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Gazette Times

VOL. 130 NO. 7 10 Pages Wednesday, February 23, 2011 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

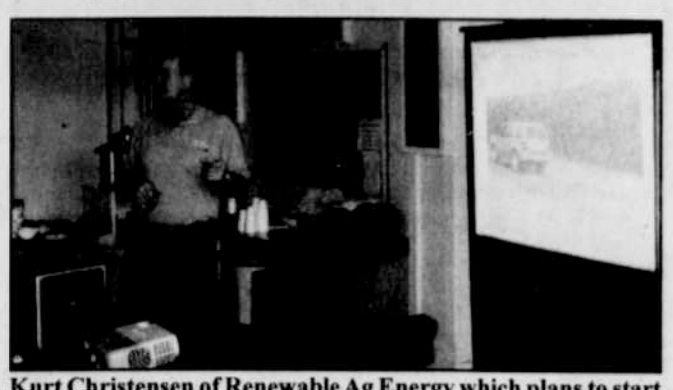
Co-Gen start-up date still unclear

Would start burning wood waste then switch to ag products

By David Sykes

The man behind the planned start-up of the cogeneration plant in Heppner said last week there is still is no firm date as to when the plant will start production.

Kurt Christensen, of Renewable Ag Energy, Inc., was the featured speaker at the annual Willow Creek Economic Development Group annual meeting last Thursday, and he told the gathered luncheon group that financing is the big problem at this time. Renewable Ag Energy has been given several options and extensions to purchase the co-generation plant at the old Kinzua Mill site in Heppner, but so far has not been able to come up with the funding to complete the transaction. The plant, as well as is the entire industrial site, is owned by the Port of Morrow.



Kurt Christensen of Renewable Ag Energy which plans to start up the co-gen plant at the old Kinzua Mill site near Heppner was the featured speaker at last week's Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group annual meeting. *-Photo by David Sykes*

"This is the most difficult financial climate in the last 30 years," Christensen said. He said investors and businesses have money but they are so unsure of the direction of the federal government and are not investing. "Nobody knows what the government is going to do," he said.

Christensen said so far his company has received "zero" financing from the government and does not intend to use funding from the government as a long tern business plan. "Any business that counts on government subsidies in the long run is going to fail," he said. "They can help you get established but you have to make it on your own.

"The Port of Morrow has been very coop-

-See CO-GEN PLANT/Page TEN

PGE still highest single taxpayer in Morrow County

The Portland General Electric Coal Fire Plant is still the highest single taxpayer in Morrow County, according to 2009-10 audit figures released by the Morrow County School District for the year ending June 30.

According to the MCSD audit, completed by Oster Professional Group, John Day and Burns, for public utilities, PGE, with an assessed valuation of $246,061,000, comprises 18.56 percent of the total county value.

Under a plan adopted by Oregon's Environmental Quality Commission, the PGE Coal Fired Plant will close by December 31, 2020.

The second highest valuation for public utilities is Avista Corporation, with an assessed valuation of $107,534,000. It comprises 8.11 percent of the county's valuation.

Threemile Canyon Farms, LLC, with an assessed valuation of $115,747,190 has the highest assessed valuation for private enterprises, making up 8.73 of the total county value. Lamb Weston is second with $35,951,170 for 2.71 percent of the county value.

All other taxpayers combined have an assessed valuation of $653,094,160 for 49.27 percent of the total county value.

The total taxable assessed value of Morrow County is $1,325,481,330. (See chart.)

Principal Taxpayers in Morrow County, Oregon

	Assessed Valuation	Percent of Total County Value
Private Enterprises		
Threemile Canyon Farms, LLC	$ 115,747,190	8.73%
Lamb-Weston, Inc	35,951,170	2.71%
Columbia River Processing	26,984,040	2.04%
Farm Credit Leasing Services	18,869,150	1.42%
Threemile Canyon, LLC	20,985,820	1.58%
Public Utilities		
Portland General Electric	246,061,000	18.56%
Avista Corporation	107,534,000	8.11%
Power Resources Cooperative	32,689,300	2.47%
Idaho Power Company	19,894,900	1.50%
Gas Transmission Northwest	47,670,600	3.60%
All other taxpayers	653,094,160	49.27%
Total taxable assessed value of Morrow County	$ 1,325,481,330	100.00%

Morrow County School District assets, revenues up for 2009-10 over previous year

District spends over $13 million on instruction

The Morrow County School District 2009-2010 audit shows over $81more in total net assets for the district than the previous year. Total general revenues were up over $500 thousand. The audit also showed that the district spent over $13 million on instruction for that fiscal year.

The Morrow County School District's 2010 audit, completed by Oster Professional Group, John Day, showed that the district had $29,733,817 in total assets and $24,239,829 in total liabilities, plus $1,538,301 restricted for debt service and $444,205 unrestricted for $5,493,988 in total net assets, $81,703 more than the previous year. Total net assets for the previous year ending June 30, 2009, were $5,412,285.

In 2009-10 for instruction, the district spent $9,776,779 for regular programs, plus an additional $3,471,041 for special programs and $16,957 for summer school program.

For support services, the district spent $270,428 on students, $495,637 for instructional staff, $509,985 for general administration, $1,462,209 for school administration, $3,514,671 for business services, $523,464 for central support services and $174,279 for the supplemental retirement program.

For enterprise and community services, the district spent $960,764 for food services and $8,813 for community services.

