

Morrow County Health District commits \$100,000 to new Boardman clinic

District administrator announces retirement

By David Sykes

The Morrow County Health District (MCHD) Monday committed \$100,000 towards construction of a new clinic planned for Boardman.

The clinic would be owned and operated by Columbia River Community Health Services (CRCHS)

which was established as a non-profit organization on January 22, 2004. The clinic currently employs 22 full-time providers and in 2007 saw 2,363 patients, according to CRHS reports. CRCHS is run by a board of directors, which says it needs to build a new facility because the current clinic is not large enough to sufficiently serve its patients.

CRCHS is counting on a large grant to get construction of the clinic off the ground. It has already purchased property in Boardman for construction. MCHD said the \$100,000 was contingent on CRCHS receiving the grant in March of next year.

The MCHD board was generally in favor of giving the money for the clinic, but felt it should get more credit in the Boardman community.

"We just put in \$100,000 for emergency services and bought a new \$110,000 ambulance for Boardman, but if you talk to people there they do not even know this," Morrow County Health District Administrator Victor Vander Does said. He pointed out that the health district received only a 33 percent yes vote in the Boardman precinct during the recent tax base election. "Boardman people don't even know we give you money," he told CRCHS board member Karen Pettigrew and CRCHS Executive Director Mindy Binder, both of whom were at the MCHD meeting. "We need some credit in that community for the money we have given you. We have given you over \$800,000 just since



Columbia River Community Health Services employees stand by a sign that marks the site for their new facility. - Contributed photo

I have been here," Vander Does added.

Pettigrew pointed out that the north end of the county is contributing a large portion of the tax revenues of the Morrow County Health District, and it can expect to get even more when Coyote Springs gas-fired generation plant comes on the tax rolls next year. She estimated it would add approximately \$150 million in new valuation, which should add another \$130,000 in annual tax revenue for MCHD.

Vander Does said the MCHD board should also expect a quarterly report from CRCHS on how the money is being used. "We are expecting a quarterly report on where the money is going and if it is being spent correctly. Your organization has not been forthcoming in the past," he told Pettigrew and Binder about CRCHS.

Binder said things have changed at the Boardman clinic. "This is not Dr. Boss' clinic any more (referring to the doctor who founded the clinic). We are making money and it is

not going into somebody's pocket," she said.

She said the clinic had netted \$300,000 per year in the past, but she added that the net would probably be down this year since a new doctor was hired.

"The clinic is very important and we need to make a commitment tonight for them to make grant applications," MCHD Board Chair Larry Mills said. The board voted unanimously to give the funds, and also postponed signing a contract with CRCHS until later next year.

CRCHS is planning a February, 2010, date for ground breaking on the new clinic.



Victor Vander Does

Vander Does announces retirement

In other business MCHD Administrator Victor Vander Does announced that he would be retiring in July of next year. He has

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Gingerbread houses on display



This gingerbread house built by the Chapa family is on display at Sweet Productions Ice Cream Parlour. -Photo by Autumn Morgan

Gingerbread houses have begun to be built and set up around town. Two houses have been built so far and are on display at D&L Auto Parts and Sweet Productions.

The house at D&L was built by Jaime McCormick. The house at Sweet Productions was built by Jodessa, Kolleen and Jodi Chapa.

Anyone that would still like to build a gingerbread house and have it displayed at a local business can call Jodi Chapa at 676-8022.

Ione School District thrilled with bond's passage

Ione School District administrators, board members and staff are celebrating with the passage of the district's \$2.8 million capital construction bond during the Tuesday, November 4, General Election. The bond passed with 216 of the city's 376 votes.

"I am pleased and excited to see the wonderful support the Ione community has for its school," said Superintendent Karl Ostheller. "With the passage of this bond, we can address some of the issues of an aging high school building and provide additional classrooms to alleviate our lack of classroom space."

The \$2.8 million

bond will cost taxpayers \$2.43 per \$1,000 assessed property value for no more than 16 years. The bond funds will allow the district to construct two new classrooms at the elementary school; repair and improve the pool and pool deck; replace the high school gym floor; replace the high school roof, including gym and cafeteria; replace the high school air-quality systems and windows; and modernize classrooms with new technology. The district will coordinate with the Umatilla-Morrow Education Service District (ESD) and the Willamette ESD when the projects are put out to bid.

The district is hoping to capitalize on other districts' bond passages to help minimize the cost associated with construction while improving the quality of the work done for the district. "We will attempt to get as many of our projects finished before the next school year starts to reduce the educational impact of construction," Ostheller said. "The addition of the two classrooms will need to go through a design phase and that will make this project take the longest to be completed. We appreciate your (Ione's) support and look forward to your input as we move forward with these projects."

Ione to hold annual Christmas Open House

Ione will hold their annual Christmas Open House on Friday, December 5, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will include food and

door prizes from local businesses.

Weather permitting there will be pony cart rides provided by Kristy Crowell.

Wreaths created by various organizations can be bid on at Taylor's Restaurant. Bidding is open until December 14.

Boardman Police Department receives good review

From: Jackie McCauley, Boardman Utility Clerk

Tuesday night the Boardman City Council heard a report, prepared by the Police Advisory Committee, reviewing the Boardman Police Department. The report came at the request of Mayor Ed Glenn, when in May of this year he formed a fact-finding committee to review the Police Department in all areas, including budget, personnel, and procedures. He appointed Councilor Jill Pambrun as the committee chair. The rest of the committee members were made up of citizens, councilors, and Police Chief John Zeiler.

The Police Advisory Committee identified issues of most concern and assigned committee members to explore those issues. They prepared a survey which went out to all households in the city and gathered information by interviewing the police officers and the city's finance director. They also participated in a ride-along with the officers.

A majority of the 64 surveys returned to the committee indicated the public was satisfied with the police department. An overwhelming percentage commented that the police department

has shown improvement over the last three years. Survey respondents would like to continue with 24/7 police coverage, and would like to see the police department continue to engage in community functions. It is the Advisory Committee's recommendation that 24/7 coverage remain a top priority. A small percentage of the surveys indicated concerns of officers writing too many traffic tickets, following vehicles too closely, and speeding in residential zones.

Information gathered regarding the budget showed, although the department's budget is one-fifth of the city's budget, they employ one-third of the city's employees and have historically stayed within or under budget. The committee recommended increasing the maintenance budget for 2009-10.

The committee also researched the department's patrol vehicle policy. Currently each officer is assigned a vehicle which they take home while they are off shift to allow for a quicker response during emergencies. The committee found that other communities have similar policies and the cost

is relatively small when you consider the time saved in the event of an emergency. They recommend continuing this policy.

Their research also showed the police department is involved in the community. The committee found that most officers participate in the Boardman community, either through coaching, community service clubs, graffiti removal, gang awareness programs in schools, or the DARE program. The committee recommends the city encourage the officers to continue to participate in community activities, but realizes they cannot require them to do so. They also recommend the city improve publicizing the police department's crime prevention and educational efforts.

Boardman Police Chief, John Zeiler is pleased with the report saying "the Boardman Police Department has been striving hard these past few years to bring the police and the public closer." He said although a police department's primary duty is to enforce the law and some people may not be too happy to see us, we are sworn to protect and serve all citizens.

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 27 and 28 in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.

We will be closed November 27, 28, and 29 for Thanksgiving. Have a happy holiday!

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