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Heppner and Boardman high schools named 'outstanding' by U.S. News & World Report

By April Sykes
Morrow County School District Superintendent Mark Burrows told the school board Monday night that two district schools, Heppner High School and Riverside High School in Boardman, were named outstanding schools by U.S.

News and World Report. Burrows said that only 31 schools in Oregon were so noted.

Burrows also presented a plaque to Heppner Elementary School Principal Matt Combe commemorating Heppner Elementary School being named an "outstanding" school by the Oregon Department of Education.

Combe credited his staff for their hard work and dedication and their emphasis on curriculum. Two HES teachers, Jannie Allen and Melissa Coiner, made presentations on their respective reading programs that evening. Coiner implements the COLT Time

reading program in her class curriculum and Allen oversees the extracurricular Basketball Reading Program.

Also at the meeting Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers presented an election report on the school district's Community Education Committees, which, she says have often lacked candidates. They have also traditionally lacked quorums for the meetings and do not have authority to take action. Childers said CEC votes must be counted by hand and that CEC elections prove to be expensive for the school district. Many of the functions of the CEC

groups overlap with the site councils which are state mandated. CEC are currently established in the Heppner, Boardman and Irrigon communities. Childers said the district may opt to abolish CECs or may continue with them.

In other business, the board:

-received a statement of assurances from Burrows that district schools are complying with state standards.

-approved naming Joe Taylor to the district budget committee position 7 as nominated by Berto Hernandez.

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HEPPNER

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VOL. 129 NO. 2 10 Pages Wednesday, January 13, 2010 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Public invited to Cap & Trade program

Free presentation to address effects of legislation on energy costs and the economy

By David Sykes

A program to inform the public about Cap and Trade, what it is and how it will affect people's lives, will be held this Sunday, January 17, beginning at 2 p.m. at the Heppner Elementary School gym. The program will be put on by Jeff Burkhardt, a Walla Walla attorney and expert on Cap & Trade.



Jeff Burkhardt

According to Burkhardt, the presentation will focus on the bill known as "Waxman-Markey" that passed the U.S. House of Representatives on June 26, 2009. Burkhardt says his

program will present both sides of the issue, with pluses and minuses, and winners and losers.

Some of the topics to be covered include assumptions people may have on Cap and Trade, what is it and how does it work, possible effects of the legislation, effects on agriculture, impacts to manufacturing and the economy, and how much the bill is expected to cost individual households through increased energy and other costs. There will be a questions and answer session with the public.

"Price increases would be essential to the success of a cap-an-trade program because they would be the most important mechanism through which businesses and households would be encouraged to make investments and behavioral changes that reduced CO2 emissions," said Terry Dinan, Congressional Budget Office, testifying before Congress on March 12, 2009.

The program is free to the public and is sponsored by the Willow Creek Tea Party, a local nonpartisan group advocating public education on various issues facing the country.

Ballot drop site locations announced

Ballots were recently mailed out for the vote on Measures 66 & 67. Ballots can be returned by mail or at any designated drop site. Listed below are the Morrow County drop site locations and the available days and hours the sites will be open. All ballots must be received by 8 p.m. on January 26, Election Day.

-New Boardman City Hall, 200 City Center Circle, Boardman, OR 97818; Open January 8-25, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on January 26 (Election Day)

8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
-Irrigon Annex-Planning Department Lobby, 205 NE 3rd St., Irrigon, OR 97844; Open January 8-25, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on January 26 (Election Day) 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

-Bank of Eastern Oregon-Ione Branch, 280 West Main St., Ione, OR 97843; Open January 8-25, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on January 26 (Election Day) 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

-Morrow County Road Office, 365 West Highway 74, Lexington,

OR 97839; Open January 8-25, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and on January 26 (Election Day) 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

-Morrow County Courthouse, 100 S. Court St., Room 102, Heppner, OR 97836; Open 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and on January 26 (Election Day) 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

For more information contact the Morrow County Clerk at 541-676-5604, 541-481-2112, 541-9224103 or visit www.morrowcountyoregon.com.

Boardman grants extension to sell Tower Road property to Love's

The Boardman City Council voted in favor of extending an agreement with Love's Travel Stop and Country Stores for the purchase of approximately thirty plus acres of city property located on Tower Road near Boardman. Love's plans to build a travel stop on the property and is currently working on their site approvals.

Love's original agreement with the city was due to expire on January 12 of this year, after both 45 day extensions were

exhausted. Frank Ille, of Love's Travel Stops asked the council Tuesday night for the extension, explaining the land use issues with the state have been time-consuming. He asked for an extension, ending January 12, 2011, to complete the sale of the land.

