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Gazette Times

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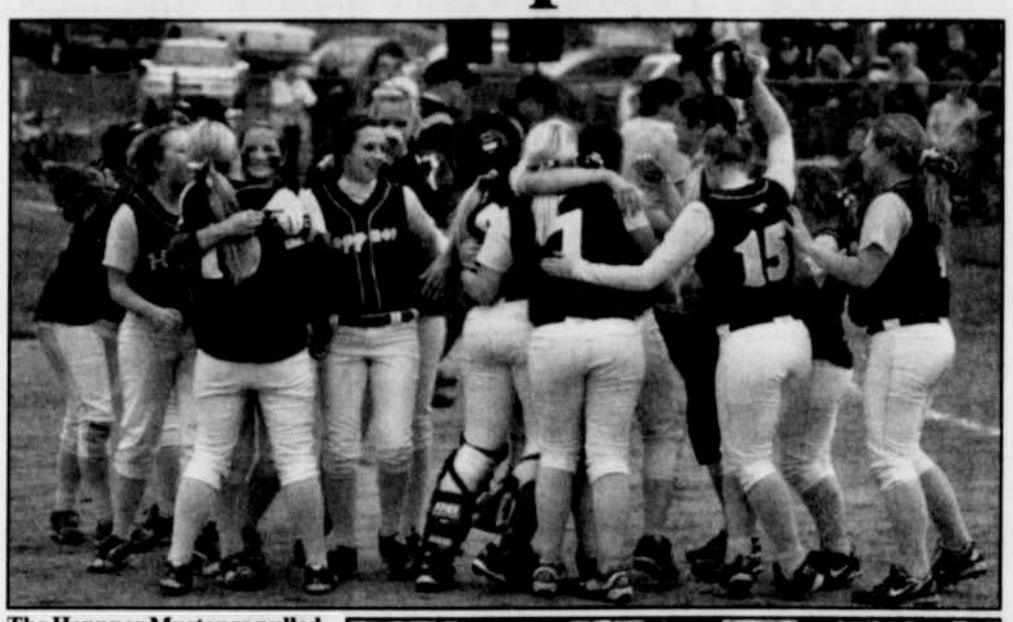
Mustangs slide into semifinals spot



The Heppner Mustangs pulled out a come-from-behind 4-3 win against the Union Lady Cats during a home game in the Class 2A/1A quarterfinals last Friday. The win secured the team a spot in the semifinals, the furthest any Heppner softball team has advanced in the postseason. The Mustangs played the Enterprise/Joseph Cubs in Enterprise on Tuesday (results not available at press time). Above: The Mustang softball team celebrates the 4-3 win over Union last Friday. Right: Natalie Rauch stretches to make the catch that puts the runner out. *-Photos by Sandy Matthews*

Two speakers at last chamber meeting

By David Sykes

The Heppner Chamber of Commerce had two speakers at its weekly luncheon meeting last week.

Carla McLane, Morrow County Planning Director, gave an update on development and planning activities going on around the county, saying she is spending much of her time dealing with energy projects, including new wind farms and transmission line projects.

County Planning Director Carla McLane

"Morrow County produces a lot of power and uses a lot of power," McLane said about the trend in the county toward more and more wind farms and, also, new data centers going in at the Port of Morrow.

To illustrate her point, McLane passed out a map showing the locations of all the met towers throughout the county. Met towers measure wind and give companies the information they need on where to build future wind farms.

The county recently approved a 51-tower wind farm at Ella Butte near Ione (an appeal of which was recently dropped, see related story); another 310-tower farm is planned east of Heppner on 60,000 acres in the Freeze Out Ridge area. McLane said public meetings on this project are planned for July 10 and 11, and more information on the meetings will be coming out later.

Other projects include the Carty gas-generating facility planned near the coal plant in Boardman, a methane digester at Threemile Canyon Farms, and electrical transmission projects being planned, including Cascade Crossing, Boardman to Hemingway, UEC transmission line and the Carty Lateral.

