

# Wind project to benefit several Morrow County taxing districts

By April Sykes

Morrow County Assessor Greg Sweek told the Gazette-Times Tuesday that a wind energy project, Willow Creek Energy, LLC, will result in a \$15-3/4 million increase in assessed value for Morrow County in 2009. Sweek said that construction is currently underway and is set to be added to the tax rolls in 2009.

Sweek said that the whole Willow Creek Energy wind project is valued around \$75 million, with around \$40 million of that located in Morrow County. He said that the first \$25 million will be taxable, with around two thirds of that in Morrow County, resulting in

the \$15-3/4 million increase in assessed value for Morrow County.

Sweek anticipates that the result would be an increase of around \$64,500 in tax monies to the Lone School District, but that would be offset by a reduction in the State School Support the Lone district would receive; around \$64,500 to Morrow County; around \$9,700 to the Morrow County Health District; around \$7,300 to the Morrow County Unified Recreation District; and around \$11,800 to the Lone Rural Fire District. The Morrow County School District will not receive tax monies from this project, said Sweek.

Sweek said that he and Morrow County Judge Terry Tallman, representing Morrow County in joint negotiations with Gilliam County and the energy company, also negotiated a \$500,000 "community service fee" from the company which will be divided between all taxing districts where the wind project is located.

In addition, he said that the Lone School District will also receive \$40,000 a year for five years for a renewable energy education program, the bent of which is at their discretion. The "community service fee" and the education program

funds are not taxes, but fees and subsequently will not offset the State School Fund. He added that the increased valuation will benefit the Lone School District in their bond measure proposed for this fall. Now, he said, the Lone School District has around \$85 million assessed valuation. The new wind project will add another \$16 million to their district.

Sweek said that the next big energy project will probably be the Shepherd's Flat project which will be a 900 megawatt project with 150 megawatts in Morrow County, huge compared to the 77 megawatt Willow Creek Energy project.

# Miller to celebrate 100 years

Hazel Miller has lived in Morrow County for many years, 100 to be exact, on August 5, and has seen many changes.



Hazel Miller

Miller's father moved from Decatur, IA, to Lone where he set up a homestead. She was born in Lone (Gooseberry) and went to school there for 12 years.

Miller has many memories of changes that have taken place over the years. She remembers seeing her first car at the age of five or six. She remembers when commercialized flying came into being. Her first airplane ride was during a 4th of July celebration in Arlington. Miller went for a ride with the pilot and two other people in a plane with no windows. When Miller's son was in the service, she was able to travel to Italy and visit different countries.

The biggest change that Miller remembers is

when the town of Boardman had to be completely moved when the John Day Dam was built. Construction of the dam began in 1958 and was completed in 1971. When the dam was built, it raised the river and much of the land in the Boardman area was completely covered, forcing the town to move locations.

Miller and her husband Russell, now deceased, have four children. Daughters Mildred Baker and Grace Carpenter live in Boardman, son James Miller lives in Arizona, and daughter Patricia Miller lives in Hermiston. Miller's husband, Russell, was a county commissioner for 12 years.

A birthday celebration for Hazel Miller will be held on Saturday, August 2, at the Senior Citizen's Building in Boardman from 1 to 6 p.m. Friends and relatives are invited to attend.

# Court Street to see \$2.5 million improvement project

-Continued from Page One and that temporary easements will be needed for construction. There will be a total of 22 different properties that will be affected.

The project final plans will be done October 30, 2008, the bids will go

out Jan. 22, 2009 and construction will be completed in 2009.

The project was included in ODOT's budget and construction schedule by Heppner State representative Greg Smith several years ago.

# Time for sports physicals

Columbia River Community Health Services is providing free sports physicals again this summer. As in the past, free physicals will only be on Fridays in July and August, and only with an appointment.

Sports physicals are available Monday thru Thursday with a \$25 fee, which is due at the time of the physical. At the time of the appointment the student will be required to provide their parental consent forms and wear loose clothing that they can move around in, such as shorts or sweats and athletic shoes. No jeans or denim shorts can be worn during the physical.

For more information about the free sports physicals, or if you would like to make an appointment call Columbia River Community Health Services, 541-481-7212.

# No Chamber lunch meeting this week

There will not be a Chamber lunch meeting this week. Next week, the speaker will be Steve Eldredge from the Umatilla Electric Coop.

# DA's Report

Morrow County District Attorney Elizabeth Ballard has released the following report:

-Gregorio Toves Torre Jr, 29, was convicted of DUII, a class A misdemeanor, and was sentenced to 180 days with 177 days of incarceration suspended, one year driver's license suspension, 24 months bench probation, 40 hours of community service, other numerous conditions, and pay \$1,293 in fines, fees and assessments.

