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## \$3 million Heppner sidewalk and street upgrades put on hold Funding bill to go on ballot for state-wide approval

By David Sykes

A \$3 million windfall from the State of Oregon to fund seven street and sidewalk projects in the city of Heppner has been put on

hold pending the outcome of a petition drive putting the expenditure on the ballot for voter approval, the Heppner City Council was told Monday night.

City Manager Dave DeMayo said opponents of the State of Oregon Transportation Bill SB 2001 that authorized the Heppner expenditure as part of many other state-wide funding projects, have collected signatures to put a repeal of the bill on the ballot for voter approval next year.

The city received the unexpected money in May when state Representative Greg Smith, R-Heppner, contacted DeMayo near the end of the legislative session about money that had become available after another city had turned it down. Heppner came up with projects in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and was awarded funds for the following projects:

1. A rebuild of Barratt Blvd, including a complete reconstruction from the sub grade up, including curbs, gutters, and a drainage system and sidewalks (\$1.48 million)

2. Completion of Riverside Ave. consisting of installing curbs and gutters, installing sidewalk along the south east side and completing the installation of the storm drainage system (cost: \$512,000).

3. Replacement and repair of "Lover's Lane" pedestrian bridge crossing Willow Creek behind the Bowling Alley, including replacement of superstructure and sidewalk approaches (cost: \$149,570).

4. Heppner Ele-

mentary School sidewalk renovation including repair and replace of existing retaining wall and replacement of the sidewalk and replacing 300 ft of safety rail (\$119,220).

5. Install sidewalks to and from Heppner High School starting at the junction of Gale and Water Streets up Water Street to Willow View Drive at the High School and then to the Junction of Spruce and Morgan Streets, about 3,300 feet, and then on to the intersection of Morgan Street and Riverside, another 1,100 feet (\$477,760).

6. New sidewalks on Hager, Cowins and Gilmore streets, approximately 4,000 feet. (\$100,000).

7. Stabilize an alleyway hill slope failure on Hill Street (\$100,000).

A list of other government entities that were scheduled to receive funding and will now have to wait included:

(a) Baker County.....	\$ 4.5 million
(b) Grant County.....	\$ 1.1 million
(c) Harney County.....	\$ 4.1 million
(d) Malheur County.....	\$ 5.8 million
(e) Union County.....	\$ 1.3 million
(f) Umatilla County.....	\$ 2.5 million
(g) City of Nyssa.....	\$ 1 million
(h) City of Heppner.....	\$ 3 million
(i) City of Milton-Freewater.....	\$ 3 million
(j) City of Ontario.....	\$ 1.2 million
(k) Port of Umatilla.....	\$ 4.5 million
(L) Port of Morrow.....	\$10.7 million

The funding was part of HB 2001, approved at the tail end of the 2009 state legislature. The funding was part of a larger 37-page transportation bill that the petition aims to put on the ballot in front of voters for approval. Until such time it is approved the funding and projects are being put on hold, DeMayo said.

A check of the Oregon Secretary of State's web site shows chief petitioners on the petition drive to place the repeal on the ballot are: Gary George, State Senator and hazelnut farmer from Newberg, State Senator Marylenn Shannon of Brooks, and Don McIntire, President of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon.

In other business at Monday's council meeting the council heard from Brad Baird of Anderson Perry and Associates, the engineering firm from La Grande that does much of the city's infrastructure engineering work. Baird talked about an upcoming wastewater treatment facility improvement plan his firm will be working on. The \$25,000 study will identify where its sewer system needs work, and where it will need expansion. There are currently 690 connections in the city, and with a population increase of about .5 percent predicted the study will address how the system will take care of them, both through improvements and expansion.

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HEPPNER

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### Ione students hold winter clothing drive



The Ione High School Chapter of the National Honor Society held a winter clothing drive to collect donations for the Neighborhood Center. Over 100 items were collected. Pictured are the members of the Ione National Honor Society. -Contributed Photo

### Town and Country Awards event to be held Jan. 14

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce Town and Country Community Awards event, sponsored by CenturyLink, will be held in the Pavilion at the Morrow County Fairgrounds on Thursday, January 14, at 6 p.m. Catering will be provided by "Pudding on the Ritz".

Tickets will be \$20 and will be available for sale on Monday, January 4.

### County schools to close for the holidays

Morrow County Schools and the Ione School District will be closed December 21 through January 3 for the Christmas holiday. School will resume on Monday, January 4.

### School board split over Measures 66 & 67

By April Sykes

A Morrow County School Board resolution supporting two Oregon state tax increase measures failed Monday night in a tie vote.

