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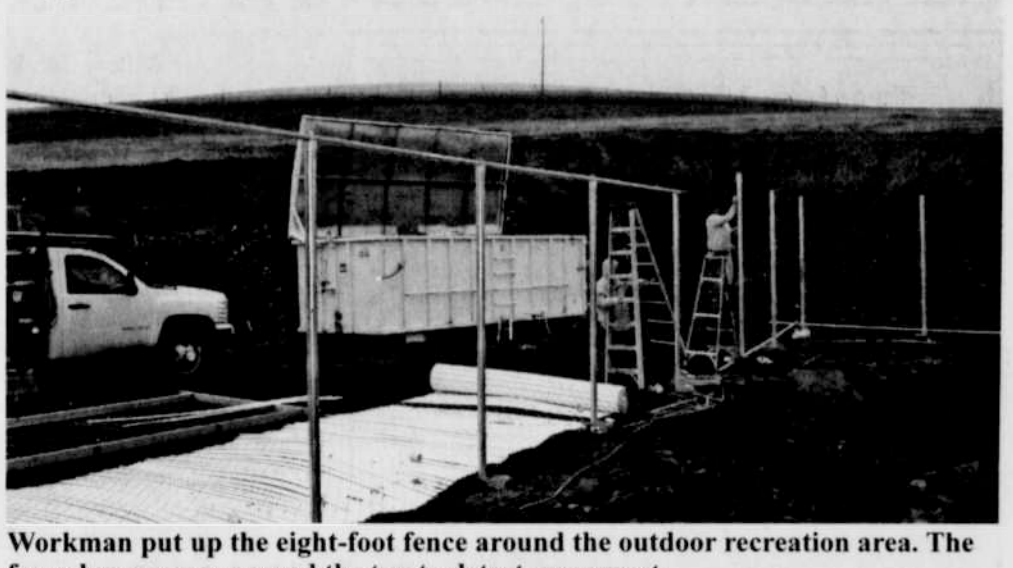
Treatment facility readies for opening

Open house next Tuesday and Wednesday for the public

By David Sykes

The Lakeview Heights Secure Residential Treatment Facility is completing its finishing touches in preparation for its opening March 22, Administrator Matt Bergstrom said Monday.

Administrator Matt Bergstrom and Assistant Administrator Jennifer Cecil show the control room of the new residential treatment facility opening in Heppner next month. *photos by David Sykes*



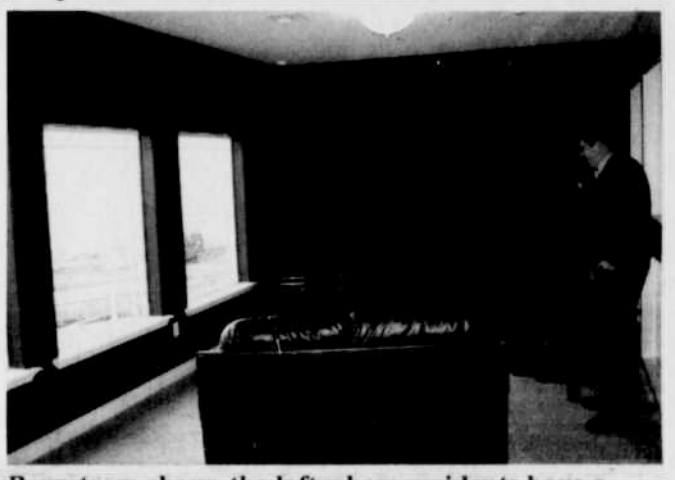
Workman put up the eight-foot fence around the outdoor recreation area. The fence has sensors around the top to detect movement.

Although there is still a lot to do, Bergstrom said the facility will be ready tb go when the residents start arriving next month.

Although the recent rains played some havoc with construction, contractor Larry Baarstad said 90 percent of the facility is done and what's left is finish-up work. When driving up to the facility, which sits across from Lakeview Heights overlooking the dam, it is obvious the landscaping has not been completed. Inside workers were still putting together furniture and doing other odds and ends. Outside workmen were putting up the eight-foot high fence around the recreation yard, but overall the facility was looking pretty good.

A tour of the building shows an entrance area for the public off which the administrator's office is located. Behind locked doors lies a central resident room in the middle with eight sleeping rooms surrounding. There are two restroom facilities for the residents, also off the main room. Above the main room is a loft area which has a couch, television and a great view of Willow Creek Lake. The whole building has a lot of natural light and is open and airy. There are quiet rooms and a medication disbursement room. Off to the side is the kitchen where the meals will be prepared by a full-time cook, and off the back is the outdoor recreation area. The facility plans to offer equine therapy later where horses will be cared for and ridden by the residents.

In the staff area, which is separated from residents by locked doors, are break, conference and staff restrooms. A total of 21 people will work at the facility, including three on-call positions. Work days are 12.5 hour shifts.



