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Heppner High School implements student proficiency program

By April Sykes

Heppner High School teachers presented details on the HHS Credit for Proficiency program to Morrow County School Board members at the board meeting held Monday night at the high school.

HHS Principal Day Stone and teachers Dieter Waite, science, Troy Morgan, math, and Andrea Nelson, language arts and social studies, outlined the highlights of the program which was designed to make certain that students can not only pass assessment tests, but are learning and retaining information and becoming accountable for their education.

In the program, which began last year:

- *Students are tested on standards with the OAKS standardized tests and in the classroom.

- *Standards are directly assessed.

- *Student and staff responsibility towards outcomes is stressed through performance assessments.

- *Learning targets are defined-there are no surprises.

- *Earning a D does not meet proficiency. Students must make up what they do not pass.

- *Special education students are mainstreamed with specialists.

- *Busy work is lessened.

The program necessitated implementation of changes at the school. The school now has an eight-period day with 45 minute class periods, an advisory two days a week and an open tutorial two days a week until 4 p.m. Student athletes are required to participate as well as students who require additional assistance. The eight period-day allows for students to take core classes, but also allows them to select an elective and take advanced or college preparatory classes.

The teachers said that through the new program:

- Students are given redo/reassess tickets if they do not pass an assessment.

- Class requirements and standards are more clearly defined at the start of the class.

- A website is available with teacher pages for parents and students that outline class syllabi and

assessed standards.

- Extended grading windows have been eliminated for the most part, so students essentially cannot put off assignments and tests to the extent that they cannot remember the subject matter.

- Communication with parents and students has been improved.

- Student progress is tracked.

- Students are monitored for their progress so that interventions can be put in place earlier.

Also at the meeting, the board approved the third reading of a policy concerning non-resident students' admission, tuition and attendance variance.

The policy included requirements that the superintendent report to the board monthly on non-resident students accepted or denied attendance in the district; resident students granted or denied an attendance variance to a non-resident district. The policy also included the qualifiers that the superintendent's decision or attendance variation requests for other

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Planning Commission approves 20 turbine wind farm

By David Sykes

The Morrow County Planning Commission at its August 31 meeting approved a 20 turbine Windfarm to be constructed in Morrow County along Highway 207 between Butercreek and Hermiston.

Called the Butercreek Windfarm Project, when completed will produce 40 Megawatts of power.

The project will have four different projects with five two-mega-watt turbines in each project. Oregon Windfarms LLC is the company behind the wind farm.

In the project description Oregon Windfarms says that the loca-

tion has sufficient wind to support commercial-grade wind energy electricity generation. There are nearby existing transmission lines for electrical interconnection. There are existing private roads that connect the project to Hwy 207 or alpine Land and nearby Interstate 84. There is grazing land and non irrigated crop land that can be put to use and no apparent environmental impacts.

The application also says that the project benefits from Columbia River winds, which are the basis for numerous successful operating wind farms west of this location as well as for the Echo Windfarms which Oregon Windfarms

recently completed on the Madison and Mader/Rust farms.

Construction on the project is planned to begin in December of 2010 and continue through November of 2011.

The project is expected to produce 150 construction jobs for six months and then approximately seven to 10 permanent maintenance jobs once completed.

Property owners on the project are: Kent Madison of Madison Farms, L. Franklin Mader; C. LaVonne Mader; Shannon Rust and Kirk Mader, Ivan and Lina Christensen and William and Joan Doherty.

Heppner council nixes purchase of apartment complex Would have been turned into parking lot

By David Sykes

The Heppner City Council Monday voted no to purchasing a run down apartment complex on Chase Street and turning the area into parking.

Councilmember Cody High was the most vocal against the purchase saying the city does not

need more parking, and they shouldn't be spending the money "just because we have it."

According to Heppner City Manager Dave DeMayo the purchase price on the apartments, which are located at 120 Chase near the bridge across the creek from the courthouse, would have been \$15,000. DeMayo said he had already worked out a price with the property owners, Jim and Yung Nelson of Lexington.