-Christopher Luellen Gonzalez, 25, was convicted of harassment, a class B misdemeanor, and was sentenced to 60 days with 30 days of incarceration suspended, 12 months bench probation, other numerous conditions, and pay \$413 in fines, fees and assessments.

-Travis L. Davis, 33, was convicted of possession of methamphetamine, a class C felony, and was sentenced to 18 months supervised probation, six months driver's license suspension, 90 sanction units with 30 jail units, complete 80 hours of community service, other numerous conditions, and pay \$1,778 in fines, fees and assessments.

-Travis L. Davis, 33, was convicted of theft in the first degree, a class C felony, and was sentenced to two years of supervised probation, 120 sanction units with 60 jail units, complete 80 hours of community service, other numerous conditions, and pay \$6,028 in fines, fees and assessments.

# Father Hume steps in at St. Patrick's Catholic Church

Father Ken Hume so Father Condon could visit has stepped in to minister at Ireland.

St. Patrick's Catholic Church while Father Gerry Condon is in Ireland.

Father Hume is a retired U.S. Army chaplain. He works with orphans, disadvantaged and abused children in nine countries. During

the past three years he has



Father Ken Hume

With 21-plus years in the military, has served all over the world.

"This community has the best, most blessed people I have ever met," said Father Hume. "Everyone in town knows your name and your profession. No one is a stranger in Heppner, Lexington or Lone."

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## Real Estate

By **DAVID SYKES**  
REALTOR

### BEFORE YOU RENOVATE

There are two truths about home renovation: Every project costs more and takes longer than expected. So, before you start, keep your cost estimate high and remember the words, "Return on investment." Whether you hire professionals or do the renovation yourself, be aware that your investment will not always result in dollar-for-dollar increase in the value of your home. Although some homeowners do make a profit on their remodeling, history tells us that some homeowners won't even recover their

costs. Do your homework. Get estimates on the costs. Study the local real estate market to be sure you're making improvements that home buyers want and will pay for.

Don't go overboard. Getting your money out of a house priced well above neighboring houses will be difficult. As a general rule, the value of the home AFTER renovation should not exceed the value of any house in your neighborhood by more than 20 percent.

Property listings are available at [www.sykesrealestate.net](http://www.sykesrealestate.net)

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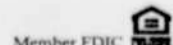
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# Smith helps vets launch Traumatic Brain Injury Program for vets

"When our brave men and women in uniform return from battle, we need to take care of their needs, especially serious medical conditions like Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)," said State Representative Greg Smith (R-Heppner). "They stood up for our freedoms; we should stand up for them in return." Today, Smith and other community leaders will unveil a proposal to help veterans with Traumatic Brain Injury at the Eastern Oregon Training Center (ETOC) in Pendleton. Official estimates show more than 300,000 vets are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with TBI and many experts refer to this as the "signature injury of the war".

The plan will be announced at a Town Hall meeting this evening (Friday, July 18th) sponsored by the Governor's Task Force on Veterans Services. The 27-member Taskforce is currently conducting a statewide tour to learn how Oregonians feel about current programs and policies. The Town Hall runs from 7 PM to 9 PM at the Pend-

leton Armory 2110 NW 56th Drive in Pendleton. The Task Force heard from residents in La Grande on Thursday evening.

"This community has the space, the place; the will and the skill to provide returning service members with what they truly need to overcome the effects of TBI," said Michele Bradford, one of the key organizers for the new Veterans Traumatic Brain Injury Coalition. "Here they can heal, gain skills, and move forward with their peers and families to a quality of life that is their choice."

ETOC has been home to people with developmental disabilities over the years but many of the programs are being downsized as clients move to community settings. There are 17 structures on the 10 acre campus many offer suitable housing for veterans with TBI.

One of the other leaders in the Coalition is Norm Winters, Vice President of Community Bank in Pendleton. "As a US Navy veteran I was drawn to the fact we, as a country, are not adequately helping our veterans with TBI. The repositioning of the EOTC to a TBI center will help our brave veterans, keep livable wage jobs in Pendleton, and may act as a catalyst for further professional opportunities down the road."

A recent RAND Corporation study found up to 19% of combat troops in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom may have suffered TBI, but more than half aren't evaluated for brain injuries. Traumatic Brain Injury is caused by a brain-shaking event that occurs during nearby blast like an Improvised Explosive Device, or close mortar attack.

Smith is working on legislation for 2009 to assist the Coalition's project. "Several other states have increased screening and education for veterans with TBI but very few facilities like the one envisioned at ETOC," explained Smith. Coalition members hope to work with state, federal and community agencies in the months and years ahead to make their vision become reality.