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## 'Communities' and county talk tippage money

By Dave Sykes

The Morrow County Court and representatives of the five county communities sat down Friday to talk about the re-distribution of nearly \$1 million in tippage fee income generated at the Finley Buttes landfill near Boardman.

Representatives of the cities of Heppner, Ione, Lexington, Irrigon and Boardman joined together in January to demand that the county turn over the major-

ity of the funds which come from fees levied on each ton of garbage dumped at the landfill. The fees average around \$80,000 per month, or just under \$1 million per year, and currently go directly into the county general fund.

The cities have threatened to take the issue to the voters if the county did not turn over more of the funds, and in August they filed a ballot measure with the county clerk that would force redistribution of the money.

If approved by voters beginning in fiscal year 2008-2009, the county would give up 25 percent of the tippage fees to cities. In 2009-2010 that would jump to 50 percent and 2010-2011 it would top out at 75 percent.

The ordinance stipulates that the cities' portion will be divided in half, with one half the funds divided equally among the cities, and the other half divided according to population.

The measure has been filed, but according to the clerk's office, the necessary 187 signatures have not been turned in for the measure to be on the ballot in May.

Boardman Mayor Ed Glenn, who represented the cities group, said Friday if a redistribution agreement

were not reached the group would begin gathering the signatures after the first of the year.

Glenn told the county court his group would represent the "communities" of Morrow County. "We want a second chance to make a first impression," he said. In response to criticism that rural county residents not living in the cities would be unrepresented under a redistribution plan, Glenn said his group would better represent the "communities" of the county than either the county court or the needs and issues committee.

Currently the needs and issues committee meets once per year to award a certain amount of tippage money to various groups and entities throughout the county. The county court, which decides how much tippage money needs and issues gets each year upped the amount to \$235,000 in 2007. Glenn said the city governments are closer to the needs of the communities than the county, or the needs and issues committee, and would be better at giving out the money.

"People outside cities are concerned," said Commissioner Gary Grieb. Grieb said the ordinance (what could be voted on) does not address communi-



Ed Glenn



Terry Tallmann

Glenn said the cities would take care of entire communities and would use a type of grant application to give out the funds. "The principal goal is to have reliable sums of money they can plan on from year to year, as well as coming up with their own plan on for allocation of funds," Glenn said.

County Judge Terry Tallmann asked if tippage funds were redistributed to cities, would they continue to fund current organizations and entities such as Extension, Soil and Water, Water Master and Neighborhood Center? Glenn said that this was the responsibility of the county. The county currently puts about \$670,000 tippage fees into the general fund with about \$185,000 going straight to various organizations and entities.

"The purpose of the tippage fees should not be to backfill the county or city budgets," said Glenn. He said if the cities receive more money a committee of people both inside and outside the city limits should be used to determine use of that money.

"None of us want this to go to vote," Heppner Mayor Les Paustian said. "We want compromise, but we (the cities) need the help. We are in a bind (financially) and I think a compromise can be made," he added.

"We are not out to threaten the county," said Heppner City Manger David DeMayo said. "We want give and take."

"I am more interested in the process," said County Commissioner John Wenholtz. "I am not ready to make a decision today. We are having a good discussion and making progress," he said.

A compromise worked up by several community members was discussed by the two groups. The compromise would have given more money (35%) to the cities next year, but less in future years. No action was taken.

"The ball is in the county court's hands," said Glenn at the end of the meeting.

"We need to think about this," responded Tallmann.

The meeting was not contentious with both groups agreeing to meet again Dec. 4 at 9a.m.

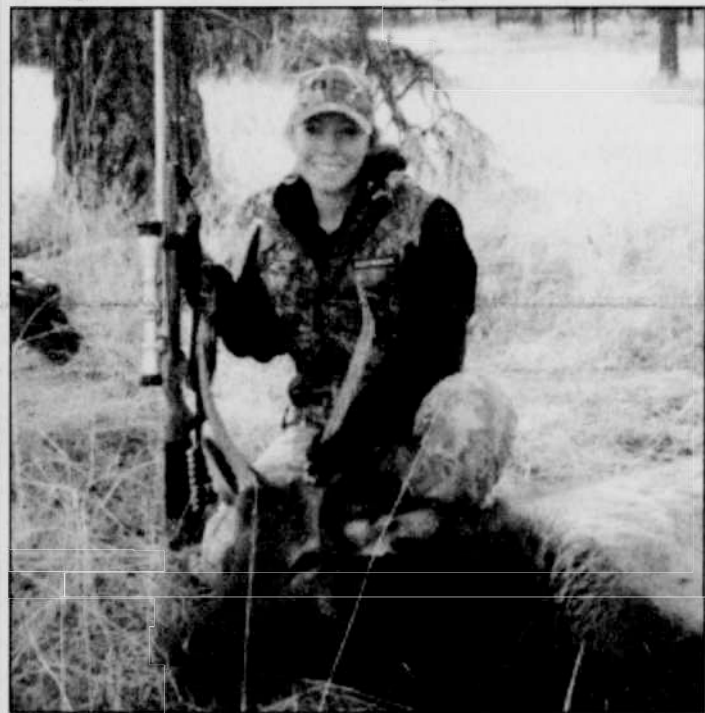
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VOL. 126 NO. 46 8 Pages Wednesday, November 14, 2007 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

### Hughes successful in spike elk hunt



Jessica Hughes shows off her first spike elk that she got on the opening day of spike season on the family ranch in Ukiah.