Mayor Les Paus-tian said he had gotten an agreement from the county to do some of the work in making the area into a parking area. "The county would help with burning and putting down gravel," he said. He said the area could be used for overflow parking, when there is a large trial at the courthouse across the street, and also to park large vehicles with trailers during community events such as St. Patrick's Day and Fair and Rodeo. City attorney Ann Spicer said she was speaking as a citizen when she said sometimes during hunting season large vehicles park in front of her office and take up a large number of parking spaces.

High was not swayed however. "I move this be rejected. I don't see the need to tear it (apartment complex) down. I don't see it attracting anything (vehicles for parking)." High said the parking area was too far off Main Street and too far from the courthouse to be used for the purposes expressed.

DeMayo said the city had the money to spend on the land for three reasons. One, They carried forward more money that was expected, he said. Two, the city received better insurance rates than expected and therefore saved some money. And three, he said in the budget he purposely underestimated the amount of taxes the city would be receiving this year in order



Top Photo: The city council Monday rejected a plan to purchase these apartments along the creek on Chase Street in Heppner and have the area turned in to a parking lot.

Bottom Photo: Over the years the apartments have fallen on disrepair. -Photos by David Sykes

to "have a buffer".

"Just because we have some extra money doesn't mean we should go out and spend it," High said.

The council learned that a nearby land owner had discussed purchasing the property and remodel the apartments, which are quite run down, however some council members did not think this was going to happen.

"If we are doing this (buying the building) because it is an eyesore then there are a lot of other eyesores we should look at around town," council member John Bowles said.

Council member High made a motion to table the purchase, and the motion passed by a one vote margin.

City loses \$4,500 per year

In other business the council learned from DeMayo that the city will lose \$4,500 in franchise fees when Heppner TV closes at the end of Sep-

tember. DeMayo was not concerned and said the city could make up the income in other areas.

After 55 years of continuous cable television service, Heppner TV will be closing down September 30, General Manager Pat Lauritsen had announced last month.

"With deep regret we are announcing that we are closing down the Heppner TV side of our business, an earlier press release had said. Heppner TV is owned by WindWave Communications which will continue in business and has an office on Main Street.

Decides against Indian monument

In other action the council decided not to pursue an earlier plan that would have the Tamastlikt Cultural Institute of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Pendleton place a monument at Heritage Plaza park in Heppner. The Institute was invited by

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School board approves new contract with administrators

By April Sykes

The Morrow County School Board approved a new contract with district administrators following an executive session at its August 9 board meeting. The contract provides for a beginning annual salary of \$75,000 for elementary school principals and \$81,000 for secondary principals with top salaries of \$81,000 for elementary and \$88,000 for secondary principals, said Superintendent Mark Burrows.

The salary range for secondary assistant principals is \$73,700 to \$80,000.

Burrows said that the change in administrators' compensation would not increase costs for the district.

According to Burrows, "In 2006, the board and administrators agreed to change the way in which

administrators were compensated. Administrators would no longer receive regular cost-of-living increases. Instead they would receive performance pay if, and only if, they personally achieved board goals and their schools met with improvement goals. In return for not receiving regular cost of living increases, the board agreed to review the base salary rate every three years and maintain administrator's base salary schedule at the market rate. Market rate is determined by averaging the beginning and highest salaries for elementary and secondary principals in the following districts; John Day, Nyssa, Milton-Freewater, Stanfield, Pendleton and Ontario.

"Due to difficult financial conditions, the base salary was not adjusted

to "market" in 2009. Also in 2009, the administrators voluntarily gave up their performance pay. This year school funding issues continued. The board was hard pressed to keep their agreement with administrators. A compromise, however, was reached between the board and the administrators. Administrators agreed to give up both their performance pay and step increases on the salary schedule for the 2010-2011 school year. In return the board agreed to update administrators' pay to the 2009-2010 market rate. This compromise agreement will benefit administrators in the long run, but actually reduces total compensation due to administrators below what would have been due under the previous contract in the 2010-2011 year," said Burrows.

Homecoming tailgate party to be held Friday

A Heppner High School homecoming tailgate party will be held beginning at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, September 17.

Pulled pork sandwiches, salad, dessert, and drinks will be available for \$7. Proceeds of the meal will go to the football program.

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.

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