

## KOFFLER RETIRES

*-Continued from PAGE ONE*  
 "I like making credit available in small communities that may not have had it and then watching businesses grow because of that," Koffler said of his work with smaller community banks. Things have changed, however, since he started in the business.

"When I came on, there were 10 community banks in Eastern Oregon," he says. "Now every community bank is gone, and we are the only community bank still headquartered in Eastern Oregon."

When he started at BEO, there were nine employees at the Heppner branch; now there are 40.

The company has a total of 100 employees across all its branches.

Koffler also gives credit for the solid growth and performance of the bank to a "loyal group of stock holders" and a great board of directors to work with.

"Three quarters of our stockholders live in the two counties we operate in," Koffler says.

In addition to his position with the bank, Koffler was also inducted into the Oregon Bankers Hall of Fame, was named Morrow County's Man of the Year, and served as chairman of the Heppner Chamber of Commerce and the Willow Creek Valley Economic

Group. He has also been president of the Heppner Lions Club, and served on the Morrow County Development Corporation, the Oregon Economic Corporation and Morrow Equity Fund, and on the Heppner City Council.

Koffler didn't say much about his and Debbie's plans after retirement, saying only that they were going to travel, relax, and "slow down."

A reception will be held to honor Koffler this Thursday, March 29 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Heppner BEO lobby. There will be cake, coffee and punch, and everyone is invited to stop by and wish George good luck in his retirement.



**George Koffler has guided bank's growth from three branches to the present 12 branches and two loan offices. He will retire this month.**

## Irrigon seeks to terminate joint management agreement

The Irrigon City Council met in front of an overflow crowd at the Irrigon City Hall Tuesday night, March 20.

The presence of so many people was a bonus for the three presenters on the agenda. Mayor David Burns welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated his pleasure at seeing so many people attending a city council meeting. He then moved into agenda items.

Greg Smith of Greg Smith and Company LLC had asked to be on the agenda to explain the Morrow Pacific Project, a project to provide a trans-load facility to transfer coal from rail cars to barges at the Port of Morrow. The coal would then be shipped downriver. The coal would be in completely enclosed facilities, and the conveyors to load the barges would have vacuum filters that would prevent any coal dust from leaving the structures. Smith was quick to point out that the coal has to be shipped from somewhere, and this is a chance to create local economic benefit without negative environmental consequences. Twenty five jobs and around \$300,000 per year for the local schools would result from the project. The Irrigon City Council voted unanimously to support the Morrow Pacific Project.

Next on the agenda was Morrow County School Superintendent, Dirk Dirksen. Dirksen gave a summary of school funding issues and explained the proposed operating tax levy. The levy would continue the existing operating levy that will expire unless voters approve extending the tax. Voting for the tax levy would not increase anyone's existing tax bill, as it would be the same as it has been.

Larry Burns, Irrigon Rural Fire District Chief, was next, with a proposal to exchange real estate owned by the city for a fairly new water truck that the fire district had appraised at \$35,000. The city lot lies adjacent and to the north of the fire hall and was the site of the city's wells, reservoir and pump house prior to the new water system. Right now, it is being used as a storage yard. Larry Burns agreed to clean up the grounds and remove the pumps, motors and valves from the pump house. The removed water parts would be delivered to the city for reuse or sale. The city lot has an appraised value of approximately \$35,000. After discussion, the council voted unanimously to direct staff to draw up the necessary documents to complete the transaction to convey the real estate to the fire district and to accept the water truck as compensation.

After the presentations, Mayor Burns opened the public hearing to consider terminating the Joint Management Agreement with Morrow County for management of the lands within the Irrigon urban growth area. The city had previously instructed City

Attorney Bill Kuhn to send a letter to Morrow County Planner Carla McLane advising the county that the city was not pleased with the present contract and wanted to negotiate a new contract. The letter was dated January 27, 2012.

City Manager Jerry Breazeale explained that the hearing was part of a legal process outlined in the Joint Management Agreement to terminate the existing agreement. He pointed out that the contract requires that, during the time between the notice to terminate and the public hearing, the two parties must seek resolution of differences. He stated that, to that date, Morrow County had not responded with any attempt to negotiate with the city regarding the agreement. The hearing was to receive public testimony regarding the agreement.

