

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10.

Community members should attend town meetings

To the Editor and Lexington Community:

The following letter was presented to all members of the town council by a community member. This letter was not even addressed at the last council meeting.

To Mayor Yocom, Councilor Haskett, Councilor Owens, Councilor Marquardt, and Councilor Lemmon, After thinking about this since the last council meeting I decided I would bring it to your attention.

You may wonder why the attitude of a few people that bother to come to the council meetings seem to be negative all the time. It seems to me the reason could be because some of the council members act put-out when any question comes up. It seems to me that we are talked down to and the answer is almost always given as if you were talking to teenagers that should not be questioning your decisions. Also there is almost no discussion of decisions to be made. It seems you have already made your decision before coming to the meeting.

Example: Last meeting when Dorothy (Edwards) asked who the candidates for mayor were and how they came to the decision to appoint Dwyla (Yocom) came about, it was stated that she had been elected by the people. This was not a true statement. If you would research the minutes you would find that she was actually appointed by Val Doherty at the June 12, 2007 council meeting. You need to know that the information you give at meetings is actually accurate.

A letter of response

Letter to the Editor:

Dear Willow Creek Valley community members;

I am writing this letter in response to the one published in last week's Gazette by Mr. Arman Kluehe. Mr. Kluehe waxes poetic about the abundance of the scenery along the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway, and the need to protect it from those monstrous "Industrial Wind Facilities".

However, Mr. Kluehe fails to mention that he has lived in our community for only a very short time and that this is actually a retirement location for him. He has no real background in the struggle that our small communities have faced just to survive, since the loss of one of our major employers when the Kinzua Mill closed. He has not gotten to know very many of us, or gotten involved in the activities that support our communities and keep them healthy and vibrant. If he had, he might realize that many of us consider wind turbines to be welcome new neighbors.

Mr. Kluehe may not realize that the Shepherd's Flat project by itself is anticipated to pay almost \$2,000,000 annually in payments in lieu of taxes in Morrow County (the majority of the turbines will be located in Gilliam County). He may also not realize that local land owners will be receiving lease payments that will increase the revenue being earned in our local communities and therefore, increase the money being spent as well. In addition, he may not realize that it is estimated that every 100MW of wind plant capacity built will create approximately seven new jobs. Not just any jobs, by the way, but very well paying jobs with benefits that will require the people holding those jobs to be young and fit enough to climb those 300 foot towers. These are family wage jobs that will require family age employees. Did I mention that the Shephard's Flat Wind Farm is anticipated to include up to 900 MW of wind turbine capacity.

Mr. Kluehe states that "The Blue Mountain Scenic Byway was recognized as a scenic highway by both the State of Oregon and Morrow County because it has an abundance of varied scenery along with historical sites and numerous recreational opportunities". Funny, I always thought it was designated because there were federal highway funds available to help maintain roads that were so designated. As far as I can see, it is a state highway just like many other state highways. It just happens to lead to the Blue Mountains. That doesn't make the Willow Creek Valley section of it such a special asset that it must be protected as a Goal 5 resource.

Mr. Kluehe also fails to tell us that the Willow Creek Valley itself is not in danger of having these "Industrial Wind Facilities" located in it. You see, the valley is not good wind territory. It is the hills on either side of the valley that will host the turbines. So, how far back from the actual Scenic Byway would he have us protect it? One mile? Two miles? Remember these towers are up to 300 feet tall with a 50 foot blade that sometimes extends beyond the top of the tower. They can be seen from a great distance. In fact, from my house just north of Ione I can see the wind farms on the Washington hills on the other side of the Columbia River, the wind farms in Sherman County and the wind farms at Condon and Arlington. So, how far from the road should these wind towers be located

The current council doesn't have a clue as to what is going on. They never question a bill or activity. They don't realize they are spending twice as much as they are taking in. Most of the decisions are made by the city recorder and maintenance man prior to the meeting (not by the council). Now the maintenance man wants to put the town in debt by building a \$500,000 reservoir. If we had another well it would be sufficient to meet the needs of the community by pumping into the current reservoir and certainly a lot less expensive.

He is already talking about rationing water, but let the reservoir run over and wasted between 200,000 and 300,000 gallons of water and washed out the county road.

