

# Council gives tentative "okay" to locating mental health facility here in Heppner

## Plans tour of Umatilla facility, & public meeting

By David Sykes

The Heppner City Council Monday was generally receptive to locating a secure mental health treatment facility in Heppner, however final judgment was reserved until after a planned trip to a similar facility and a public meeting to be held on the

project.

Last Tuesday the council, along with the Willow Creek Economic Development Group, and members of the county court heard a presentation from Rod Estes, who develops residential treatment facilities used to house and treat mentally ill persons convicted of crimes and found "guilty except for insanity." Estes talked about locating an eight-bed 6,200 square foot facility in Heppner.

The council again discussed the proposal at its monthly meeting Monday night, and was generally favorable to the idea because the facility would give an economic boost to Heppner, providing 20 to 24 full-time positions paying \$30,000 to \$65,000 in wages for annual salaries of \$720,000. The annual operating budget would be around \$960,000, and construction costs of the facility would be \$1.2 million, Estes said.

In addition, most supplies for the facility would be purchased locally, including food, medications, and transportation and general supplies. It would also strengthen the local mental health services, increase local school populations with more students of workers, and generally strengthen the local economy, Estes said.

The council was polled at Monday's meeting, and all in attendance (councilmember Keith Lewis was absent), said they are, at this time, in support of the project. The council

said, however, it is going to reserve final judgment until after a trip tentatively scheduled for Monday, July 21, to visit a similar facility recently opened in Umatilla. A public meeting with a presentation from Estes and chance for questions and answers from the public is also being planned, but the date and time have not been announced.

Several member of the public in attendance at the council meeting Monday expressed support for the project, saying it would help the local economy and the schools. No one in the audience voiced opposition to the facility.

Umatilla City Manager Larry Clucas attended Monday's council meeting and said there have been very few problems with McNary Place, the secure facility located at McNary in Umatilla which opened in December. The facility is not exactly what is planned for Heppner, however Clucas said it has been an asset to the community.

Councilmember John Bowles, who is also a Morrow County Sheriff's Deputy, said following last Tuesday's meeting he toured the facility at Umatilla, talked to the staff and found the security to be "impressive". Bowles also said the two-bed crisis respite unit for local people that is part of the treatment facility would be very helpful for the local community and law enforcement. Bowles said that a lot of times deputies, who also

provide patrol duties for Heppner, encounter local people having mental health crises and law enforcement officers really do not have any place close to take them. He said the beds reserved for locals would be of great benefit.

Mayor Les Paustian said the facility would be a benefit to Heppner, but the city would have to be compensated somehow for the additional city services needed. "Stable employment from state jobs would sure help local businesses," he said. "We haven't had anything like that for a long time." He added that the city would need to be compensated either through increased taxes or direct payment for services used.

The facility would require one to one-and-one-half acres of land on which to locate, and could be located in a residential zone without a conditional use permit. "We will work hand in hand with the community to find a piece of property that works," Estes told the council. Although an okay from the city council is not "required" to locate a facility here, Estes said he wants a general approval from the community before pursuing a facility in Heppner. A mental health facility recently proposed for Fossil caused considerable upheaval in the community because it was to house sexual offenders. The Heppner facility will not house

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## Research project on harmful algal bloom prevention begins at Willow Creek Reservoir

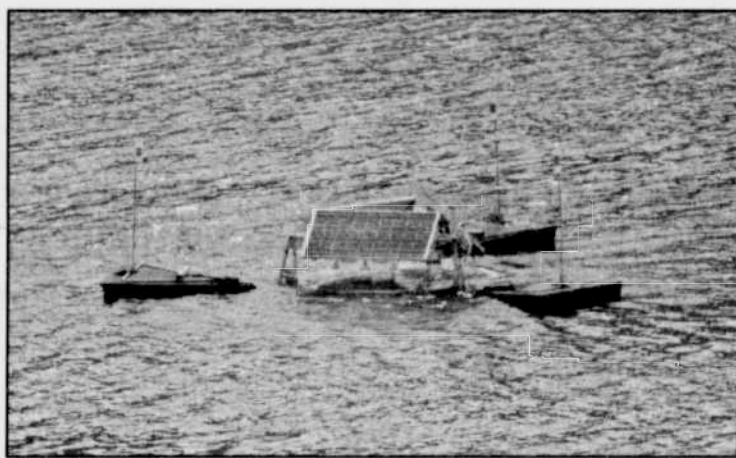
A research project focused on preventing harmful algal blooms began this week at the Willow Creek Reservoir near Heppner announced the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Two solar-powered long distance water circulators were placed in the Balm Fork arm of the reservoir. The units draw water from specified depths and distribute that water throughout the reservoir. According to the manufacturer, this process mixes the specified layer of reservoir, disrupting blue-green algal habitat and diversifying aquatic organisms within the lake.