Most of in the audience were not city residents, nor did they reside within the county-recognized Irrigon Urban Growth Boundary. Rather, they were from the area removed by Morrow County from the Irrigon urban growth boundary (UGB).

Also present at the meeting were McLane, Morrow County Judge Terry Tallman, Morrow County Commissioner Leann Rea, and Morrow County Executive Secretary Karen Wolff. The Morrow County Court had directed that notices be sent to all landowners with in the UGB letting them know that the city of Irrigon was planning to terminate the Joint Management Agreement, and encouraging them to attend the public hearing.

Most of the testimony at the hearing indicated that the property owners were fine with the current agreement and did not wish the city to terminate the agreement. One person, Deanna Fountain, asked Rea why the county was not willing to negotiate with the city to forge a new or amended contract. Rea at first refused to answer but, after the second time she was asked the question, Rea stated that when the letter comes from the attorney, they do not respond except through their attorney. Kuhn then pointed out that the Morrow County attorney had not contacted the city of Irrigon.

Specific items listed by the city of Irrigon as reasons to terminate were: disputed removal of the urban growth boundary from Irrigon's inventory by Morrow County; insufficient recognition of city concerns in Urban Growth Area planning decisions; insufficient cooperation between the county and the city in Urban Growth Area planning decisions; and inadequate application of city planning standards in

Urban Growth Area planning decisions.

Another public hearing item was the amendment of the city ordinance regulating the growing of medical marijuana. The city is attempting to manage health and safety concerns raised by the new state statute that allows the growing of medical marijuana. The amendment would allow more than one registered card holder legally residing at the same residence to grow marijuana if all the other conditions are met. The conditions that must be met under the ordinance are: the growing must be done indoors or in a greenhouse; it must not be closer than 1,000 feet from a school; the grow site must have an Irrigon zoning permit to be reviewed annually; and the site must be inspected twice per year, one of which may be unannounced. Growing for more than one person not legally residing at the same residence must be done from a commercial zone. No one from the audience testified regarding the amendment of the ordinance.

Mayor Burns closed the public hearings after giving everyone an opportunity to testify. Councilor Ken Matlack moved to send Morrow County a notice of the city's intent to terminate the Joint Management Agreement and get them to negotiate as required in the agreement termination clause.

"There is no movement on their side," he stated, "and this is a means to get them off the dime."

The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Burns then called for a vote on the ordinance. The amendment was unanimously approved.

In other business, the city heard from John Garlitz of JUB Engineering that progress was being made on the Septic Conversion Project and that plans were nearly complete and ready for agency review and approval. Once they are approved by the Department of Environmental Quality, the city can go out to bid on the project.

A date of April 10, 2012 was set for the city of Irrigon goal-setting. Mayor Burns stated that the meeting was open to the public and city citizens were welcome to participate in the discussions.

A proposal to purchase an 8,500 square foot city lot in a newer subdivision to obtain the water rights from an exempt well on that site also was considered. It was determined that the asking price of \$15,000 for the property on a paved and lit city street was a good investment for the city. The city council unanimously approved the purchase.

## Garden club plans guest speaker

The next meeting of the Heppner Garden Club will take place April 2 at 7 p.m. at St. Patrick's Senior Center. A representative from Monrovia will be the guest speaker. The meeting is open to the public.

Also, community members are reminded to mark their calendars for the annual plant exchange on May 12.

## Koffler retirement reception planned

A reception will be held to honor Koffler this Thursday, March 29 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Heppner BEO lobby. There

will be cake, coffee and punch, and everyone is invited to stop by and wish George good luck in his retirement.

## Community invited to Holden Evening Prayer

The community is invited to participate in Holden Evening Prayer at 4 p.m. on Sunday, April 1, at Hope Lutheran Church on the corner of Alfalfa and Cowsins in Heppner.

The service is part of a synchronized sing-along involving churches all across the country to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Holden Village, a remote Lutheran retreat center in the rugged north Cascade Mountains of Washington.

Holden Evening Prayer was written by Marty Haugen while he was

composer in residence at Holden Village in 1985-86. Since then, the service has gained wide popularity with churches of all denominations in many countries of the world. It continues to be sung regularly at Holden Village, and has often been used locally for midweek Advent and Lenten services held by the Shared Ministry of All Saints Episcopal Church and Hope Lutheran Church, and also at Valby Lutheran Church.

