

Sheriff candidates campaign as election nears

By David Sykes

The two candidates for Morrow County Sheriff took their campaigns to the Heppner Chamber of Commerce last week. The election looms closer as ballots are expected to be mailed out October 17.

Larry Sample and incumbent Sheriff Kenneth Matlack answered questions before the Chamber, explaining their priorities and plans for the future of the Sheriff's Department.

Matlack said his most important accomplish-

ment the last three and one half years is the re-negotiating of the Umatilla County Jail contract. Morrow County contracts with Umatilla County to house prisoners, and Matlack said the new agreement allows more prisoners to be housed which "makes people responsible." "We had nine beds at \$200 per day. I was able to get 11 beds." Matlack said now lawbreakers face real jail time and they know it. "We now have room at the inn and there isn't any other place where you are going to do as much time," he said of Morrow County. Sample agreed that the current jail contract is a good one.

Matlack also said the single most important issue facing county law enforcement is drug traffic and usage. "Drug usage drives theft and vandalism and we have it all across the county," he said.

Challenger Larry Sample said there have not been enough rural patrols under the current sheriff and he planned to change that. He also said he plans to establish a citizen advisory committee in each community. "So we know what the problems are." He also wants to get funds restored for the DARE drug program. "DARE works," Sample said. He also told the chamber he wants to build back

up the search and rescue and the sheriff reserves.

During a question and answer session from the audience Sample said he would totally reorganize the sheriff department and also institute an employee incentive plan. Matlack said a big change he instituted was the number of calls he and the undersheriff take. "Deputies go from call to call. Myself and the undersheriff take 300 to 1,000 calls per year." He said he also increased animal control for better livability.

On a question about the budget, both candidates agreed that the current budget is "adequate". On a question about deputy training, both agreed that deputies need adequate training.

About the current contract with the city of Heppner to provide police protection, Matlack, who negotiates the contract on a yearly basis, said he is satisfied with the current contract and that he rotates all the deputies through Heppner and that the sheriff and undersheriff take calls when a deputy is not available.

Sample said the contract does not provide enough coverage for Heppner and he wants another deputy assigned here. "Sometimes at night you need another deputy. I would want to re-negotiate that contract," he said.

"I would investi-

gate all crimes in Morrow County," Sample said. "You will not hear on the phone 'We don't have anyone to respond to that'. You would not hear that if I am the sheriff," Sample said. He also favored assigning dog control and code enforcement to non certified sheriff department employees.

Matlack said calls are covered and crimes are investigated in the county. "Steve (Myron, undersheriff) and I take those calls," Matlack said. He said he did not support non certified officers doing code enforcement and animal control. "I prefer a uniformed guy," he said.

On drug enforcement Matlack said the county participates in BENT (the regional narcotics investigation unit) and that the deputies do street and other searches that find drugs. "We ask people if we can search their car or their house, and you would be surprised how many people consent, and we end up finding drugs," he said.

Sample said BENT is not working in Morrow County as much as it should. "We need more than knock and talks," Sample said of the procedure of knocking on suspicious doors and talking to people.

Sample also said if elected he would work on keeping victims and people who file complaints informed on what is going on. He said the current sheriff department is not getting back to people.

Matlack disagreed. "Every 30 days we contact the person that made the complaint," he said.



Sheriff Kenneth Matlack



Larry Sample

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

VOL. 127 NO. 40 10 Pages Wednesday, October 1, 2008 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Annual Ione Education Foundation Dinner held



The annual Ione Education Fundraiser and Dinner was held this past weekend in Ione. -Photo by David Sykes

Health district loses \$35,000 in August; prepares for levy

By April Sykes

The Morrow County Health District saw a \$35,000 loss for the month of August, further demonstrating the district's need for a successful levy this November. The district has been operating without levy monies for the past several months as the previous levy has expired. Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney reported at the district's regular meeting Monday night in Boardman that the year-to-date loss since July 1 is \$69,000.

Morrow County Health District is seeking a .39 cent levy deemed necessary to maintain services and continue to provide up-to-date care for district patients.

MCHD CEO Victor Vander Does reported that he nixed the installation of a heating and ventilating system in the Pioneer Memorial Hospital basement and solarium for \$90,323. A new HVAC system is in the process of being installed upstairs as part of the recent renovation designed to allow for care of long-term care patients at the hospital. Vander Does said that \$90

thousand was just too expensive and said that they would try to make do with the old system downstairs. Vander Does said that with the renovations "possibly the downstairs heating system will run more effectively." He suggested that the district wait through the winter to see how the current downstairs system operates. Vander Does also vetoed a \$24,000 expenditure for carpet replacement throughout the hospital. "We are watching our funds," he said.

He said that Mahoney and a hospital team

are looking at used hospital beds to outfit the new long-term care rooms, as hospital beds are required for the facility to meet code. He said a new hospital bed would have cost \$9,000 apiece. He said that the hospital has some beds, but they need seven more to outfit the rooms for nine long-term care patients.

In other business at the meeting, the board:

-approved a change in malpractice carriers for the district. Mahoney and Vander Does suggested that

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Morrow County educator arrested for theft

On Wednesday, September 17, the Morrow County Sheriff's Office arrested Forrest Dean McKinnis, 30, the director at the Morrow County Alternative Education Center in Irrigon for Theft I and Official Misconduct I.

McKinnis was charged with the theft of reference books totaling

\$2,600, owned by the Morrow County School District, and then selling them.

The Morrow County School District has placed McKinnis on administrative leave. He is scheduled to appear in circuit court in Heppner on November 6.



Forrest McKinnis

Christian Life Center welcomes Antonucci as new pastor

By Autumn Morgan

Christian Life Center in Heppner welcomed a new pastor on August 1. Dean Antonucci and his wife, Teri, began their work with the church after the Van Cleave family moved to Pendleton. The Antonuccis moved from Port Angeles, WA where Dean was the senior pastor of Light in the City Church of God.

Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, Dean knew that he was being called into the ministry at age 13. He lived in Buffalo until he was 17, moving to Ellendale, ND to begin Bible college. He is the first in his family to go to college and graduate and is the only minister in his family.

After beginning his college education in North Dakota, Dean transferred to Southwestern Assembly of God University where he received a bachelor of science in professional studies. He is certified in food service mid-management in the study of culinary arts from the American Culinary Federation. He has also begun graduation work through the University of Phoenix in Business Leadership.

Dean has been in the ministry for 24 years. He started in Buffalo as a Royal Ranger commander for his



Dean and Teri Antonucci

home church. He then became a youth pastor after moving to North Dakota. Dean met Teri while at Bible college. They later moved to Oregon and were married in Milton-Freewater.

The couple went on to serve as children's pastors in Prineville and then youth pastors in Toledo. They then moved to Grand Prairie, TX where Dean was called to be an associate pastor. It was during this time that Dean graduated from Southwestern Assembly of God University in Waxachie, TX.

After graduating, Dean was transferred to Wakeeny, KS where he served as the senior pastor at Harvest Time Assembly of God. They later moved

back to Oregon and Dean served as associate pastor at Living Faith Church in Hermiston. He was then transferred to Roseburg to be an administrative pastor and then to Port Angeles, WA to be a senior pastor before ultimately transferring to Christian Life Center in Heppner.

"I fell in love with Heppner," said Antonucci. "We are looking forward to building long-term relationships with the community and becoming a vital part of advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ in Morrow County. I'm amazed that even though Heppner is a small town, there's a great deal of life and hope."

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