Three board members, Bill Kuhn, Dan Dalton and Thad Killingbeck, voted for the resolution which supported State Ballot Measures 66 and 67. A "yes" vote on the measures would support the \$733 million tax increase enacted by the state legislature in July. The measures will come before the voters on the January 26 ballot.

Board members Craig Miles, Pat McNamee and Chair Barney Lindsay voted against the resolution. Board member Berto Hernandez was not present at the meeting.

A "yes" vote on Ballot Measure 66 would raise taxes on incomes above \$250,000 for households and \$125,000 for individuals. This measure also eliminates income taxes on the first \$2,400 of unemployment benefits received in 2009. This measure, if approved, would raise approximately \$472 million currently budgeted for education, health care, public safety and other services.

A "no" vote on

Ballot Measure 66 would not increase taxes. It would not include a tax exemption for the first \$2,400 of unemployment benefits received in 2009 and would leave education, health care, public safety and other services under-funded by approximately \$472 million.

A "yes" vote on Measure 67 would raise the corporate minimum tax from \$10 to \$150 for most businesses and would increase taxes for corporations with over \$500,000 in Oregon revenues. It would also increase the tax rate some corporations pay on profits; and increase some business filing fees. It would increase filing fees by \$50 for Oregon business and \$225 for out of state businesses. The measure would raise \$255 million to fund current budgets for education, health care, public safety and other services.

A "no vote on Measure 67 would retain a \$10 corporate minimum income tax rather than raise it to \$150 and would not raise corporate profits taxes. It would leave current education, health care, public safety and other services budgets under-funded by around \$255 million.

Miles said that he could not vote in support

of the measures because he did not believe businesses should be penalized in a time of recession. He said that if businesses are required to pay additional taxes, businesses will cut back and jobs will be lost, exactly what is not needed in this economy. Miles said that approving the measures would not only put a burden on small businesses in Morrow County, many of which are mom and pop operations, but on family farms as well. "The same people who make more than \$150,000 are the same people who run these businesses," he said. He said a strong economy will, in the long run, increase the amount of money available to fund education. He said that private industry has lost some 116,000 jobs, while the government sector has gained. "The fact is the state budget was raised by nine percent before it was raised by 20 percent." "I don't believe the government creates wealth." Miles said that he believed the vote for or against the measures goes along party lines, with Democrats agreeing with the measures and Republicans disagreeing with the measures.

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### H1N1 vaccine now available for all

By David Sykes

The H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine is now available for everyone, the Morrow County Health Department announced Monday. "Everyone can get it now," MC Public Health Director Sheree Smith told the Heppner Gazette.

Smith said enough vaccine had arrived in the county that all who want the vaccine can go to regu-

lar clinics now and receive it. She said the regular flu vaccine is also available and can be received at the same time.

The Boardman Clinic at 101 Boardman Ave. is open 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1 to 4:30 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday. The clinic in Heppner at 120 S. Main is open Thursday's from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m.

Smith also said they would be going back to the schools to give second doses to certain age groups. The Health Department will also be going to the Senior Center on meal site days to give the vaccine. Smith added that health officials are expecting at second wave of H1N1 to come through in the spring of 2010.

### Area pastors invited to submit Christmas messages

The Heppner Gazette-Times invites area pastors to submit Christmas messages to be published in the December 23 edition. The deadline is Friday, December 18, at 5 p.m.

Messages can be dropped off at the Gazette office, emailed to editor@rapidserve.net, or faxed to 676-9211.

### Celebrate Heppner Christmas Event to be held December 17

The Chamber Raffle Baskets are currently on display in the window at Heppner TV. Raffle tickets are available for sale at one for \$1 and six for \$5 and can be purchased at Community Bank, Heppner Chamber and Heppner TV through Thursday, December 17. The winner of each basket will be drawn during the Celebrate Heppner Christmas Event at the Elks Lodge on December 17.

The Elks will be serving lasagna, green salad and garlic bread. The cost for dinner will be \$9 for

adults and \$5 for children 12 and under. Those who purchase a dinner will be given a \$10 Rewards Card for each meal, up to \$50 for a family.

Rewards cards can be entered for drawings for prizes from 7:30-9:30 p.m. upstairs in the Elks Lodge. Penny raffle board will also be available for an opportunity to win an XBOX 360 Elite or RCA 7" Dual Screen Mobile DVD System. At this time the community will be able to meet this year's foreign exchange students.

Santa will be available to take pictures (\$5 per picture) from 6-7:30 p.m. Musical entertainment will be provided by exchange student Viktoria Bosch from 6:15-7:15 p.m.

The drawing for prizes will begin at 7:30 p.m. There will be numerous prizes in each category. Some examples of the prizes are: cherry cheesecake, gift certificates (\$10 category); bowling parties, winter sports passes, gift certificates (\$20 category); and Hamley's gift card, leather coat (\$50 category).

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