

HEPPNER

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VOL. 130 NO. 2 8 Pages Wednesday, January 12, 2011 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Morrow School Board to hire Dirksen as superintendent

### Mendoza tabbed for assistant job

The Morrow County School Board Tuesday night voted to direct current Superintendent Mark Burrows to schedule public meetings concerning the proposed hiring of Dirk Dirksen as district superintendent. Dirksen has been with the district his entire career, first as a teacher and currently as Riverside

High School Principal. Burrows, who has been with the district seven years, has announced his retirement effective this year.

Also at the meeting, held at Heppner Elementary School, Burrows said that the district plans to hire George Mendoza, cur-

rent RHS vice-principal, as assistant superintendent, replacing current Superintendent Phyllis Danielson, who has also announced her retirement effective this year. Danielson has also been with the district her entire career, as a teacher, a principal and then as assistant superintendent.

## Nolen arrested on sex charges

Morrow County District Attorney Justin W. Nelson recently announced the indictment and arraignment of Russell Lee Nolen, 31, on charges of Unlawful Sexual Penetration in the first degree and Sex Abuse in the first



Russell Lee Nolen

degree. The charges stem from a January 1, 2011 incident in Irrigon.

Nolen was arraigned on the indictment on January 7 by Judge Christopher Brauer. The court kept bail set at \$150,000. A pre-trial conference was

set for January 13, trial readiness fro February 10, and trial for February 24 in Morrow County Circuit Court.

The case is being investigated by the Morrow County Sheriff's Office. Anyone with information should call the sheriff's office at 541-676-5317.

## Pioneer Memorial Clinic in Heppner participates in study

Pioneer Memorial Clinic in Heppner is one of four Oregon Rural Health Clinics that is participating in a study through the Oregon Rural Practice-Based Research Network (ORPRN) through Oregon Health & Science University. The study, called Shared Decision-Making in Rural Primary Care, explores the best ways to use informative materials to help patients make complex medical decisions about their care in partnership with their physicians.

The study is funded through grants by the Boston-based Foundation for Informed Medical Decision Making. According to a press release issued by the foundation, each year it funds organizations that it believes have the greatest commitment to patient-centered care and the infrastructure to make decision aids part of daily medical practice. Each grant covers demonstration site activities for three years. The decision aid materials consist of booklets and DVDs that are created with the assistance of medical experts in each specialty and thoroughly

review a patient's options and include real patients discussing their choices.

Pioneer Memorial Clinic began participating in the two-year study last year under the direction of Dr. Betsy Anderson, with the clinic's other providers and staff also taking part. Sue Thompson, RN, is serving as the data coordinator for the study at the clinic. The three areas of Decision Aid study at the clinic for 2011 are Depression, Knee Osteoarthritis and Growing Older - Staying Well. Patients with a diagnosis of one of these conditions are asked if they would like to take part in the study. Those who agree watch a DVD and read a booklet on their diagnosis topic that provides information about the condition and discusses various treatment options. They then decide if they want to follow up with a doctor to discuss the treatment options or not. The patient also completes a survey about the materials and those survey results are compiled into reports along with data from participants at the other ORPRN clinics at Winding Waters Clinic in Enterprise, Bayshore Fam-

ily Medicine in Pacific City and Lincoln City Medical Center. The Oregon results will then be compiled with those from participating clinics across the country.

As of mid-July, 24 Pioneer Memorial Clinic patients had participated in the study. Of those patients, 45 percent reported their overall rating of the materials was Very Good, while 35 percent said it was Good, 18 percent said it was Excellent and five percent rated it as fair. The remaining three percent left the question blank. "People have been happy with the information in the booklets and the DVDs. Everyone usually learns something new, and it's a great opportunity to talk to the doctor again about any new information or questions," said Dr. Anderson.

The Oregon Rural Practice-Based Research Network (ORPRN) was founded in 2002 and is a collaboration between Oregon Health & Science University, the participating primary care clinicians and their practices. The mission of ORPRN is to improve the

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## Where did the money go?

# Morrow County received \$37.5 million in fed stimulus money in 2010

### From a \$14,000 fence project to a \$25 million grant to ZeaChem, federal spending created 14 jobs

By David Sykes

Boardman, Heppner, Irrigon and Ione, as well as the Port of Morrow and other entities, received a total of \$37,452,866 in Federal Stimulus funds during 2010, creating about 14 jobs, according to a government website that tracks the funds and subsequent job creation.

The biggest recipient of funds in the county was ZeaChem, a Colorado-based ethanol company that received a \$25 million grant to build a prototype processing facility in Boardman. ZeaChem said the funds would create 2.17 jobs.