When community members (who do attend the meeting) question a bill or activity, or ask why something has been (or not been) done, they are ignored, ridiculed or cursed and told they do not need to know what is happening.

The city charter is not obeyed, nor are state regulations followed.

It's high time the people of the town attend the meetings and find out what is really going on before the town ends up being bankrupt.

Bob Taylor
Lexington

in order to protect this precious resource?

One other thing that Mr. Kluehe fails to mention is what other kinds of development would be restricted in an area designated as a Goal 5 Resource. I researched and found that the Department of Land Conservation and Development rules for Goal 5 Resources require various levels of protection depending on which type of resource you are dealing with. For historic sites, open spaces or scenic views, for example, a local government gets to determine which resources it will designate as "significant" within its geographical territory. It then must conduct an ESEE (economic, social, environment and energy) study of the impacts caused by the restriction of conflicting uses in the designated area. It will then determine what kind of protections to put in place for the area. It appears that Mr. Kluehe's request is mostly for a scenic designation and that in order to protect that type of resource you would have to prohibit just about any type of development in the designated area. The repercussions of such a designation could go well beyond Mr. Kluehe's feared "Industrial Wind Facilities". That had better be some view to justify so much negative economic and social impact on our local communities, not to mention the impact on the potential production of renewable energy in our state.

By the way, I would bet that Mr. Kluehe did not realize that energy resources can also be Goal 5 resources. In fact the DLCD rules state that

"For purposes of this rule,

(a) "Energy Source" includes naturally occurring locations, accumulations, or deposits of one or more of the following resources used for the generation of energy: natural gas, surface water (ie: dam sites), geothermal, solar, and wind areas. Energy sources applied for or approved through the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) shall be deemed significant energy sources for purposes of Goal 5.

(b) "Protect," for energy sources means to adopt plan and land use regulations for a significant energy source that limit new conflicting uses within the impact area of the site and authorize the present or future development or use of the energy source at the site."

It appears the Mr. Kluehe and others who want the Blue Mountain Scenic Byway to be designated as a Goal 5 Resource have not realized that the reason the Planning Commission is not interested is because that designation would be in conflict with a Goal 5 resource that they are already required to protect. The proponents of this designation have also failed to consider the substantial negative economic impacts that restricting wind development would create for our communities and local land owners. In addition, they have not told us how large of an area should be protected or why the resource that they care so much about deserves this level of protection.

I applaud the Planning Commission for not pursuing this and welcome the increased wind resource development. I would like to see a lot more wind turbines a lot closer to my house. So, by all means, contact the Morrow County Planning Commission. Let's just make sure they get both sides of the story.

Lisa Rietmann
Ione

Van Cleave completes master's degree

The Colorado State University Department of Atmospheric Science has announced that Darren Van Cleave has completed a master's degree in atmospheric science.



Darren Van Cleave

On July 7 Van Cleave successfully defended his thesis entitled "Relating Snowfall Patterns of the Central and Eastern U.S. to Infrared Imagery of Ex-

tropical Cyclone Comma Heads," and was given a strong PhD recommendation by his thesis committee.

Van Cleave is a 2003 graduate of Heppner High School, and a 2007 graduate of the University of Utah. He is the son of Tim and Myrna Van Cleave of Pendleton, formerly of Heppner.

Morrow County Court weekly meeting held

The Morrow County Court met on July 15 in Boardman with Judge Tallman, Commissioner Grieb and Commissioner Rea in attendance. Following is a summary of those meeting provided by Leann Rea.

The court approved the minutes of July 8, 2009.

The court reviewed and approved Accounts Payable, Retirement Taxes and an add-on for a total of \$169,991.21.

The undersheriff provided the court with a tour of the new Emergency Command Truck.

The July 15th Road report follows: The crew has finished Myers Lane and moved to Depot Lane to complete the shoulder work. **Road grading** - The crew has been grading roads on Penland Lake Road, Board Creek and the lower end of Dee Cox Road. **Paterson Ferry Road** - Replaced guard rail that had been damaged. **Cattle Guards** - Repair work and replacement to cattle guards on Road Canyon Road, Sunflower Flat Road and Dee Cox Road. The crew is replacing guards on the rock crusher and reviewing compliance regulations and safety practices before beginning work at the Clarks Canyon rock pit. The crew will be using some of the reclaim materials to do some repair work on Bunker Hill Road. The court heard that the entire road crew will be attending an all day safety training program.

