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# Could Heppner have the largest shamrock?

**Students from Heppner High School's senior class painted the shamrock in the middle of town for the annual St. Patrick's Day Celebration this past March.** *–Photo by Autumn Morgan*

Could Heppner's Main Street shamrock be the largest in the world? Public works director Brian Harmon said he had heard we might have a shot at it, and was going to measure the shamrock and see if it could get it in the Guinness Book of World Records.

"I haven't measured it yet," Harmon told the city council at its monthly meeting Monday night. "If fact every time I paint it I get outside the lines a little bit and it gets bigger," Harmon said. The shamrock needs to measure at least 20 feet wide to claim the title of largest shamrock.

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# Council discusses sidewalk tables

**Kay Robinson is surrounded by members of the Heppner Fire Department before Monday night's council meeting. Robinson, who is going off the council after 19 years (including a two year stint as mayor) was honored for her care and dedication to the Heppner Fire Department all those years. She said in a previous interview that her single biggest accomplishment was helping procure new fire trucks for the department.** *-Photo by David Sykes*

**By David Sykes**

The Heppner City Council talked Monday night about businesses placing chairs and tables on the sidewalks for customers to eat at, and in the latest request, smoke at.

Because of a recently enacted state law smoking is no longer allowed in public buildings including restaurants and taverns, so Nancy Gochnauer of Bucknum's Tavern has approached the city about allowing tables outside for eating and smoking.

Smoking is not allowed within 10 feet of the front of a public building, so the council said the tables would most likely have to be put in the back of the tavern since there would not be enough room on the front sidewalk. The council also discussed regulation of sidewalk tables and that one business, Murray Drugs already has tables out on the sidewalk.

Morrow County Sheriff Deputy Randy Rayburn said if the tables were located in the back of the tavern, there would need to be regulation so that people did not take drinks outside while smoking.

City attorney Anne Spicer said if the council is going to regulate tables on city sidewalks for one business, they would have to do it for all businesses.

Gochnauer also asked the city if social gambling is allowed in local businesses. Spicer said the council would need to "look at" the city's social gambling ordinance before making a decision. She said social gambling is allowed at the Elks Club because it is a charitable organization.

In other business at Monday's meeting the council heard that the St. Patrick's Senior Center remodeling is "moving right along." According to Judy Buschke of the housing authority the apartments "were beautiful" and the $750,000 remodeling project is ahead of schedule.

Cascade Management, a professional management company, will take over management of the apartments when the project is completed. There are currently five vacancies at the center, but seven people interested in moving in, Buschke added.

It was also announced at the meeting that the city had purchased a 4X4. The vehicle would be used in part so volunteers could continue to plow city sidewalks during the winter. The city has a list of volunteers that have said they would be able to operate the vehicle. "The volunteers will have to be certified," Mayor Les Paustian said. Paustian said he was going to approach the Heppner Chamber of Commerce to help pay for the 4X4 since it is used to plow in front of businesses. The city paid $6,135 for the all terrain vehicle.

The council also sold some city property with a sealed bid. A vehicle was sold to Alex Rystedt for $500. There were a total of four bids. A Boom truck was sold to terry Corbin for $200, his was the only bid. A roller was also sold to Corbin for $10 with one bid. A 200 gal water tank, trailer and trash pump did not receive any bids.

The council granted a request to use the city park for a Marick and Fanger family reunion on July 18 and 19, 2009. There would be 50 to 75 people in attendance, Margaret Fanger of Spokane said, in making the request.

# Residential Treatment Facility could break ground soon

Construction of a new eight-bed, 6,200 square foot secure mental health facility in Heppner could begin in the next couple of months, The Heppner Gazette-Times has learned. According to reports, funding for the facility is ready to go, the site has been secured, the contractor chosen, and now the developer is just waiting on the surveyor to finish his work.

Location of the facility will be above Rock Street in Heppner. The facility has been in the planning stages since last summer.

Developers say the facility will give an economic boost to the area providing 20 to 24 full time positions paying $30,000 to $65,000 in wages. The annual operating budget would be around $960,000 and construction costs of the facility would be $1.2 million. In addition, most supplies for the facility would be purchased locally, including food, medications, transportation and general supplies.

The facility is expected to be finished in September or October of 2009.

# Morrow County School District receives audit

**By April Sykes**

The Morrow County School District accepted their annual audit, conducted by Oster Professional Group, Certified Public Accountants, John Day and Burns, at their regular meeting in Heppner Monday night.

Oster's report indicated that the district's net assets decreased by $1.2 million for 2008 due to several causes: a decrease in property tax revenues by about $1.9 million; a decrease in revenue from miscellaneous sources by about $.4 million; an increase in state, local and special programs by approximately $.9 million; and an increase by $1.5 million in expenditures for instruction and support services.

The district showed $18,340,850 in total revenues, including over $4 million in taxes and over $12 million from state sources. The district had over $18 million in expenditures, including over $11 million for instruction and nearly $7 million in support services, such as instructional staff, general administration, school administration, business services and central support services. The district's available fund balance as of June 30 was $1,926,853.

In other business at the meeting the board:

-heard a report from Barb Moore, teachers and volunteers about the HEROES reading program at Heppner Elementary School. The group was commended for their work in encouraging reading in elementary school students. Heppner High School teacher Jeannie Collins, representing the "Adopt a Teacher" organization, presented the program with a check for $6,000 to help ensure the program's continuation. The group has also sustained the program through numerous fundraising activities.

-approved a request from the Heppner High School basketball coach and students to attend a basketball camp/tournament in San Diego next December. Supporters have raised nearly all funds required through fund raisers.

-learned from Burrows that attendance is down by around 30 students, but upon research, learned that an attendance drop for this time of year is consistent with the district's historical records.

-learned that Riverside High School was a haven for around 20 people who were left homeless after a fire swept their apartment in Boardman. The district has an agreement with Red Cross to provide their facilities in the event of emergency.

-heard a proclamation designating January "School Board Recognition Month." The district gave their appreciation to the volunteer board and presented each board member a gift.

-adopted policies concerning head lice, staff ethics and gifts and solicitations.

-learned from Burrows that the district is in compliance with state standards for elementary and secondary schools.

-received the following attendance report as of January 5: A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irrigon-344 students; Heppner Elementary School-190; Heppner High School-232; Irrigon Elementary School-121; Irrigon High School-316; Riverside High School, Boardman-380; Sam Boardman Elementary-309; Windy River Elementary, Boardman-224; Morrow Education Center-Morrow County School District-77; Morrow Education Center-Umatilla School District-28; total 2221.

-received the following announcements: end of the semester-January 15; Martin Luther King holiday-January 19; board work session, district office, 5 p.m.,-January 29; next board meeting, Riverside High School, Boardman, 7 p.m., February 9.

# 2009 Chamber board members installed

**The 2009 Heppner Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors was introduced last Thursday at the annual chamber luncheon. Left to right are Alvin Liu, Darcee Mitchell, Tom Mafera, Daye Stone, President Jeff Bailey, Anne Murray, Nancy Snider and Lisanne Currin. Bailey will be serving his second year as president.** *–Photo by David Sykes*

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