

The Official Newspaper  
of the City of Heppner and the County of Morrow

Heppner  
**GAZETTE-TIMES**  
U.S.P.S. 240-420

Morrow County's Home-Owned Weekly Newspaper  
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David Sykes ..... Publisher  
Autumn Morgan ..... Editor

All News and Advertising Deadline is Monday at 5 p.m.  
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For Public/Legal Notices: public/legal notices deadline is Monday at 5 p.m. Dates for publication must be specified. Affidavits must be required at the time of submission. Affidavits require three weeks to process after last date of publication (a sooner return date must be specified if required).  
For Obituaries: Obituaries are published in the Heppner GT at no charge and are edited to meet news guidelines. Families wishing to include information not included in the guidelines or who wish to have the obituary written in a certain way must purchase advertising space for the obituary.  
For Letters to the Editor: Letters to the Editor MUST be signed by the author. The Heppner GT will not publish unsigned letters. All letters MUST include the author's address and phone number for use by the GT office. The GT reserves the right to edit letters. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

## Vote "no" on the tippage fee referendum

To the Editor,

In a few weeks you will be asked to vote on whether to allow the County Court to continue to decide one how to distribute more than \$1,000,000 of annual tippage fee income Morrow County receives each year from Finley Buttes landfill or to give 75% of it, after phase in, to the cities and allow them to spend the funds.

The County Court has been receiving tippage fees for almost two decades and has been distributing some of it to the cities by the needs and issues system. The County Court has been paying for many needed social services throughout Morrow County with part of the funds. The remainder has been used for County services such as the Road Department and other budget areas. The Court has also been saving a significant portion of the funds and have amassed almost \$1,000,000 in a reserve fund for unspecified purposes.

While we can argue about the County Court's handling of the funds, much of the money has been going to needed services, capital projects in all parts of the county and budget categories that have benefited a great many county citizens and taxpayers. Some people are wondering why such a large reserve fund needs to be kept when there are so many needs in the county.

During recent meetings with city officials, the court didn't show a great deal of statesmanship in dealing with the cities and probably forced the city officials to bring to a vote the tippage fee controversy. This comes after probably 18 months of city officials from throughout the county meeting with little or no citizen input into their planning.

However the bottom line for me is the following: Should we trust the County Court to manage the tippage fee revenue or trust the cities with the majority of it?

We know what the County Court will do with the money. After watching the process for many years, they have a track record you can rely on. While there certainly can be modifications to their process, like allowing individual cities to decide on needs and issues awards, by and large the County Court have been good and very conservative stewards of the money. The cities are talking about how they would divide the money and at least one city has devised a plan. Despite that, the money today is being spent on much needed county and other social services that would have no promise of funding if the election went in the cities favor.

Based on all of these issues, I urge a NO vote on the tippage fee referendum later this month.

(s) George Koffler  
Heppner

## ~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

### Tippage in democracy?

Letter to the editor:

Recently numerous meetings and many written words have barraged people who had no idea what tippage fees were one year ago. By now anyone in Morrow County paying attention knows that shortly a vote will determine how, and more importantly who will control distribution and use of these funds. For the uninitiated few, tippage fees (funds) are the amount paid (by contract) to Morrow County by the operator of Finley Buttes Landfill for tonnage disposed there. Recently, the cities demanded they be given control of 75% of these funds to spend as they see fit. County government, after consideration determined they should retain control over these funds. What to do?

In the beginning (according to Judge Carlson, in office during original contract), the county attempted to distribute these funds to the cities, giving up when the cities failed to provide a substantial plan for distribution and use. Subsequently, these funds became county funds and, as state and federal funds ebbed, became a necessary portion of Morrow County's budget. The 'cushion' these funds provide have given commissioners 'discretionary' monies to assist county needs and issues not a normal part of the budget.

