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Gazette Times

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Local woman, church making a difference at home and overseas

About 20 years ago, a small church was started in Heppner where the pastor began taking people overseas to share bible studies and the Word of God to other countries. Since then, that small church is still small but is making a world of difference in the countries they visit and the people they minister to.

Linda Liu is the current head pastor of Elohim Covenant in Heppner, a church of approximately 20 members. This is the church that Catherine Sims joined when she moved to Heppner.

As a teenager, Catherine went to Mexico two years in a row with her church. It was after those trips that she decided that after finishing school she wanted to be a missionary doctor for 10 years in a foreign country. Now she is a missionary, minus the doctor part.

After high school, Catherine went on to college and got a job, and her missionary plans were temporarily put on hold. About 13 years ago, she felt God's calling to move to Heppner where she found Elohim Covenant and began her missionary work.

Catherine has been to Belize, Taiwan, The Philippines, Mexico and Uganda but the church as a whole has ministered in approximately 17 countries such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Zimbabwe, Ecuador, Russia, and Inland China.

After witnessing the conditions that people deal with in the foreign countries she has traveled to, Catherine believes everyone should be involved in some type of missions trip as a teenager so they can truly be thankful for what they have. According to Catherine, these trips "make you more grateful and give you a bigger sense of responsibility."

Catherine Sims displays some of the handmade items brought back from various countries Elohim Covenant has sent missionaries to.

Catherine Sims is shown with some of the locals during a trip to Uganda. When visitors leave, it is traditional for the host to give them a live chicken, no matter how poor the family may be. The day the group left, they received eight chickens. It is considered an insult to refuse the gift.

The work the missionaries do includes holding seminars to teach pastors, feeding people, and building churches. Catherine says that when people hear that missionary visitors have arrived, they will walk for miles to hear the Gospel. They will sit through storms

-Continued on page three

Heppner Council tables request to support county road levy; takes no action on street closure request, nuisance cat ordinance

Editor's Note: The following article was inadvertently cut off in last week's edition of the Heppner Gazette-Times.

The Heppner City Council Monday took no action on a request by Burke O'Brien of the Morrow County Road Department that the city publicly support a proposed $10 million road levy to be on the ballot next month.

Morrow County Public Works Director Burke O'Brien talks to Heppner City Council Monday night, April 9, about proposed road levy.

O'Brien has been visiting all the city councils in the county asking for support of the levy, and told the Heppner council the city would receive $36,384 per year for five years if the levy is approved. Under state law each city in the county would receive a portion of the levy for use on city roads.

County roads scheduled for repairs if the levy passes are: 2.5 miles of Ella Road, 6 miles of Ione-Boardman road, 3.8 miles of Juniper Canyon Road, 1.3 miles of Kunze road, .52 miles of Miller Road, 4.9 miles of Depot Lane and 6.7 miles of Sand Hollow.

O'Brien said the road repairs are necessary for commerce and safety reasons, pointing out that trucks use many of the roads and commuters and school buses also use the roads. He also answered questions from the council about the distribution of road money between north and south Morrow County, saying the road committee works hard to balancer the road funds spent evenly between north and south. In response to questions, he also answered why more roads are not being returned to gravel instead of being repaired, saying the county has returned 50 miles of roads back to gravel, but that the roads scheduled for repairs are necessary to the farm economy, commuting and school busses.

Also urging the council to support the levy was Ken Turner, a farmer who lives on Sand Hollow. Turner said Sand Hollow is badly deteriorated and unsafe. 'We haven't got a road out there," he said. "It's hazardous and I'm going to plead with you people to support this because we need to pass this levy and get these roads fixed."

In the end the council agreed to table the county request.

In other business the council heard from Heppner Elementary Principal Jack Thompson who asked the council to once again consider closing Stansbury Street for safety reasons. Stansbury runs between the two elementary school buildings and Thompson is concerned that a child is going to get hit by a car there. He asked the council to allow him to meet with city manager Dave DeMayo and discuss the option of closing Stansbury and extending Elder around behind the school and connect to Court Street by the tennis courts.

The council told Thompson the city had no money to build a new road, however Thompson said it may be possible to have Oregon Department of Transportation may foot most of the cost. Court

-Continued on page two

Ione pool fund faces shortfall

The Ione School Board learned at their regular meeting Monday night that the Ione Pool fund faces a $13,250 shortfall. The board will see a resolution at the May or June meeting to transfer funds from the general fund to cover the shortfall and recent needed improvements to the pool.

The board will also receive a resolution to adjust the Title I fund plus REAP Flex which has a $4,468 shortfall and the federal REAP Flex account which has a $4,205 shortfall

Collections ending March 31 included $23,177 in property tax receipts, $48 in forest fees and $28,000 from the Morrow County Unified Recreation District for the extra-curricular fund. Additional money was transferred from the general fund to the Community Involvement Fund to cover expenditures through June 30.

Superintendent/ Principal Bryn Browning shared with the board proposed budget additions and changes since the April 9 budget meeting. A reduction in Title 1 funds will create a need for an additional $10,000 to be transferred back into the general fund to cover one elementary instructional aide position. The district will receive an additional $10,000 payment from the Willow Creek Park District to operate the pool. Receipts for pay-to-play and contest admission were also recorded balancing the 2006-07 extra-curricular fund.

Also at the meeting, the board:

-learned that the Morrow County Unified Recreation District funding has changed slightly. According to Superintendent/Principal Bryn Browning, "The agreement will not longer be to fund extracurricular/ community activities, but rather for the rec district to lease our facilities and allow them to be used for extracurricular/community activities." "Our data," added Browning, "shows that the lease could cost up to $123,900 in building use fees; however the rec district is providing $84,000 of that a amount."

-learned that the district has renewed the intergovernmental agreement with the city of Ione for $8,000 to mow the irrigated grassy areas.

-learned that the middle school held its science fair with board members Joe McElligott and Gregg Rietmann as judges. The elementary and high school also created classes. "The hatching chicks were once again a bit hit," said Browning.

-learned that Ione students, Tiana Camarillo, Teonna Vandever, Brenna Rietmann, Mickey Raible, Sarah Stillman and Alex Carlson will compete at the OSAA state speech tournament April 19-21 in Monmouth.

-learned that student-led conferences were held for grades four-eight and parent-teacher conferences were held for kindergarten through third grades and nine through 12. Eighty-two conferences were held for the middle school and high school grades and 53 were held for the elementary school. Karen Holland organized translators for Spanish-speaking families.

-learned that the Site Council met April 9 to review the high school credit policy, hear an update on TESA, the online testing program which has been terminated because of a breakdown in negotiations between the Oregon Department of Education and the testing company, and discuss the 2007-08 proposed budget reductions.

-learned that enrollment as of April 9 was 147 students-59 in kindergarten through fifth grade; 38 in grades six through eight; and 50 in grades nine through 12.

-learned than English classes are starting at Ione Community School in Karen Holland's classroom on April 24, May 1, 8 and 15, from 4-5:30 p.m.

-learned that National Library Week is April 15-21 and all parents and community members are invited to stop by the school library during the month of April.

-learned that the Ione Chapter of the National Honor Society will host its second annual Youth Track Meet on Sunday, April 29, at 2 p.m. at the school. Children from birth to fifth grade may participate in events including the tennis ball throw, standing broad jump, 100m dash, 50m dash and 25m dash. Donations will be accepted, with all proceeds going to the Creative Care Preschool in Ione.

-Continued on page two

Don't Forget!

The last day to register to vote is Tuesday, April 24, by 5 p.m.

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