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HEPPNER Gazette Times

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Vanpooling to jobs may be in future

Company gives presentation on commuting

By David Sykes

A company that specializes in setting up and supplying vans to groups of workers who commute gave a presentation in Heppner last week. They met with around 20 workers to explain their program.

Victor Spencer of VPSI, Folsom, CA, said his company is the nation's oldest, largest and most experienced vanpool provider with over 5,000 vanpools in service in the United States.

Spencer came to Heppner at the invitation of the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG), and the Heppner Chamber of Commerce as part of an effort to help people who live in the Heppner, Ione and Lexington area save money while commuting to work in the north end of Morrow and Umatilla counties.

Victor Spencer of VPSI, Inc. shows one of the vans that could be used in vanpooling if enough local workers are interested. *-Photo by Dave Sykes*

A 2003 study done by WCVEDG showed at that time there were over 100 workers living in this area and commuting to the north end. WCVEDG would like to bolster the local economy and keep people in our communities by helping those people who work in Boardman, Irrigon and Hermiston live here if they want to.

"Especially with the rising cost of gasoline, vanpooling can save workers substantial amounts of money," Spencer said. The company pays all the van expenses and then charges the riders monthly. The actual savings would depend on the size of the van and the total miles the workers commute. *See table.* For instance, a 15-person van commuting 45 miles one way five days per week would cost a worker $156 per month including gasoline at $4.45 per gallon.

The way the program works is the company will meet with groups of workers who may work in the same area with similar working hours, etc. The company would help set up schedules, then contracts with a primary driver who runs the van, collects the fees, and does the driving. For handling the driving and administrative duties the driver normally receives free or reduced expenses for his seat on the van. The rest of the workers split up the cost among themselves.

VPSI pays all expenses including maintenance, insurance and gasoline and the group of workers pays VPSI on a monthly basis. There are seven, nine,12, and 15 passenger vans available. There are also certain economic benefits to employers who might participate in the vanpool.

Sheryll Bates, executive director of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce, is in charge of coordinating the vanpooling program, and anyone who is interested, or just wants more information, should call her at 676-5536, or email at heppnerchamber@centurytel.net.

The website for VPSI iswww.vpsiinc.com for anyone who would like more information on the vanpooling company.

			Sample Rates				Heppner Sample Rates		
Size	1-way miles	Monthly Miles	Rate	Incentive Per Pers	New Rate W / Incentive	Subsidy	New Rate W / Subsidy	Monthly Cost Per Person	Monthly Gas	Per Person W/ GAS
										4.45
7	45	1980	1458					208	440	271
9	45	1980	1575					175	587	240
12	45	1980	1565					130	677	175
14	45	1980	1696					121	677	166
15	45	1980	1669					111	677	156
7	70	3080	1717					245	685	343
9	70	3080	1858					206	913	308
12	70	3080	1848					154	1054	242
[illegible]	70	3080	2031					145	1054	220
15	70	3080	1992					133	1054	203

VPSI Inc.

Sample monthly rates for various size vans traveling different commute miles.

Ione's Annual 4th of July Celebration

Schedule of Events

Thursday, July 3rd

Annual Golf Tournament at China Creek Golf Course in Arlington. $50 per person. Start time 8 a.m. Contact Craig Holland, 422-7455, for more information.

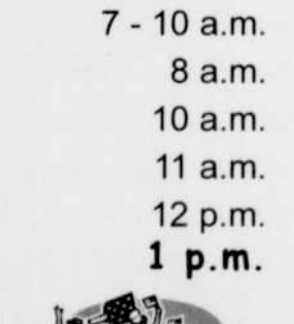
Evening Events at the Ione City Park: Music, Food and Drink, plus Golf Awards

July 3rd - July 5th

Paintball Extravaganza! $15 per person (includes rental of semi-automatic paintball marker, goggles, 100 paintballs and up to two hours playtime). Open play field times all three days: 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and 3-7 p.m. at the field across Willow Creek at the bonfire site.

