

Vasquez sentenced to 75 months on sex abuse charges

Jose Melendez Vasquez, 65, was sentenced Tuesday to 75 months in prison for sexually abusing a child in July of 2009. A Morrow County Jury found Jose Melendez Vasquez guilty on March 11, 2011 of two counts of sexual abuse in the first degree.

The defendant unlawfully subjected the child victim to sexual contact while the victim was sleeping over at a friend's house in Boardman. The child was awakened by the contact and immediately reported the abuse to her parents. The parents, in turn immediately called police.

Circuit Judge Daniel J. Hill, who presided over last week's two day trial, imposed sentence today. Judge Hill first found that the victim was particularly vulnerable at the time of the crime due to the fact that she was asleep. The judge then merged the two convictions of sexual abuse in the first degree into one and imposed the 75 month sentence required by Ballot Measure 11. The defendant will not be eligible for any

form of early release and will be required to register as a sex offender.

The Court also ordered the defendant to pay restitution in the amount of One thousand, one hundred eighty five dollars and eighty three cents (\$1,185.83) to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Account, a fund managed by the State, as reimbursement for costs paid for services on behalf of the victim.

The Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) has been prosecuting the case since February 2010, when the DOJ assumed control of the Morrow County District Attorney's Office. Upon his appointment in July of 2010, District Attorney Justin Nelson asked the DOJ to continue to prosecute certain cases involving serious person crimes in order to minimize disruption to crime victims.

The case was investigated by the Boardman Police Department with the assistance of the Mount Emily Safe Center in La Grande.

City offering free tire disposal

The City of Heppner is offering free tire disposal for city residents.

Beginning March 21 through April 17, City of Heppner residents will be able to take old tire they no longer want to the bin at the Public Works yard located at Riverside Avenue and Jenkins Street. Tires with wheels will be accepted.

This is a one time offer. It is being sponsored by the City, City Public Works, Morrow County Sheriff's Office, and Waste Connections at Finley Butte.

Morrow County residents are eligible for the disposal of large items free of charge at the two Morrow County Transfer Stations. Items accepted are furniture and home appliance. People will be required to show proof of

residency in the county with identification. Residents can also take advantage of the E-cycling program that provides the free disposal of computers, computer monitors and televisions. The transfer stations are Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information about the E-cycles program visit www.oregoncycles.org. For more information about the transfer station disposal contact the M.C. Public Works office at 541-989-9500.

The city, through the sheriff's office, can also assist with the disposal of old cars.

For more information regarding the free tire disposal or other code enforcement issues contact the Morrow County Sheriff's Office at 541-676-5317.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SICK LEAVE POLICY

-Continued from Page ONE

choice that option can enter college with some credits or even an associate's degree already under their belts. "This system is going to join these two systems together," said Stone. "HHS classes will be the same as college (classes). After the instruction, students would then take an assessment and, if they pass, would receive college credits. "We're pretty excited about it," said Stone.

One aspect of the program would be to correlate the high school course number with the college course number and teach toward those proficiencies.

Stone told the Gazette that the program could assist families who now are faced with sky-rocketing college costs (now in the neighborhood of \$35,000) and dwindling support from colleges and universities and federal programs.

The Ione School District had opted in on Eastern Promise the previous month.

Burrows also spoke briefly as to how to cope with the dwindling school population in Heppner. In addition to using technology and distance learning (online classes) and possibly capturing more home-schooled children, Burrows said that another possibility would be to form a charter school in Heppner. He said that forming a charter school could be accomplished through a contract with Morrow County School District (MCS D) rather than independently of the district-as in the case of the Ione School District.

The board also mentioned the uncertain future of ESDs in Oregon in light of information that some school districts have indicated that they would like to opt out or, such as the Hermiston School District, would prefer cafeteria-style options. Baker, for example, receives flow-through monies through the UMESD.

Also at the meeting, the board was presented with four calendar options for next year's school schedule as follows:

*Option A: a pre-Labor Day start with two weeks at Christmas, teachers beginning August 22, students beginning August 29, a two-week Christmas holiday from Dec. 16 to Jan. 3, students ending Thursday, June 7, secondary teachers ending Friday, June 8, elementary teachers ending Monday, June 11.

*Option B: a post-Labor Day start with two weeks at Christmas, teachers beginning August 29, students beginning Sept. 6, a two-week Christmas

holiday from December 16 to Jan. 3, students ending Thursday, June 14, secondary teachers ending Friday, June 15, elementary teachers ending Monday, June 18.

