

Long-time Ione teacher, Dean Robinson, announces retirement

By April Sykes

Long-time Ione teacher, coach and athletic director Dean Robinson will retire at the end of this school year, the Ione School Board announced at their Monday night meeting.

Previously, to ratchet down costs, the board had authorized Superintendent/Principal Karl Ostheller to reduce the teaching staff by

one position. Since Robinson has announced his intent to retire, the position will not be reinstated, Ostheller said.

Also at the meeting the board discussed a letter to the district from Governor Ted Kulongoski concerning the impact of the recession on the K-12 budget for 2009-11. Kulongoski told them that the state's budget shortfall has tripled to more than \$3.1 billion below "Essential Budget Level." He also told them to prepare for an additional \$2 billion in lost state revenue by February 2010, which will bring the total state loss to more than \$5 billion. Consequently, Kulongoski asked the school districts to develop budgets according to a \$5.4-\$5.9 billion State School Fund for 2009-11. The Ione School District indicated that they are planning for the \$5.4 billion scenario and hoping that it won't be worse. "Education is not taking as big a hit as other (state) agencies and they're down there asking for more," commented board Chair Joe McElligott. "We don't want to lose our credibility."

In other business:

-Ostheller announced that the district sold its voter approved bonds on April 7 and the interest rate was lower than originally projected. "The net effect," said Ostheller, "would be a reduced tax rate (around \$2.45 per \$1,000 of assessed value instead of \$2.82) and an additional \$77,000 above the 2.8 million to be used for the capital projects."

-the geotechnical site investigation has been completed for putting the elementary addition out

for bid. Ostheller said that in the process of digging test holes, it was discovered that the old building's foundation and basement were under the surface with the walls knocked in and backfilled.

-the cafeteria, gym and stage lighting project has gone out for bid. Ostheller said that an extra bid was added for retrofitting the shop lighting and recommended by the energy audit. The bid project is being combined with Helix and Athena-Weston to attempt to get a lower bid price for the projects in all three districts. Eleven companies showed up for the initial walk-through.

-the first budget meeting was held April 13. Linda LaRue was voted in as chair and Marcus Collier as vice chair. The next meeting will be held May 11 at 7 p.m.

-the board approved a management contract with the Umatilla-Morrow ESD for \$36,388. Funding for maintenance was not included in the contract.

-the board accepted Dean Robinson's retirement "with regret."

-student enrollment is at 164 with 71 students in kindergarten through grade five, 29 in grades six through eight and 64 in grades nine-12.

-according to Beth O'Hanlon, chief financial officer, the district received \$118,300 in basic school support in March; the general fund collected \$17,018 in property taxes; and the extra-curricular fund received \$36,334 from the Morrow County Unified Recreation District.

-O'Hanlon reported

that individual special revenue funds continue to carry deficit fund balances, however, with the exception of the Pool Fund, all funds will be made whole by approved grant dollars.

-O'Hanlon reported larger or unusual payments for December for the following: Mid Columbia Bus for transportation; Morrow County Grain Growers for propane; Sysco for food purchases; Umatilla-Morrow ESD for a server and miscellaneous supplies; Vern's and Sons for food purchases and Willamette ESD for bond project costs.

-O'Hanlon reported that the \$5.4 billion state school funding estimate would allocate "just \$1,400,981 for the Ione School District which is \$90,000 less than discussed during the budget committee meeting, "primarily due to the difference in local revenue," said O'Hanlon. She said that she had only included current property tax collections as local revenue instead of county school funds, in-lieu of property taxes, etc. She said that the initial estimates were provided by COSA.

-mowing has been initiated as per contract with the city in consultation with athletic director and track coach Ryan Rudolf.

-the board approved moving the June board meeting and budget hearing to June 15.

-the next budget committee meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, at 7 p.m.; the next board meeting will be held Monday, May 18.

-the board held an executive session to discuss negotiations.

HEPPNER

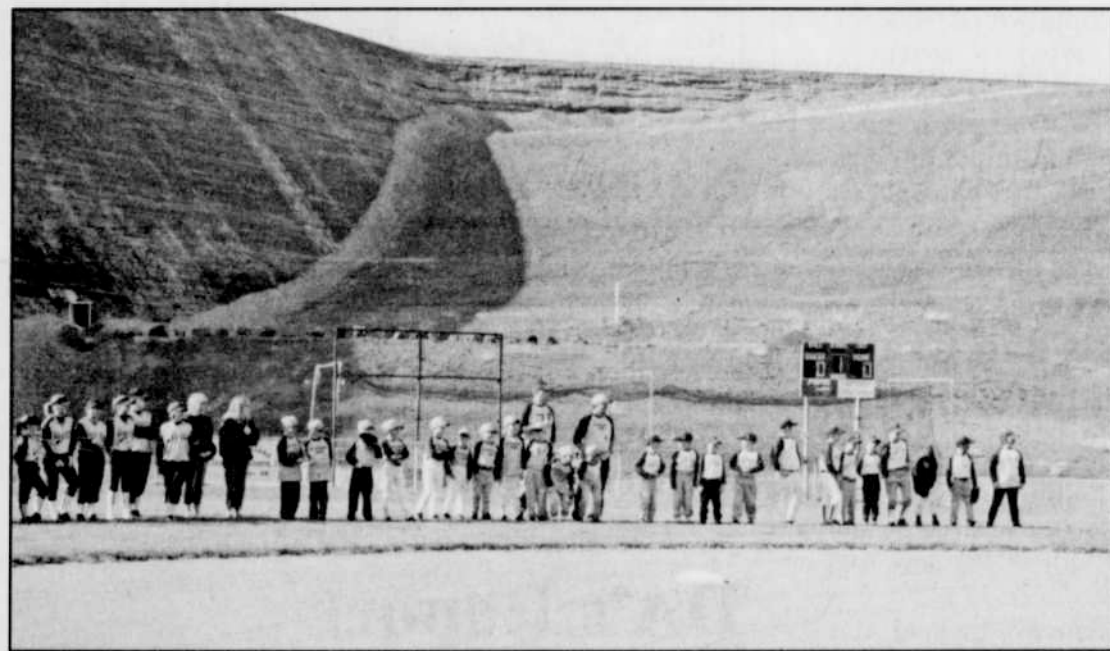
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Little League season begins