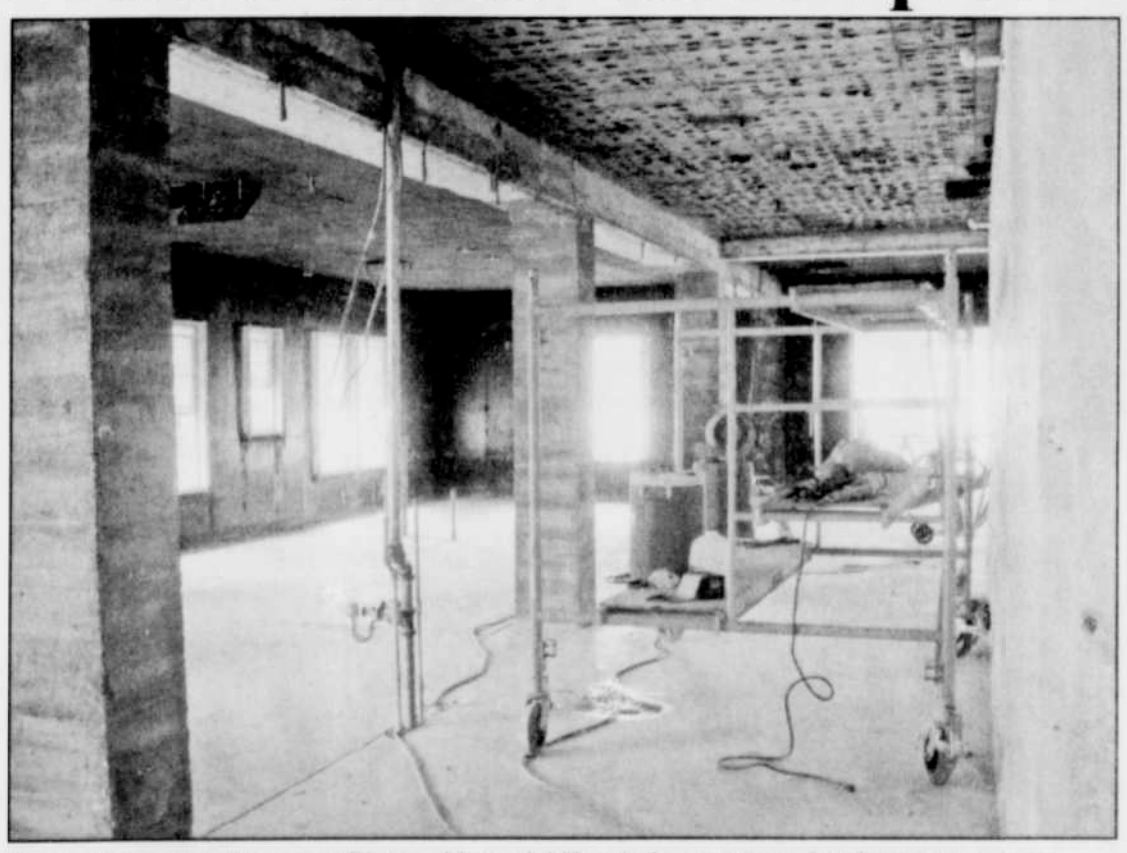
Friday, July 4th — HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!

7 - 10 a.m.	Firemen's Breakfast
8 a.m.	Dawn's Early Light 5K Run Run/Walk
10 a.m.	Topic Club Book and Button Sale
11 a.m.	Fish Pond
12 p.m.	Altar Society Pie Sale
1 p.m.	**Red, White and Blues Parade and 12th Annual Blues Cruise & Classic Car Show.** Contact Chuck Nelson, 989-8148, for registration form and additional information on the cruise/car show.
After parade	Bingo
2:30 p.m.	Talent Show
4 p.m.	**CRUISIN' TO THE BLUES MUSIC featuring John Lee Hooker, Jr., Ione All Stars (with special guest), JR Sims and Texas Special, and Baseline.** Music funded by the Morrow County Unified Recreation District.
7 p.m.	Boat Trip Auction
DUSK	**Ione's 60th Anniversary of 4th of July FIREWORKS DISPLAY honoring Ione's WWII Veterans (the original crew)**



Other fun events during the day: Frog Jumping, Straw Money Pile, Dunk Tank, Pie Throwing, Ducky Races, Rodeo Court Raffle, Horseshoes, Volleyball, and Free Swimming!

Renovations underway at Pioneer Memorial Hospital



Renovations are underway at Pioneer Memorial Hospital to accommodate long term care patients. See Morrow County Health District story on page three. *–Photo by Autumn Morgan*

Gazette-Times closed for 4th of July

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed on Friday, July 4.

All MCGG stores and facilities will be CLOSED July 4th, 5th and 6th.
Have a happy and safe 4th of July!
Harvest hours start July 7th: Mon-Fri 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. and Sat 7 a.m.-5 p.m.
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net