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Gazette Times

VOL. 128 NO. 46 10 Pages Wednesday, November 18, 2009 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Ione School Board gives preliminary go-ahead for gym bleacher project

By April Sykes

The Ione School Board Monday night gave the go-ahead to move the gym bleacher project up to priority one and advertise for bids on the project. Board member Bink Ramos abstained from voting on the issue.

The Ione High School gym floor installation has been completed and its current bleachers no longer fit with the enlarged gym floor, so the board opted to replace rather than rework the bleachers.

The flooring had to be replaced following a storm which caused rain seeped through the uncompleted roof and destroyed it. The board opted to increase the size of the floor at that time, which made a bleacher redo of some sort a necessity.

The board also decided to proceed with some second tier projects that had not been completed previously with bond measure monies.

The board remarked on Ione School's "outstanding" ranking in the state school report cards, but expressed some concern with the school's writing scores. They directed Superintendent Karl Ostheller to research the results in order to find out if the writing scores were in error, a reporting glitch or something the district needs to address further.

The board agreed to proceed on the school's five year charter renewal and will hold a public hearing at the district's December board meeting. The charter will expire in January.

In other business, the board:

-heard a presentation from Michael Lasher with the Umatilla-Morrow Educational Service District about a possible merger between the Umatilla-Morrow ESD and the Union Baker ESD. The Ione district contracts with UMESD for educational and support services. Lasher told the board that the state legislature is urging reduction of the number of ESDs and UMESD is considering proactive measures. He said that a merger would bring both advantages and disadvantages, including a $250,000 to $450,000 deficit on the part of the Union Baker ESD. Lasher said that "much of the $250,000 to $450,000 would disappear", primarily in reduction of services and the elimination of duplication in staffing.

-pointed out that the school's website is not current and directed ESD to update it.

-heard from board member Lisa Rietmann who advised that the district do a "much better job" of getting items in the newspapers.

-received the following financial update: the district received $121,609 in basic school support and $4,692 in State Fiscal Stabilization Funds from the Oregon Department of Education in October; some special revenue funds are overspent-the federal REAP Fund, the food service fund, the pool fund, extracurricular fund, miscellaneous fund and IDEA fund. According to the report all funds will either be reimbursed or have transfers to cover the deficit balances. The miscellaneous fund will receive Science Grant monies.

-learned from Lasher that school funding for the current school year will be sufficient with additional financial support from "Stimulus Funds" and state "Rainy Day Funds," but he cautioned that next year's funding projection is not so rosy. "Next year is likely to be worse," he said. "Let's not think about that," retorted board Chair Joe McElligott. Lasher reminded the board that the ESD is also affected by state school funding cuts.

-See IONE SCHOOL DISTRICT/Page SEVEN

Health Dept. begins H1N1 school vaccinations

By David Sykes

The Morrow County Health Department has been moving into the schools to begin administering the H1N1 or "Swine Flu" vaccines.

So far 618 doses have been given in the schools. Below are the totals given out so far and the proposed schedule in the next two weeks.

SCHOOL	DATE	SCHOOL POP.	# DOSES GIVEN
Ione School Dist.	11/12/2009	165	99
Heppner Elementary	11/12/2009	196	95
AC Houghton	11/13/2009	265	195
Sam Boardman	11/13/2009	324	186
Irrigon Elementary	11/18/2009	198	
Morrow Ed. Center	11/18/2009	70	
Windy River	11/18/2009	218	
Heppner High	11/23/2009	224	
Irrigon High	11/24/2009	336	
Riverside High	11/24/2009	428	
TOTAL		**2424**	**575**

The Health Department has also gone into the Head Start programs in Irrigon and 2 in Boardman where a total of 43 injections were given. The Ione Preschool and Heppner Daycare have attended the H1N1 clinics in their local schools.

After the schools are finished the Health Department plans to begin holding regular clinics and giving out the vaccine to the high risk portions of the general public.

Following is the high risk population that will begin receiving the vaccine after the schools are completed:

-Pregnant women
-Household members and caregivers of infants less than 6 months of age.
-Anyone 6 months through 24 years of age.
-Persons age 25-64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of complications from influenza.
-Healthcare workers and law enforcement.

"We are receiving vaccine one week at a time, and are subject to the allocations the state parcels out." Morrow County Public Health Director Sheree Smith told the Heppner Gazette-Times Monday.

Smith said that the Health Department would be returning to the different schools the week before Christmas break to give the required second doses to children nine years and younger.

Heppner, Ione and Lexington 'plans' presented to public

Newly completed strategic plan provides vision to communities in the Willow Creek Valley

By David Sykes

A new Strategic Plan, laying out the aspirations and concerns for the communities of Heppner, Lexington and Ione, has been completed and was presented to the public Monday night.