After declaring a Conflict of Interest as he works for Devin Oil Company, Councilor Steve Doherty was the first from the audience to speak in opposition to the sale; Devin Oil has been an outspoken op-

ponent to the Love's Travel Stop project. Mr. Doherty said he originally voted in favor of the sale because he mistakenly believed Love's would be subject to an 8% tax on all sales because the project would be located within the proposed speedway excise tax district. He said he would not have voted in favor otherwise. Mr. Doherty said having a travel stop at that exit would cause a commercial district to develop outside the city limits.

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Town and Country Awards event to be held Jan. 14

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce Town and Country Awards event, sponsored by CenturyLink, will be held in the Pavilion at the Morrow County Fairgrounds on Thursday,

January 14. This year's theme is "Honor Our past, Celebrate the Future."

A no-host social hour will begin at 6 p.m. and dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Catering will be provided by

"Pudding on the Ritz". Tickets will be \$20 and can be purchased at Bank of Eastern Oregon, Community Bank, Chamber of Commerce, Heppner TV, and Murray Drugs.

Chamber elects Sponseller president for 2010

By David Sykes

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce elected Claire Sponseller president for 2010. She will take over from Jeff Bailey who served the past two years as president of the group.

Sponseller, along with the rest of the Chamber Board of Directors, was sworn in at the Chamber annual meeting luncheon held last Thursday at All Saints Episcopal Church. Sponseller, who previously served on the Chamber Board of Directors, is the 4-H Agent at Oregon State University Morrow County Extension Service, with offices in Heppner.

Before being presented with a plaque of appreciation, outgoing president Bailey praised all the volunteers who worked on various community projects the past year including St. Patrick's Day Celebration, the going away party for Barbara Hayes, Christmas lights on Main Street, Celebrate Heppner and the Parade of Lights.

Chamber Executive Director Sheryll Bates also gave out awards to some special volunteers in the community. "When I'm putting together any type of event or activity, I have learned it is very important

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Top Photo: 2010 Heppner Chamber of Commerce officers were sworn in at the group's annual meeting last Thursday. They are left to right: Board members Dean Antonucci (also second vice pres.), Dave DeMayo, Nancy Snider, Kay Fowler, Les Paustian (also vice pres.) Daye Stone, Jeff Bailey (also outgoing pres.) Claire Sponseller (2010 president), Lianne Currin (treasurer) and not pictured Anne Murray. Middle Photo: Incoming Chamber of Commerce President Claire Sponseller presents Jeff Bailey with a plaque of appreciation for his work as president the past two years. Bottom Photo: Chamber Executive Director Sheryll Bates (left) presents Doris Brosnan, Joanne Burleson and Babette Wall with volunteer awards. -Photos by David Sykes

Residents must now dial 541 to make local calls

Beginning January 10 residents living in the 541 area code had to begin dialing a three-digit area code for their local calls to be connected. According to Oregon's Public Utility Commission, if you dial incorrectly you will get a recorded announcement instructing you to hang up and

dial again with 10 digits. Customers have been able to make calls by dialing either 7 or 10 digits since July 12.

The Public Utility Commission also states that customers with existing 541 area code telephone numbers will continue to use their same area code

and seven digit telephone number. It may take some time before customers begin seeing phone numbers with the new 458 area code. Phone companies will first use their inventory of 541 phone numbers. However, after February 10, 2010, they may assign numbers with the 458 area code.

City manager concerned over possible conflict of interest on sewer study

By David Sykes

Heppner City Manager Dave DeMayo is concerned about a possible conflict of interest when the same engineering firm scheduled to do a study of the city sewer system, will probably end up doing the engineering work on the final system upgrade project.

Monday DeMayo shared emails he has exchanged with LaGrande engineering firm Anderson Perry with the Heppner City Council, outlining those concerns.

"I am very concerned in general, that an

unbiased study is even conceivable. A-P (Anderson Perry), DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) and the funding agencies all have a vested interest in an unfavorable outcome, and I might add, typically an expensive unfavorable outcome," DeMayo emailed Anderson Perry President Brad Baird on Dec. 16. DeMayo also sent a copy of the email to Del Little, Program and Policy Coordinator of the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund, which would help finance any planned improvements to Heppner's Sewer Treatment facilities.

An unfavorable outcome would mean the study will find extensive and expensive upgrades are necessary to the waste system.

At their December meeting the city council heard a presentation from Baird who talked then about the waste water treatment facility improvement plan his firm will be working on. The \$25,000 study will identify where Heppner's sewer system needs work, and where it will need expansion. There are currently 690 connections in the city,

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