*Option C: a pre-Labor Day start with less than one and a half weeks at Christmas, teachers beginning August 22, students beginning August 29, Christmas break from an early dismissal Dec. 21 to Jan. 3, students ending Monday, June 4, secondary teachers ending Tuesday, June 5, elementary teachers ending Wednesday, June 6.

*Option D: a post-Labor Day start with less than one and a half weeks at Christmas, teachers beginning August 29, students beginning Sept. 6, Christmas break from an early dismissal Dec. 21 to Jan. 3, students ending Friday, June 8, secondary teachers ending Monday, June 11, and elementary teachers ending Tuesday, June 12.

A change to semesters was brought up in relation to the school calendar, but it was discovered that it would entail starting school in mid-August in order for the first semester to be completed by Christmas break. Board members, especially from south Morrow County, had apparently earlier voiced concerns that starting in mid-August would interfere with the county's ag-based economy and also the Morrow County Fair held in Heppner. Burrows jokingly noted that future district superintendent Dirk Dirksen, currently Riverside High School principal, was somewhat incredulous that fair would be a factor in determining the school calendar. North Morrow families traditionally do not participate in fair activities to any great extent. Dirksen indicated, however, that he did not want to see a shorter Christmas break because many Hispanic families, which make up a large portion of north Morrow students, still make extended trips to Mexico in December. A longer Christmas break would allow those children to lose less instruction time.

The options will be presented to the staff for a vote and then the results will be presented to the board prior to action.

Also at the meeting, Burrows told the board that district elementary principals are working on a plan to separate grades from behavior and attendance issues and instead concentrate on assessing what the children have learned. Burrows said that while behavior and attendance are important, those issues will be evaluated separately starting next year. The plan

will come before the board prior to implementation.

In other business, the board:

-heard from Burrows once again that he believes that the district will be okay financially for the 2011-12 school year, but he expects financial difficulty for the 2012-13 year with about a million dollar deficit. He said the district plans to cut this year's budget in anticipation of the shortfall next year. "We decided to ratchet down this year's budget so we don't get smacked with such a big deficit for next year." He said that an administrative meeting has been planned in April primarily to discuss staffing, since 80 percent of the budget is comprised of salaries and benefits. A board work session to discuss the issue has been scheduled on April 11, prior to the next meeting. The first budget meeting is set for May 2.

-approved a screening committee to select a new principal and assistant principal at Riverside High School as follows: current RHS Principal and future Superintendent Dirk Dirksen, Mark Burrows, board members Dan Dalton and Pat McNamee, Guadalupe Colin, Dawn Callow, Cheryl Costello, Maribel Jimenez and Julie Ashbeck.

-received the following attendance report: A.C. Houghton Elementary School, Irrigon (kindergarten through third grade)-253; Heppner Elementary School (kindergarten through sixth grade)-184; Heppner High School (grades seven through 12)-206; Irrigon Elementary (grades four through six)-221; Irrigon High School (grades seven through 12)-309; Riverside High School, Boardman (grades seven-12)-392; Sam Boardman Elementary School (grades K-three)-318; Windy River Elementary, Boardman (grades four-six)-220; Morrow Education Center-Morrow County School District-66; MES-Umatilla School District-27; total-2196.

-approved the following employment action: resignations for Mayra Colin-Carillo, Morrow Education Center English language learner ed assistant, Richard Rockwell, RJH assistant track coach, Betsy Shane, RHS Talented and Gifted program coordinator; transfer for Dee Hamilton, from IES full-time ed assistant to half-time ed assistant, replacing Naomi Matheson; employment for Jolene Stensland, HHS language arts teacher, and Gena Wade, MEC temporary half-time special ed teacher; extra duty contracts for Brian Bigham, Irrigon Junior High school head track coach.

-approved the following probationary teachers: (Heppner teachers listed only) Andrea Nelson,

HHS language arts teacher-contract, Lindsay Orem, HHS special ed-third year, Jeremy Rosenbalm, HHS math/business-second year, Kristine Martin, HES/HHS counselor-second year.

-approved non-renewal of temporary teachers Tim Beatty (IJS, Heather Miller on leave), Matt Wells (IJS Andrew Johnson on leave until late fall), Kory Waterland (ACH job share Schreiber/ Cunningham), Jolene Stensland (replacing Mark Dowdy who has passed away).

-approved non extension of contract for teacher Carolyn Rhinhart, WRE special ed.