Unlike the aeration system used in the reservoir in the past, the long distance water circulators mix only the top portion of the reservoir, leaving the cooler, nutrient rich waters found at depth undisturbed.

The project will study the effects of an emerging technology, solar-powered long distance circulation, for preventing freshwater harmful algal blooms with the goal of gaining acceptance as a management method by the scientific community. This is the first year of a potentially multi-year study.

Researchers from Oregon State University and the University of Idaho will study the changes caused by the long distance circulator



This is one of two solar-powered long distance water circulators that were placed in the Balm Fork arm of the Willow Creek Reservoir. -Photo by Autumn Morgan

treatment in the populations of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae), zooplankton, bacteria and viruses in order to understand how the technology can potentially prevent blooms. The study will involve genetic characterization of the bloom-forming organisms, using technology that will replace identification solely on the basis of microscopic observation.

The study is a collaborative effort between the two universities with long distance circulators provided by Solar Bee, Inc. and in cooperation with the Corps of Engineers.

The units float on the surface of the water and are anchored directly underneath. They are marked and have light beacons as a safety precaution. There are no anticipated recreational impacts of the study.

Harmful algal

blooms caused by cyanobacteria affect many lakes and reservoirs across the US. They are fueled by excess nutrients derived from sources such as fertilizer run-off or from manure or septic system contamination.

Willow Creek Reservoir was chosen because of the presence and documentation of regular harmful algal blooms caused by the toxigenic genera, Anabaena, Aphanizomenon, Microcystis and Oscillatoria. Exposure to toxins released by these algae blooms can produce symptoms of numbness, tingling and dizziness which can lead to difficulty breathing or heart problems and require immediate medical attention. Additional symptoms of exposure to toxins include skin irritation, weakness, diarrhea, nausea, cramps and fainting.

## Articles wanted for annual fair edition

The annual Morrow County Fair is fast approaching. Once again this year the Heppner Gazette-Times will be putting together a special fair edition. Anyone interested in writing any fair related articles are asked to turn in those articles by Friday, July 25. Articles can be dropped of at the Heppner Gazette-Times or emailed to editor@rapidserve.net.

## Heppner United Methodist Church welcomes new minister

By Autumn Morgan

Jonathan Enz said he received his call to the ministry when he was a senior in high school, but did not answer it. In 1991 he heeded to the call to go into ministry and now, 17 years later, he has been appointed as the new minister at Heppner United Methodist Church.

Enz was raised in parsonages throughout western Oregon as his dad was a Methodist pastor. After graduating from high school, he attended the University of Puget Sound (UPS) and Willamette University College of Law. He later passed the bar and became an attorney. He served for four years as an attorney in the Army with the Judge Advocate General. He later practiced business law in Portland for 17 years.

After answering the his call to ministry in 1991, Enz went to San Francisco Theological School where he completed the four year course in two and a half years. Methodist ministers are appointed to churches by the bishop annually at conference. In January of 1995 he was appointed to

Philomath United Methodist Church where he served until July of 2001. He was then appointed to Monroe United Methodist Church. He served there until the end of June 2008, when he was appointed to Heppner United Methodist Church.

"I like Heppner, the area and the people," said Enz. "We are getting settled and unpacked and getting to know people both inside and outside the church."

Enz and his wife Dorine, who he met at UPS, have two children and three grandchildren. One son, David, a police officer, lives in Molalla. Their other son, Michael, lives in Framingham, MA, and is a professor of economics at Framingham State College. His three grandchildren live in Molalla. Dorine is a retired elementary school teacher and is hoping to be able to

substitute in the area.

Enz is very active in community organizations. He served for four years as co-chair of Benton County's Commission on Children and Families. For the last 10 years he has been on the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force. This is a legislative task force that was formed 12 years ago to address the fact that Oregon was number one in hunger. Now Oregon is ranked in the 20's. "Eliminating hunger and the root causes of hunger is important to me," said Enz. He has also served for four years on the Oregon Faith Round Table on Hunger and has served for the past three years on the Bishop's Initiative to Eliminate Hunger.

"I am looking forward to meeting and working with area pastors," said Enz. "The church (Heppner United Methodist Church) will continue to be active in the community."

Enz is still an active member of the Oregon State Bar. He is currently looking for the opportunity to work on pro bono projects with a non profit agency.



Jonathan Enz

## Free tax preparations available for those who have not filed

The IRS recently announced that 61 people in the Heppner zip code area have not filed a 2007 tax return to get their stimulus payment.

Leann Rea will make arrangements to come to Heppner and provide free tax preparation for those who have not yet filed their 2007 tax return. To make an appointment call 541-481-5922.

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