Everyone who has ever experienced Holden Evening Prayer or Holden

Village, or would like to, is encouraged to participate in this special service.

On April 1, Palm/Passion Sunday, the shared ministry of Hope Lutheran Church and All Saints Episcopal Church will worship at Hope. The service will begin at 10 a.m. with a procession from the entryway with palm branches, and will conclude with a reading of the passion story and stripping of the altar.

Check next week's paper for a full Holy Week schedule.

## Children's theater revisits classic tale

Audiences of all ages will get a fresh look at an old favorite on Saturday, March 31.

Missoula Children's Theater, with local Irrigon and Boardman students, will present "The Tortoise Versus the Hare." The classic tale of the competition between the speedy rabbit and the steady turtle will be presented in the Windy River Elementary School gymnasium.

This lively format will feature the tortoise, a conceited hare, a sweet bunny, rascally weasels, singing

ferrets and scaly reptiles at the annual Animal-Reptile Competition.

There will be two performances: a 2 p.m. matinee and a 5 p.m. early evening performance. Each performance is approximately one hour long.

Windy River Elementary School is located at 500 Tatone St, south of Wilson Road, in Boardman. Tickets are \$2 for adults

and \$1 for youth. Tickets are available at the door for general seating. Doors close five minutes before show time.

"The Tortoise Verses the Hare: The Greatest Race" is presented by North Morrow Community Foundation, with support from community donors and Morrow County Cultural Trust. For more information, call 541-481-4761.

## Marriage Licenses

The Morrow County Clerk has issued the following marriage licenses:

-Justin Parris, Sr., 26, of Heppner and Surany Cegueda, 30, of Heppner.

## Chamber lunch meeting

Due to Spring Break, there will be no chamber lunch meeting on Thursday, March 29.

The next chamber lunch meeting will be an all entities report on April 5. It will be held at All Saints Episcopal Church from noon to 1 p.m.

Participants are asked to RSVP for chamber lunch meetings the Wednesday before.

**Easter is Approaching!**  
 Sunday April 8th  
 Floral Department taking orders for Easter centerpieces.  
 Call **541-676-9426**  
 -Easter lilies  
 -Custom made Easter baskets  
 -Lots of candy to choose from!  
 You've gotta try this! **YOCREAM SHAMROCK SHAKE \$4.00**  
**ESPRESSO SPECIALS**  
 CARAMEL MACCHIATO \$4.00  
 BLUEBERRY SPRITZER \$2.25  
**Murray's Drug, INC.**  
 217 North Main St., Heppner • Phone 676-9158 • Floral 676-9426  
 Serving Morrow, Wheeler & Gilliam counties Since 1959

Due to the Morrow County Fee schedule order No. OR-20-2011 as of January 1, 2012 the Morrow County transfer stations will increase their fees 20% for removal of waste. Due to inflation of annual operating cost and other expenses beyond our control.

Morrow County would like to encourage and remind you the free disposal of latex and enamel paints, computers, computer towers and televisions free of charge. Remember residence are still allowed to dump the large appliances and household items such as refrigerators, stoves, dishwashers, washer/dryers, water heaters, mattresses, sofa, loveseats and lounge chairs free of charge. Thank you. North end Transfer Station, 69900 Frontage Lane, Boardman, OR. 97818. South end Transfer Station 57185 Hwy 74, Lexington, OR. 97839. Both hours of operation 9:00 - 4:00 Saturday and Sunday. Any questions or concerns may be addressed to (541) 989-9500.



**If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, help is available and that help is FREE of charge.**  
 If YOU have a family member who suffers from gambling addiction, YOU can also receive FREE treatment even if the gambler is not receiving treatment.  
 If you are a resident of Morrow County and you wish to take advantage of the services above or desire more information, Please call any of the following numbers to set up a LOCAL appointment or just to talk:  
 Bobby Harris @ 541-676-9925 or 541-256-0175  
 Community Counseling Solutions (CCS) @ 541-676-9161  
 OR 1-877-695-4648 (1-888-MYLIMIT)