Bergstrom shows the loft where residents have a view of the Willow Creek lake below.

Public entrance to the treatment facility

Cameras abound throughout the facility, where staff will keep an eye on residents using several monitors in the central control room. "There will be two people on staff and awake all night long, and then the other staff will come in during the day, so there is always someone awake here," Bergstrom said.

Residents are taught to do chores like washing their own clothes in the washer and dryer, and there are privileges granted for good behavior, Bergstrom explained. There is TV, ping pong, foosball and other activities for recreation, and residents are allowed to take smoke breaks outside.

In addition there are two "crisis respite" beds available in a separate section of the facility. Those rooms will be available for local people who may be having certain types of problems. There is a covered carport where sheriff's deputies could bring people to the facility if need be.

The treatment facility will hold an open house on Tuesday, February 16, from 3-8 p.m. and on Wednesday, February 17, from 5-8 p.m. and the public is invited. "We want people to come up and take a look around," said Bergstrom.

Treatment Facility Open House

Lakeview Heights Secure Residential Treatment Facility will hold an open house on Tuesday, February 16, from 3-8 p.m. and on Wednesday, February 17, from 5-8 p.m.

Hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served.

The facility is located at 68982 Willow Creek Road in Heppner. For more information call 541-676-9161.

Cutsforth, Nelson in, Ballard out, in Morrow County DA race

Incumbent gets DOJ job in Salem

By David Sykes

The Morrow County District Attorney election underwent some changes this week as incumbent Elizabeth Ballard said she will drop out and not seek a second term, and Morrow County native Tom Cutsforth threw his hat in the ring for the position. Cutsforth will join another county native, Justin Nelson of Lexington, who also announced his candidacy for the job.

Word had circulating that Ballard would not run again for Morrow County DA, but she had filed for the position with the secretary of state. Tuesday morning a press release from Oregon Attorney General John Kroger put an end to the speculation by announcing Ballard would be hired to prosecute health care fraud for the Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ). (See related story page 6)

"I have been so honored to serve of the Morrow County District Attorney," Ballard said when contacted by the Gazette-Times Tuesday. "And I very much appreciate how well the community treated me and my daughter while we were here." Ballard's daughter graduated from Heppner High School last year.

Ballard, who will be resigning from the DA's job in March, said the governor will either name a replacement until the election is completed, or the DOJ will send someone to fill in the job.

The DA's position is non-partisan, and as with all non-partisan positions in Oregon the candidates face off in the May primary election. If no candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote, the top two finishers face off in a runoff election (typically the following November.) If there are only two candidates in the primary election, the top vote getter will become DA at that time.

Meanwhile Tom Cutsforth has announced his candidacy, joining Justin Nelson who had already filed. Cutsforth had registered Dec. 4, 2009, to run for district attorney in Gilliam County, and then on February 8, 2010 withdrew that filing and the same day filed to run in the Morrow County election. (see related stories page 6).

Heppner endorses Irrigon Depot plan

Could see igloos used for mushroom growing

By David Sykes

The Heppner city council Monday voted to endorse a plan by the city of Irrigon which could, among other things, turn the old Army Depot chemical igloos into a mushroom growing operation.

As chemical destruction at the depot winds down and the base gets ready to be closed, a group of local agencies called the LRA (Land Reuse Authority) has been meeting to decide how the depot will be used once the Army pulls out.

Monday Irrigon City Manager Jerry Breazeale asked the Heppner Council to endorse "The Irrigon Plan", which Breazeale says would see the former Depot turned into an economic engine producing many jobs.

Breazeale produced figures showing a total job loss of 120 in Morrow County when the Depot finally finishes it works and closes down, including 73 people in Irrigon, three in Heppner, five in Ione, 27 in Boardman and one in Lexington. "This is too important for us to just let this go," Breazeale said about the depot jobs that will be lost.

Total job loss for Morrow and Umatilla Counties together will be 907 with a combined payroll of over $52 million, Breazeale says.

Breazeale has come up with a 20-page plan, which he handed out to the Heppner council, outlining how the Depot could be converted into an economic asset to offset the coming job loss.

"The City of Irrigon has submitted a formal notification of interest to the Army Depot Transition team asking for a specific conveyance of a significant portion of the lands and structures on the Morrow County side in accordance with the plans and procedures of the US Army in closing the entire facility and transition the property out of the military," the plan starts out. Part of the Depot property lies in Morrow County and

continued page 8

- 1001 Storage Bunkers "Igloos"
- 26x60 = 1560 sqft and 26x80 = 2080 sqft, 17' ceiling in middle,
- Ventilated: top back wall/bottom of front door
- Front doors large enough for forklift, only a few large enough for vehicles
- 2' minimum dirt covering at top, much more on sides, ventilated, 55-65 degrees year round thermal, no water or electricity in any
- Typically stored explosives, very clean

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