### County Clerk's Office releases unofficial results for special election

Precinct	Measure 49	
	Yes	No
1 Boardman	278	290
2 Irrigon	432	346
3 Lexington	82	129
4 Ione	110	174
5 Heppner/Hardman	367	414
Total	1269	1353

Precinct	Measure 50	
	Yes	No
1 Boardman	132	438
2 Irrigon	173	612
3 Lexington	37	173
4 Ione	61	223
5 Heppner/Hardman	173	613
Total	576	2059

Measure 49 modifies Measure 37; clarifies the right to build homes; limits large developments; protects farms, forests, groundwater.

Measure 50 amends the constitution: dedicates funds to provide health care for children, fund tobacco prevention, through increased tobacco tax.

### G-T closed for the holidays

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed on Thursday, November 22, and Friday, November 23, for the Thanksgiving holiday. All deadlines will remain the same.

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

### Sr. Center gets \$1 million plus help package

The Heppner Sr. center has been awarded a package of loans and grants of over \$1 million that will help keep it going for "the next 20 to 30 years", the city council was told Monday night.

The City, which oversees operation of the center, was told the package included \$861,509 in grants and \$290,000 in low interest loans that will help make the financially struggling facility viable for the foreseeable future.

The money does come with some rules that may change the rents for some residents, however.

Darlee Rex of Rex Development of Pendleton applied for the grants for the city and said by phone conference with the council Monday that the government money is designated for lower income type housing, and residents whose income exceeds a certain level will be required to pay one third of their income for rent if they wish to live at the center.

She said according to the grant rules four of the 19 units could be rented to over income individuals and still qualify.

"Over time this is going to keep this place going for the next 20 to 30 years," said council member George Koffler. "I think we are going to have to take the good with the bad."

"When you take government money you have to take their rules," said Rex. "It is a hard pill to swallow but I don't know any other way to fund this and make affordable housing available to seniors," Rex added.

The city has struggled in the past to make basic upkeep and repairs costs on the facilities and still keep rents reasonable.

The funding will allow the center to upgrade the

living quarters with weatherization, new cabinets, appliances, windows and other improvements. The refinancing will reduce the city's debt interest on loans on the St. Center to about 2 percent for 20 years, Rex had told the Gazette-Times earlier.

Martha Andrews of Andrews Architects of Portland will be handling the project and was at the meeting Monday. "We need to be aware of a population (at the Center) that is special, and we will do our best not to upset them," she said of the remodeling project.

Andrews said tenants would be moved around during the remodeling.

Heppner resident Ed Struthers asked the council to make efforts to have the roof fixed. He said his mother lives at the center and was displaced when the roof leaked. The architect said she would need more information on the roof to address whether or not money would be spent on repairing it.

Koffler also asked Andrews if local contractors were going to be given a shot at doing work on the Sr. Center. "Can we give preference to local contractors?" Koffler asked. "We have to bid it out, but we don't have to take the lowest bid," Rex said. She said there would have to be justification for not taken the lowest bid, however.

In other business the council approved bids to fix the city hall roof, \$18,750, and the fire hall roof for \$7,560. The city was awarded

\$18,000 in tippage money from the needs and issues committee this year to be used for the repairs.

The mayor swore in Keith Lewis of 440 Terrace Dr. to the council to replace Glenn Baker who recently resigned. Lewis has a history of public service including

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### Wind damage reported

High winds swept through the area on Monday, November 12. The following damage reports were made:

-The Farm Builder's roof in Heppner was getting ready to fly off because of all of the wind.

-The complete roof of a barn was lifted off the structure and was blocking Highway 74. The Oregon Department of Transportation responded to remove the debris.

-Strong winds caused dirt to blow across Highway 207 making it hard to see.

-The Morrow County Sheriff's Office was unable to locate a downed tree in the area of the Heppner Day Care.

-A Fir tree fell and hit some lines as it came down on SE Court Street in Heppner.

-A tree blocked most of the road on County Road 678.

-There was no visibility near the Wagon Trail Farms area of Lexington.

-Large amounts of tumbleweeds partially blocked Willow Creek Road near the reservoir.

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