-approved employment for the following administrators: Dirk Dirksen-superintendent; George Mendoza-assistant superintendent; principals-Mark Jones, Matt Combe, Joel Chavez, Daye Stone, John Sebastian, Jacque Johnson, Craig Benson and assistant principal Matthew Matz.

-approved the following contract teachers for extension (Heppner teachers listed only): Heppner Elementary-Jannie Allen, Karen Clough, Melissa Coiner, Pam Dowdy, Mary Ann Elguezabal, Sue Gibbs, Mary Haguewood, Sherry Matteson, Sharon Morris, Molly Rill, Karen Smith-Griffith, Michelle Stone; Heppner High-Jean Collins, Beth Dickenson, John Flaherty, Dave Fowler, Terri Gentry, Greg Grant, Joe Lindsay, Troy Morgan, Jason Palmer, Petra Payne, Jean Strange, Dieter Waite.

-tabled the second reading and adoption of policy on employee attendance which defines unauthorized leave as non-performance of duties and responsibilities assigned by the district and its representatives, including refusals to provide service, unauthorized use of sick leave, unauthorized use of other leave benefits, nonattendance at required meetings and failure to perform assigned duties at school-sponsored activities. The unauthorized leave shall constitute a breach of contract and may result of the initiation of dismissal procedures, loss of salaries or disciplinary action. The employee's superintendent or supervisor may require a physician's verification as to the employee's claimed reason for absence in a situation which is believed to have no valid grounds for the employee's absence. An employee missing five consecutive days of work will provide a physician's verification for the absence within five working days of the absence.

-held an executive session to discuss personnel and student expulsion.

-heard the following announcements: end of third nine weeks-March 17; spring break-March 21-25; next board meeting-Riverside High School, Boardman-Monday, April 11, 7 p.m.

M.C. Creative Arts & Crafts sale to begin Friday

Members of the Morrow County Creative Arts and Crafts will be selling artwork and crafts at Les Schwab on Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Among local artists are Mary Ella Johnson with Cotton Crochet rugs; Beverly McCloud with wool rugs all different sizes, hot pads, dish cloths, and pot scrubbers; Nancy Arson with purses, bowls, and lamps, Sheryl Parrot with paintings and cards; Jan Blaser with note cards;

Shirley McNary paintings and art work; Mona Shade with rugs and beads; and also on Saturday Raquel Herrea with her breakfast burritos and tamales.

The next meeting is March 24 at 1 p.m. at the Stable of Youth. On the agenda are watercolor classes and any changes on the Walton class on April 8-10. In charge of this month's program will be Murphy from Darkhorse Leather Goods.

The public is invited to attend.

Celtic Love Knot Scented Warmer

Look for us in the Wall To Wall To Wall store next to the Firearm Dept. We'll Western Scents, Oregon

MARCH 18-19, 2011

Reduce Your Heating and Cooling Costs ALL Winter

Rebates & Tax Incentives Available Now

ADD A LAYER OF INSULATION IN YOUR ATTIC

ALL NEW VINYL FRAMED THERMAL PANE WINDOWS

By **PLY GEM** Windows

Mr. Insulation Co. Inc.

(541) 587-2348 • (541) 276-0097 • 1-800-265-2348

Stop by our showroom! 30599 Lauback • Hermiston

www.mrinsulation.info

mrsinsulation@otnet • CCB# 97049 • Member N.E.O.H.B.A.

FREE Household Hazardous Waste Event

Morrow County will be hosting another Household Hazardous Waste event FREE of charge to County residents

Saturday April 23, 2011
11:00 am - 3:00 pm
 Lexington Road Dept.
 365 W. Hwy 74, Lexington, OR

Accepted during the event:
 Used oil (containers less than 25 gallons) Oil filters, Spent Antifreeze, Automotive batteries, Alkaline & rechargeable batteries, Propane Tanks (smaller than 25 gal.) Oil based paint, Paint thinners and solvents, Roof and asphalt patch, Adhesives, glues and contact cement, Caulks sealers and joint compounds, Lawn and garden chemicals and fertilizers, Pool chemicals, Household cleaners (including bleach, ammonia, furniture polish, toilet bowl cleaners, carpet shampoos) Sludge (soil contaminated with oil smaller than 25 gal. containers) Mercury thermometers, Florescent lamps, All types of aerosol cans, Used cooking oil, Road flares, PCB ballasts, Organic peroxides (hardening agents)

Items not accepted: Empty containers, ammunition, explosives, biological waste, radioactive waste.

Morrow County Public Works
mcpubliwork@co.morrow.or.us
 P.O. Box 428
 Lexington, OR. 97839
 541-989-9500