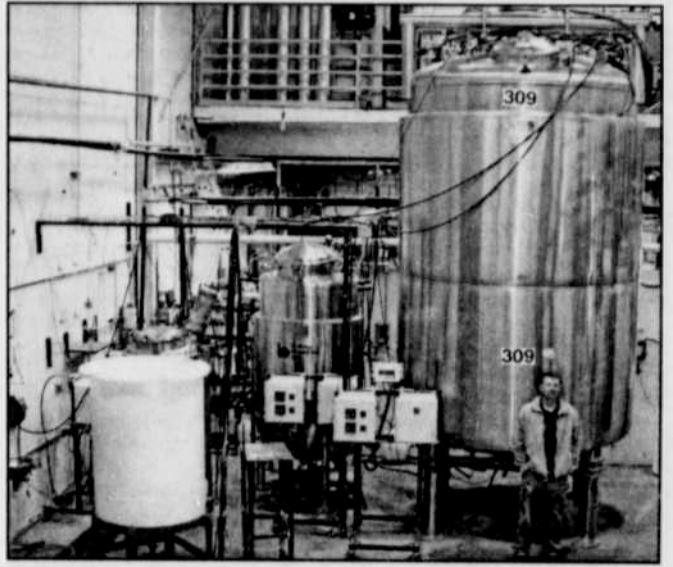
Congress approved The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (which authorized the stimulus funding) to distribute \$787 billion across the United States with the purpose of creating jobs.

This is how the funding broke down in Morrow County.

### Spending in Heppner

**\$14,813** - Removal of Elk fences in the national forest. Jobs created - 1.

**\$1,507,639** - New highway project from Court Street to the Morrow County Fairgrounds. This project was originally funded under the state highway budget, but was switched to stimu-



ZeaChem, a Colorado based company, received a \$25 million stimulus funds grant to build a digester similar to this one in Boardman. The grant was part of the \$37.5 million in funds given out in Morrow County in 2010

lus funding when the money became available from the federal government. Jobs created - 1.65.

**\$509,211** - 2.3 miles of paving on Upper Rhea Creek Rd. Jobs created - 0.

**\$117,800** - Weatherization at county courthouse. Jobs created - not reported.

**\$121,737** - Northwest Trails, Inc., received the funds to develop forest trails and facilities.

### Spending in Boardman

**\$25,000,000** - To ZeaChem to build ethanol prototype facility. Jobs - 2.17.

**\$5,315,678** - To Sagebrush Affordable

Housing, LLC, of Enterprise, Oregon, to develop low income rental housing in Boardman.

**\$341,840** - To Columbia River Community Health Services to purchase an electronic medical records system. Jobs reported - 1.1.

**\$131,146** - To Columbia River Community Health Services to expand its dental and x-ray program. Jobs - 1.5.

**\$1,454,400** - To Port of Morrow to add new track and turnouts and improve crossing safety. Jobs - 0.

**Spending in Irrigon**  
**\$1,527,962** - For construction of First Street

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## Chamber elects 2011 officers



The Heppner Chamber of Commerce at its annual meeting last week elected new officers for the 2011 year. Pictured above are (left to right) Lisanne Currin Treasurer, Nancy Snider and Jeff Bailey board members, Claire Sponseller outgoing president, Les Paustian President, John Gould, Michael Blauer, Kay Fowler and Ann Murray board members, and not pictured Daye Stone Vice President. Sheryll Bates is employed by the Chamber as its Executive Director. -Photo by David Sykes

## New med student on clinical rotation with health district

Val Riss, 26, from Portland is the new face that you might see if you make a trip to Pioneer Memorial Clinic or Pioneer Memorial Hospital. Riss is medical student from Oregon Health and Sciences University working on a clinical rotation.



Val Riss

As a third year medical student, Riss is required to participate in rural clinical rotations. Each rotation is five weeks long. Riss chose Heppner because it was

the smallest of all the rural choices. She began her rotation last Tuesday.

As part of the Heppner rotation Riss works in the clinic, covers hospital patients, and is on call for the emergency room. She is currently pursuing a medical doctorate and will decide next year what to specialize in.

When deciding on a career, Riss knew she wanted to do something she was passionate about, and

briefly considered going into politics. But she enjoys the one-on-one interaction that practicing medicine provides, and she is good at science.

"I like Heppner," said Riss. "The doctors take time with you to teach you."

But it hasn't been all work and no play for Riss since arriving in town. She has been enjoying the snow and has been cross-country skiing. "I'm having a fun time in Heppner," states Riss.

## Morrow County Schools closed Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>

Morrow County Schools will be closed on Thursday and Friday, January 13 and 14 for teacher work days. Schools will also be closed on Monday, January 17, in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. School will resume on Tuesday, January 18.

### GREEN FEED & SEED IN HEPPNER:

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