Some of the goals for Heppner include: increasing the amount of rental housing, retaining and developing small businesses, retaining medical services, promoting tourism, maintaining programs and quality of education in the schools, expanding use of the public library, maintaining and upgrading the city water system, streets, etc., and planning for a population of 1,600 people.

The Heppner goals also focused on quality of life issues such as providing "diverse, wholesome and fun recreational activities, and maintaining a neat, clean and attractive community. The plan goes on to list other goals such as maintaining strong law enforcement, support for seniors and youth and training and recruiting new community leaders.

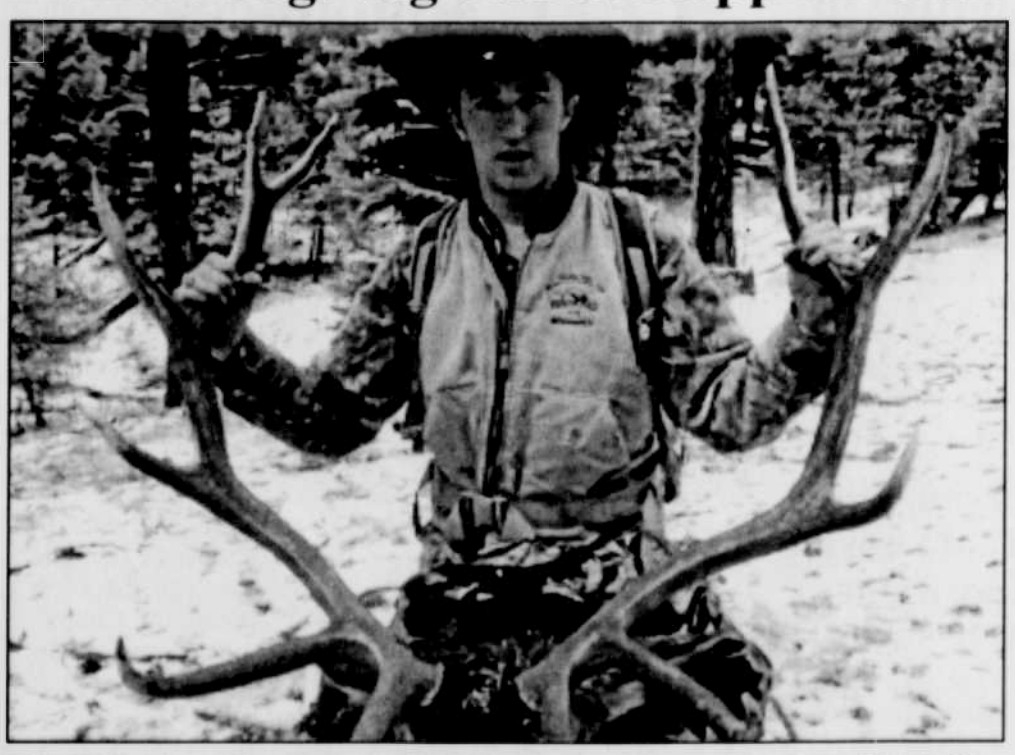
The plan does not provide answers on how to pay for the ideas, but is instead used more as a road map and vision for the future. It can also be used as an aid in procuring grants

-See STRATEGIC PLAN/ Page SEVEN

Mustangs to play in state quarterfinal game

Jordan Hatfield intercepts a pass in Saturday's game against Monroe. The Mustangs defeated Monroe 33-0. Heppner will play their next game on Saturday, November 21, against Kennedy in Mount Angel. *-Photo by Sandy Matthews*

Hoffert bags big bull in Heppner Unit



Tyler Hoffert, 18, of Hermiston shot this bull on October 29 around Brush Creek in the Heppner Unit. After graduating from Hermiston High School, he plans to join the Marines and will attend boot camp in August 2010. He is the son of Sandra Rice and Steve Hoffert of Hermiston, and the grandson of Glen and Joyce Ward of Heppner. *–Contributed Photo*

The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to have your picture taken, drop off photos, or email them to editor@rapidserve.net.

Body found in Irrigon field

On Thursday, November 12, the Morrow County Sheriff's Office discovered the body of 29 year old Eric Chairez Sanchez of Hermiston in a field east of Irrigon.

Autopsy results will not be complete until toxicology reports are returned to the State Medical Examiner. According to the Morrow County Sheriff's Office, "The condition of the deceased, the weather, his clothing, and the location where the deceased was found are consistent with the death being the results of hypothermia."

The Morrow County Sheriff's is still investigating.

Gazette-Times to close for Thanksgiving

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed on November 26 and 27 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. The office will re-open on Monday, November 30, at 9 a.m.

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

We will be closed for Thanksgiving at all locations
November 26, 27, and 28
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