Little League season opened in Heppner on Saturday. -Photo by Sandy Matthews

Columbia River Community Health Services awarded grant from American Recovery & Reinvestment Act

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has announced the release of a one-time grant of nearly \$6 million to expand services at 25 of Oregon's community health centers. The money was made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the federal economic stimulus package) and comes as more Oregonians join the ranks of the uninsured.

A portion of this grant was awarded to Columbia River Community Health Services to continue to serve Boardman's most vulnerable residents. The grant will be used over the next two years to expand services and outreach program efforts. Some services already in the works are an increased presence in community events, childhood immunizations during well child visits, and setting up a digital x-ray program and

tech. More one-time federal grants are expected from the stimulus plan to help health centers fund capital projects, including facility construction and remodeling and the purchase of electronic medical records equipment. Columbia River Community Health Services will keep a close eye on future federal grants, as they plan to construct a new facility to house their ever growing patient population.

Health centers serve one in every 15 Oregonians - more than 264,000 in 2007, about 48 percent of whom had no health insurance. Centers provide physical, oral and mental health care, plus such support services as case management, translation and transportation. Columbia River Community Health Services delivered care to over 56% of Boardman's residents last year, not counting patients from

around the area, such as Irigon, Umatilla, Heppner, Ione, and their surroundings.

Columbia River Community Health Services accepts Oregon Health Plan, Medicare, most insurance plans, and offers a sliding scale fee program. The clinic is open from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday. Some of the services they offer include: comprehensive exams, DOT physicals, occupational services, school sports physicals, chronic illness management, well child exams, as well as adult and childhood immunizations.

For more information on services, or to schedule an appointment call 541/481-7212. For information on the clinic's fundraising efforts, to build a new clinic facility, contact Mindy Binder, also at 541/481-7212.

Palmer receives \$15,000 research grant

Jason Palmer, a science teacher at Heppner High School, recently received a \$15,000 grant from the MJ Murdock Charitable Trust. The grant is a Partners in Science grant in which Palmer will be doing research at Eastern Oregon University with Dr. Colin Andrew on the build-up of nitric oxide in the bloodstream and how it's transported.

Palmer had applied for the grant three different times prior to receiving this year's. The grant is a two year grant.

This project will investigate the reactivity of a heme-containing protein from the bacterium, *Alcaligenes xylosoxidans*. Research has recently shown that this protein, termed

AXCP, exhibits novel reactivity with the gas, nitric oxide. This unprecedented heme chemistry may help AXCP protect bacteria against the toxicity of nitric oxide in its environment, and may also be relevant to nitric-oxide-based signaling pathways in the cardiovascular and central nervous systems. To understand how the molecular structure of AXCP controls its heme chemistry, the group will carry out a range of experiments using kinetic, spectroscopic, and chromatographic techniques.

Palmer is hoping to carry out research using equipment that could possibly be purchased for the classroom, specifically a spectroscopic. The proposed work will be carried out

using state-of-the-art equipment in the new science building at Eastern Oregon University.

During the previous three-years, a total of 18 students were involved in the project. Research was published in the international peer reviewed journals, "Biochemistry, and Journal of Biological Chemistry," as well as in the "Eastern Oregon Science Journal." Students traveled widely to present their research at National and International Conferences, including the 2006 "European Conference on Biological Inorganic Chemistry," in Portugal. Palmer will be presenting at a national conference two different years about the findings in his research.

Umatilla Morrow Head Start accepting applications for 2009-10 school year

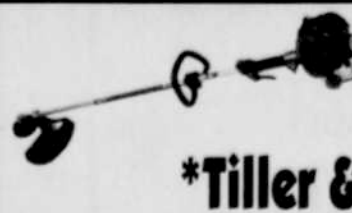
Umatilla Morrow Head Start is currently accepting applications for the 2009-2010 school year. Children must be 3 years of age on or before September 1, 2009.

In Heppner, families can obtain an application at Heppner Elementary school or contact Candy Green at 676-5482. Ana Reynaud can be reached in the Boardman or Irigon area by calling 481-3254.

Ballots to be mailed May 1

Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers has announced that ballots for the May election will be mailed on May 1.

At the MCGG GREEN FEED STORE in Heppner:

 Shindawa \$199.99 ON SALE
Home Pro 22-T String Trimmer
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242 W. Linden Way, Heppner • 676-9422 • 989-8221 (MCGG main office)

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MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.