The court heard an update report from Michael Strong, UMCDF Site Project Manager and Robert Dikeman, Project General Manager, regarding the project status, start-up challenges and the closure planning for the Umatilla Army Depot.

The county Planning Director, Carla McLane, reported: That there is an informational meeting regarding wind towers and transmission lines July 31st in The Dalles and that she will be attending. Stated that the county needs an MOU with PGE, this would allow the county to receive reimbursement for expenses related to the proposed gas generating plant at Carty. The court approved the director to proceed with changes that need to be made to the Morrow

County Zoning Ordinance: Article I needs clarification for the definition of parcel and adding a definition for a tax lot. Article 2 needs to have the addition of the four new zones that have been created. Article 4 needs to be reworked as to how hardship variance extensions are handled. There are also changes that need to be made to Articles 5, 6, 8 and 9. It appears there is no shortage of work that needs to be completed. The court heard a request for the replacement of the copy machine located in the planning office. This machine is also used by the Sheriff's Department, Justice Court, Juvenile Court, CSSEP and the County Court when they meet in Irrigon. The court later authorized the purchase of a new colored copier.

The court conducted the following business: Received a report from the Community Counseling Solutions Director, Kimberly Lindsay, that their budget from the state had not been cut as severely as anticipated. The court then decided to rescind the motion of April 27, 2009, which allowed the waiver of rent payments for a one year period and continue with the original rental agreement; Reviewed and signed a number of contracts related to the fair, a contract re boating issues, a contract re mapping tax lots for a remapping project in the Irrigon area, two Inter Governmental Agreements between Morrow County and Oregon Commission on Children and Families, signed a letter of support for the Port of Newport in its effort to secure the Home Port for the NOAA Pacific Marine Operations Center; reviewed information regarding the detection of West Nile Virus in mosquitoes in the area of south Irrigon. Learned that the North Morrow Vector Control District will step up spraying in the area and are asking residence to be on the look-out for conditions that allow standing water, also requested that residents report dead birds, such as Crows, Magpies, Jays and Robins. There have been no human, equine or avian cases of West Nile Virus reported in the county this year.

FFA canned drive continues

"We have been busy fundraising and collecting cans this summer to help with expenses for our trip to national FFA convention!" said Jarreid Miller, the chapter's assistant treasurer.

Miller's sister, Josie has applied for her American FFA Degree, and will hopefully walk across the stage at convention to receive it. This is the first America degree application from the latest Heppner FFA Chapter.

The FFA canned drive will continue through August, and if you have recyclable (pop, water or barley hops) containers, please drop them (preferably in a bag) in the trailer located by the HHS Metals Shop, or call Zech Hintz (676-5985) to arrange a pick-up of bagged cans.

Senior Center Menu

United Methodist Church members will be serving lunch on Wednesday, July 29. The menu will include salmon croquettes, scalloped potatoes, mixed veggies, fruit juice, and apple crunched.

"Where There's Smoke, There's Fire!" Program to be held at Heppner library

"Where There's Smoke, There's Fire!" is a special program about the history of firefighting and the use of fire by today's municipal, forest and volunteer firefighters, including those in Eastern Oregon. The program will be held on Friday, July 31, at 7 p.m. at the Heppner library, 444 N. Main St.

Kathleen Almquist, curator of the Eastern Oregon Fire Museum in La Grande, will present a power point program and will bring items from the museum, to be followed

by a question and answer period.

"Firefighters belong to the most respected profession in America," Almquist said. "My program is given as painless learning about the element of fire, which both terrifies and fascinates us. Professional firefighting was a way of life in ancient Rome and remains a process of intrigue to this day."

The firefighting program is one in the A Sense of Place series of programs in the arts, sciences and humanities given this

year in the region through funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to Libraries of Eastern Oregon (LEO).

The program in Heppner is sponsored by the Oregon Trail Library District.

For further information about the program please contact Marsha Richmond, library district director at 541-481-3365 or Lyn Craig, LEO director at 541-763-2355.

IMLS is the primary

source of federal support for the nation's 122,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas.

IMLS works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more, visit www.imls.gov.