Some have attacked the county court for having a budget surplus roughly equivalent to the current amount of the tippage fees, their argument being that the county should expend every cent every year, without any carry-over. When I became a commissioner in January of 2003, that cushion was very comforting at budget time, but it steadily decreased every year despite our best diligence. Please tell me, what prudent businessman, farmer, or even household spends every cent it has without a 'cushion' for emergency? A 'cushion' is one-time money. Keep it and have it, or blow it and emergency can become catastrophe.

As for the deciding who controls the tippage fees, currently 40% of county residents live in the five cities, and 60% live in the county. A vote to give control to the cities gives the elected mayors and councils of the five cities control of 75% of the funds. Although the cities have no finalized overall plan, some are discussing an appointed 'board' to determine usage. That means that instead of three commissioners, duly elected at large by 100% of Morrow County voters, controlling the fund, five mayors and five city councils, representing 40% of the population, will likely appoint a committee(s) (board) who will determine usage.

People complain when control of their funds is taken away from them. Even though the cities have promised to distribute some of these funds outside the city, to my knowledge no legal mechanism exists in Oregon for cities to expend or distribute funds outside their city limits. So, 40% of the population of Morrow County will control 75% of the funds from tippage fees. That is a step not lightly taken.

Some have said if the county commissioners don't agree to do this, they should be replaced. I find that hard to fathom. Certainly anyone who disagrees may run for commissioner, but if elected, that person's responsibility will suddenly be to run the business of the county to the best of their ability. If that person were honest, such responsibility would likely change their viewpoint of just who should control the tippage fee funds.

Ray Grace  
Heppner

## Morrow County Health Department calendar

Thursday, Feb. 21 - Heppner Clinic 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (closed 12-1)  
Monday, Feb. 25 - Boardman Clinic 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (closed 12:30-1)  
Tuesday, Feb. 26 - Boardman Clinic 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (closed 12:30-1)  
Thursday, Feb. 28 - Heppner Clinic 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (closed 12-1)

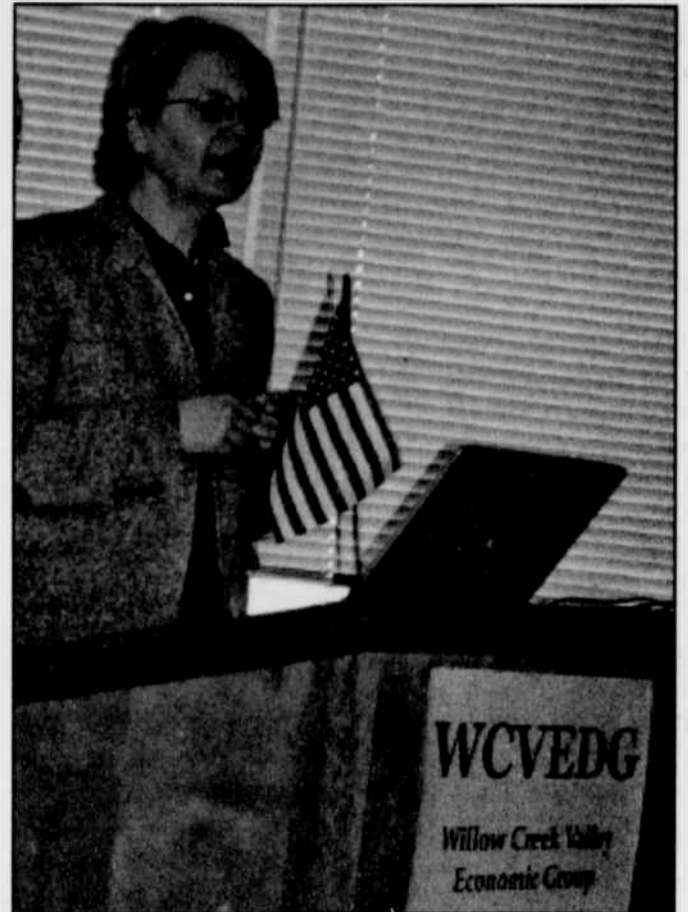
## Valby Lutheran Church announces time changes for worship

Valby Lutheran Church will be changing the time of Sunday morning worship to 10 a.m. for the months of March, April, and May.