The district had $1,177,828 for debt service and $698,006 for depreciation.

Total for government activities was $23,060,861.

On the revenue side, the district received $5,049,185 in property taxes levied for general services and $1,320,231 in property taxes levied for debt services; $12,054,885 from the state school fund; $178,416 from the common school fund; $183,927 in other unrestricted funds; $57,748 in unrestricted investment earnings; and $33,039 from the sale of capital asset, plus $667,292 in miscellaneous revenues for a total of $19,544,723 in total general revenues, compared to $19,015,593 in total general revenues last fiscal year.

Rural issues expert to speak in Heppner on March 2

Public invited to participate in discussion on wolves, grazing and state budget effects on rural Oregon

An expert on issues facing rural Oregonians will be the featured speaker at an open town hall meeting in Heppner Wednesday, March 2, at 7 p.m. at Heppner City Hall.

Karla Kay Edwards

Karla Kay Edwards, rural policy analyst for Cascade Policy Institute, a public policy research organization, will speak on, among other things, the wolf population in Oregon, changes in grazing fees and allotments, wilderness versus private land, pesticide rules and their effects on farmers, and the state budget and how it will impact rural Oregon.

Edwards, an expert in these and many other issues facing rural Oregon, will take questions from the audience following her presentation. The public is invited to attend. The program is being sponsored by the Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots.

The Cascade Policy Institute, located on Scholls Ferry Road in Portland and founded in 1991, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research and educational organization that focuses on state and local issues in Oregon.

Cascade's mission is to develop and promote public policy alternatives that foster individual liberty, personal responsibility and economic opportunity. Cascade promotes property rights, incentives, markets and decentralized decision-making.

Cascade advances these values by sharing its research with the public, the media, and state and local lawmakers through publications, educational programs, community forums and special events.

Local man teaches business classes

Chamber hears program on creativity and innovation

By David Sykes

Dr. Carmelo A. Di Salvo of Heppner teaches business classes through the University of Phoenix and he recently shared his expertise with the Heppner Chamber of Commerce by putting on a lunch presentation entitled Creativity and Innovation for a Competitive Advantage.

Most people know Di Salvo as someone who works at Heppner Family Foods, and how he ended up in Heppner is a story by itself, but two weeks ago he told the Chamber that in order for organizations to survive and prosper, they must be creative and have successful implementation of that creativity. "I call it creativity with feet," he said.

Dr. Carmelo Di Salvo was the recent speaker at the Heppner Chamber of Commerce. He spoke on creativity and innovation. *-Photo by David Sykes*

He described creativity as an original or imaginative thought and the ability to think up or imagine new ideas or services. His examples of creative and innovative people are Henry Ford for inventing the moving assembly line, Howard Schultz the founder of Starbucks and Steve Jobs for all the Apple products he has created.

Di Salvo said the qualities of creative people include being eccentric, highly imaginative, taking road less traveled, risk takers, very determined people, and people who are able to overcome obstacles. He said many times creative people are the ones in

-See CHAMBER PROGRAM/Page TEN

Rollins elected economic development president

Ed Rollins, of the Bank of Eastern Oregon, was elected president of the Willow Creek Economic Development Group at its annual meeting last Thursday. He will replace David Sykes who served the past two years as president.

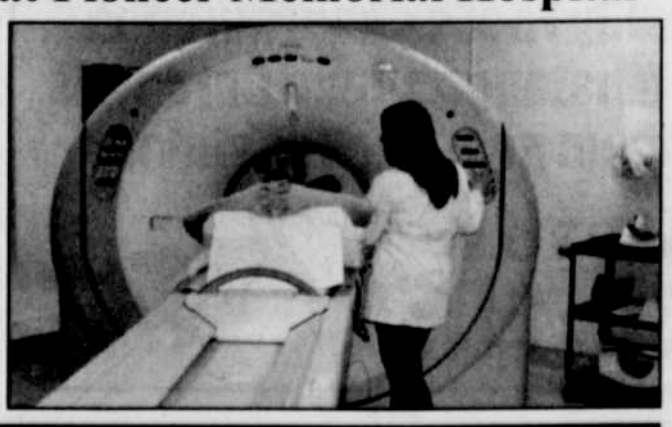
Ed Rollins - 2011 WCVEDG President.

Also elected were Michael Blauer vice chairman and Marcia Kemp re-elected secretary/ treasurer. Other board members are George Koffler, Nancy Snider and Dave DeMayo.

In going over past accomplishment Sykes noted the group's efforts in obtaining over $23,000 in training funds which were given to the Morrow County Health District for workforce training purposes. Sykes said Executive Director Sheryll Bates was instrumental in working with Workforce Development out of Pendleton in obtaining the grants.

WCVEDG is a non profit organization working for economic development in the Heppner, Lexington and Ione area. Dues are $25 per year for anyone who would like to become a member.

New CT in use at Pioneer Memorial Hospital



Katie Duncan, registered radiologic technologist at Pioneer Memorial Hospital, readies a patient for a scan in the hospital's new CT scanner. The new equipment was purchased with a zero interest USDA loan through Columbia Basin Electric Co-op and a $90,000 grant from the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust. *–Contributed Photo*

Editor's Note

The story in last week's edition, "Chaplain inspires hope, courage in soldiers" was about Andrew Johnson of Heppner. Johnson is a teacher at Irrigon High School and a former pastor at Heppner Christian Church.

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