the tippage fund distributed to the cities in equal shares.

The cities are contending that the money was promised to them when the landfill was sited in the county back in 1992. In fact the county passed a resolution dividing 90 percent of the tippage fees up among the cities in 1993, but then rescinded that resolution one year later.

Several citizens testified at the meeting, and most were in favor of leaving the money where it was. "If the cities get this money most of our organizations will go down hill," said Earl Papineau of Ione.

County Judge Terry Tallman had said last week that if the county loses the tippage fee money it will have to lay off people and cut back on support for groups and organizations. The county disburses some of the tippage money to various civic and other groups in the county including the Neighborhood Center and the Extension as examples.

"I ask that both sides go easy on this," said George Koffler of Heppner. "There will be loss of jobs and

services. We are just asking that you slow down the process. It would be difficult for groups and entities to make up this shortfall (caused if the county lost the ability to fund them)," he said.

Former county commissioner Dan Brosnan said the loss of tippage money would be "devastating" to county government. Brosnan said there would be layoffs in the sheriff department. At present the tippage funds are distributed by the court between rural and city needs, a balance he feels would be lost if cities were given most of the funds.

Previously several mayors had said the cities need the funds for such things as water and sewer projects, roads and other services.

Brosnan said approval of the tippage redistribution would probably mean the end of a special levy being proposed to fix roads in the county. "This is bad policy at a bad time and I urge the commissioners to reject it," Brosnan said.

Another former commissioner Ray Grace said he felt the same as Brosnan. "This county works within their budget," Grace said. "I would not vote in favor of this. I could not accept the consequences," he said.

Former judge Louis Carlson, who was chief negotiator with Tidewater Barge Company to establish the landfill here, also wrote a letter against the cities proposal.

There were several who supported the cities' position, however, including Heppner city councilmember Glenn Baker (see letters to the editor page 3) who told the commissioners that the issue is accountability and need. "The county reversed it self (in 1993) and I feel promises made should be kept. We all have needs, and so do the cities," Baker said.

"You are balancing the budget on a precarious source," Heppner City Manger David DeMayo said. "The DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) could shut this landfill down at any time.

Glenn told the commissioners that funds from the tippage fees were originally promised to be used to offset the negative impact having a garbage dump located in the county would have, including forcing people to live elsewhere. Tallman disagreed. "To say that Finley Buttes is the reason people do not live in Morrow County is hogwash," he said.

Glenn apparently felt different about disbursement of the tippage funds in 1987. In the July 22, 1987 issue of the Heppner Gazette-Times Glenn was quoted at a public hearing discussing locating the landfill here as saying he was probably closer to the project than any other resident of the county. "The lights of the trucks will be shining right in my bedroom window," he pointed out.

Glenn said at that time he favored the project, but thought the county should decide on how to spend the "franchise fees" imposed by the county, and that the money should be used to stimulate business development.

"I think we should dedicate the money to help small manufacturing companies locate in the county," Glenn said. "Small manufacturing will bring new money into the county," he said at the time.

Although all three members of the county commission refused to reallocate the fees, they did indicate they were willing to talk later about a new way to distribute the "needs and issues" funds given out from the tippage fee funds each year.

continued page 9

HEPPNER

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New technology wave of the future for Morrow County School District

Michael Lasher from the Umatilla-Morrow ESD, at the Monday night school board meeting in Boardman, outlined a proposed partnership among the state legislature, ESD and the school districts which would put data projectors and document cameras in all 708 classrooms in Umatilla and Morrow and Umatilla counties.

Lasher says he has been working with State Senator David Nelson, Pendleton, to seek funding through the legislature. Lasher said that Nelson, who has been proactive in terms of promoting technology in the schools, will help in convincing the legislature of

the machines' "tremendous benefit to children". The proposal has no senate bill number as of yet.

Cost for the project is estimated at around \$470,000. The ESD has pledged \$250,000, with the ESD seeking another \$250,000 in matching funds from the school districts.

The system is a sort of high-tech version of the overhead projector. However, with the overhead, a teacher has to write out on transparencies what he would like to show to his classroom. With a data projector and document camera, which, say educators, will make the overhead projector obsolete,

the teacher can place virtually anything under the projector—a book, a math lesson, child's homework, a butterfly, educational information from the internet, for example—to show his students. Any type of computer may be used with the system. The machine is highly desired by teachers and "makes show and tell a whole other world," said Wade Smith, MCS D assistant superintendent.

The MCS D has planned yet another demonstration, this one concerning a high-tech school bus, Wednesday, March 7, at A.C. Houghton Elementary School in Irrigon, from 10 a.m. to noon. People are invited to "take a ride on the magic bus" and those with wi-fi laptops are invited to bring them as they would be able to log-on through the bus.

This technology will not only allow a bus to be observed by district officials, but can tell them if the bus is off its route or has stopped for an unusually long period of time and is equipped with a global positioning system. The technology also enables district officials to "count noses" and determine if and when a child enters or leaves the bus and could even have the capability of scanning fingerprints. The system can also capture a license plate and other activity on camera and officials can determine if the owner of the vehicle has any prior convictions.

The morning's demonstration will include a reenactment of an incident

Continued on page two

Aprons for charity



Shannon Wicklund is shown with one of her apron designs.

Four years ago Shannon Wicklund began making children's aprons for charity. She asks for donations for the aprons and donates all proceeds to the Prineville chapter of the Relay for Life. Wicklund's daughter, Rebecca Swearingen, is the co-chair of the Prineville chapter of the Relay for Life.

Four years ago, Wicklund's father died from cancer and she has had other relatives who have died from cancer. Wicklund herself is a cancer survivor.

This year's goal for Relay for Life in Prineville is \$60,000 with proceeds going to fund cancer research.

Many people have donated fabric to Wicklund to help her in making the children's aprons. The aprons can be found at Murray's Drug Store.

For more information about Relay for Life you can visit the website at www.relayforlife.org or go to www.cancer.org, and click on the Relay for Life link.

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

Special elections to be held

The Morrow County Clerk has announced that on May 16, an election will be held for the purpose of electing board members to fill the positions and terms for the following districts listed below:

Heppner Rural Fire Protection District
two positions at large - four-year terms;
Ione Rural Fire Protection District
two positions at large - four-year terms;
Boardman Rural Fire Protection District
two positions at large - four-year terms;
Irrigon Rural Fire Protection District
Position 1 - four-year term
Position 2 - four-year term;
Morrow County Unified Recreation District
Zone 3 - four-year term
Zone 4 - four-year term
Zone 5 - four-year term;

Oregon Trail Library District
Position 1 - four-year term
Position 2 - four-year term
Position 3 - two-year term;
Port of Morrow
Position 4 - four-year term
Position 5 - four-year term;
Heppner Cemetery Maintenance District
one position at large - four-year term;
Ione Lexington Cemetery District
two positions at large - four-year terms;
Boardman Cemetery District
one position at large - four-year term;
Irrigon Cemetery Maintenance District
two positions at large - four-year terms;
Willow Creek Park District
three positions at large - four-year terms;

Irrigon Community Park and Recreation District
Position 2 - four-year term
Position 3 - four-year term;
Boardman Park and Recreation District
three positions at large - four-year terms;
Ione School District
No. 2
Position 1 - four-year term
Position 2 - four-year term;
Morrow County School District Director
Position 1 - four-year term
Position 3 - four-year term
Position 4 - four-year term
Position 5 - four-year term;
Heppner Community Education Committee
Position 1 - two-year term
Position 2 - two-year term

Continued on page three

At the MCGG GREEN FEED STORE in Heppner:

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