From 9 to 10 a.m., there will be opportunities for Bible study, music rehearsal, and fellowship. The time of worship will return to 9 a.m. for the summer months. During the season of Lent, everyone is invited on Monday nights for soup at 6 p.m. and worship at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome.

For more information, call Katy Anderson, Intern Pastor, at 989-8174.

## Wind Farm project manager speaker at WCVEDG meeting



Pat Pilz of the Shepherds Flat Windfarm project was the featured speaker at the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group annual meeting last week. Pilz told of the economic benefit the wind generation project would bring to the area. She said about 250 construction workers would be on the project once it got going. The windfarm is located on the Krebs property on the Gilliam-Morrow County line.

## Coordinated efforts apprehend theft suspect

On February 13 at approximately 3:35 p.m., the Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a report that a welding trailer with a large amount of welding equipment had just been stolen from Western Empire Farms on Paterson Ferry Road. A farm representative followed the white Ford pick-up that had taken the trailer while he called 911 from his cellular phone.

Multiple units from Morrow County, Boardman PD, Umatilla PD and Oregon State Police began to converge on the area. The suspect was able to evade the farm representative who lost site of the pick-up and trailer near Interstate 84. The same motorist stayed on the line and followed the vehicle while he directed officers to the van. Sr. Trooper Noel Salinas with the Oregon State Police stopped the van on I-82 at 4:21 p.m. The suspect was taken into custody without incident. The people in the van were not involved in the incident and were simply giving the subject a ride. They were released from the scene of the traffic stop.

Ramon Jaimes-Galvez, 26, of Irrigon was lodged at Umatilla County Jail on charges of Theft-I, Criminal Trespass-II, and Attempt to Elude on foot. The stolen trailer and equipment were returned to Western Empire Farms and the towed vehicle was impounded.

"The key factor in the rapid apprehension of this suspect and the return of the property to the victim lies in the fact that we had a Good Samaritan that was willing to get involved," said Undersheriff Steve Myren. "His phone call was the key to locating the suspect. In addition, the continued cooperation that we enjoy between agencies in our area is unparalleled. As I have said before, law enforcement is very much a team effort."

A passing motorist called 911 and stated that just prior to the patrol cars arriving, a man ran out onto the freeway and flagged down a passing van. The subject got into the van and the vehicle continued east on I-84.

## Chamber Luncheon meetings announced

The weekly Heppner Chamber Luncheon will be held Thursday, February 21, at John's Other Place. Nathan and Kristen Van Cleave will be sharing information on their recent trip to Rwanda.

Next week's meeting will be held on Thursday, February 28. Tom Mafera from the Heppner Ranger District will be sharing a video of Umatilla Fire and Fuel Career Camp. This luncheon will also be held at John's Other Place.

## Senior Center Menu

Heppner Christian Church members will be serving lunch on Wednesday, February 27. The menu will roast, tilapia, rice pilaf, peas and carrots, fruit juice and hot rolls.

**HEPPNER ELKS 358**  
676-9181 "Where Friends Meet" 142 North Main

**The 111th Elks Annual**  
**Saturday, February 23rd**  
**Hawaiian Luau!**  
Ladies' Tea and Social at 2:30 p.m.  
Lodge at 3:00 p.m.  
Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
(Roasted pork loin \$20)  
Music and Dancing to follow  
Be sure to wear Hawaiian attire!

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**Morrow County Grain Growers**  
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net

**COFFEE HOUR for**  
**LARRY SAMPLE**  
Candidate for Morrow County Sheriff  
**Thursday, February 21st**  
John's Place, Heppner  
starting at 6 p.m.  
Hosted by Louis and Betty Carlson