"I feel like an energy planner sometimes," McLane said of all the projects currently being planned in Morrow County.

Also at the chamber meeting was Amy Dunkak of Northeast Oregon Area Health Education Center, or NEOAHEC.

Amy Dunkak, Executive Director of NEOAHEC

Dunkak gave a rundown on her organization and what educational services it provides, including In-A-Box, Girls in Science, Saturday Science, MedQuest, MedStars and Future Health Professionals.

The educational services are wide-ranging, with the In-A-Box, for instance, providing a "fun curriculum for students in the 4th through 8th grades." The exploration-in-science boxes available include curriculum on brain, bones, bones and muscles, ear, eye, guts and mouth.

In the Future Health Professionals program, high school students interested in pursuing a health profession can learn fundamental skills required for health careers, and can earn two college credits from Eastern Oregon University in the process.

A college program is also available for those considering a career in the health care field, including experiencing a graduate school program for a day, where they attend a lecture, meet actual students and see what life as a student is like on the campus of Oregon Health and Science University. A health speaker series is also available, in which students can hear fist-hand experiences from members of the area medical community.

The purpose of NEOAHEC's programs is to use education to bring health professionals to rural Oregon. Their office is located in La Grande; their website is www.eou.edu/neoahec.

County negotiations going to mediation

By David Sykes

Negotiations between Morrow County and the Teamsters Union, which represents the Morrow County Sheriff's Department, is headed to mediation, it was announced at last week's meeting of the county court.

The county and the sheriff's office have been negotiating for the past year and have been unable to reach a new labor agreement. There is no animosity in the negotiations, it was reported.

At last Wednesday's meeting, the court agreed to set aside a certain amount of funds to eventually pay back cost-of-living increase amounts that have yet to be settled.

The other two groups of unionized workers, the road department and general workers, have just begun negotiations for the fiscal year 2012-13, while the Teamsters and the county are still working on 2011-12 year. The two other groups are represented by the AFSCM, American Association of State and County Municipal workers.

In other business, the court

-decided to hold their north county meetings at the Port of Morrow.

-discussed a request to spend $21,000 of the community Development Block Grant from Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corp. for administrative expenses on the larger total grant of $400,000 for low income home rehabilitation money available for Morrow County.

-heard that a $12,000 metal detection system had been installed at the court room. A $3,125 security system has also been installed for the county Mental Health Department.

-awarded a contract for operation of the Landing concession stand at the county Off Highway Vehicle Park to Gay and Patty Harshman. The contract is good for them to operate the food concession from May 23 until closing on Dec. 24, 2012.

Boyd and Rea will not face off in general election

Kandy Boyd and Leann Rea will not face off in November general election for the county commissioner seat, as was reported in last week's Gazette.

It was earlier reported that, although Boyd had lost the primary election to Rea, 241 to 320, the two would run against each other in the fall because Boyd had received the most write-in votes on the Republican ticket, which would have allowed her to run as a Republican. Both of the candidates are Democrats.

However, a subsequent ruling by the Morrow County Clerk changed that decision, and it was determined Boyd would not be eligible to be on the ballot.

Wind farm appeal dropped

An appeal to the decision by the county planning commission to site a wind farm in the Ella Butte area of Ione has been dropped.

James Jepsen, who filed the appeal to the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, dropped the action May 21. No reason was given for the decision.

2Morrow Energy, LLC has plans to build a 52-turbine wind farm north of Ione; Jepsen, in February, appealed the decision to allow the project, citing noise, potential medical problems and loss of business if the wind farm is built.

Jepsen, owner of Dobyns Pest Control of Ione, whose home and business are near the proposed wind farm, said, also, that the "installation of the windmills, transmission lines will lower our property value, make our home, property and business unsalable. Also ruining our view of sunsets, dark starry nights, skies and having to look at the visual pollution of the windmills, wind sensor noise and the noise generated by the windmills and impact on wildlife and endangered species in the area."

Annual Heppner FFA chapter banquet held

By Lilly Sandford

Blue and red banners are hanging around the room, as well as various pictures that have been taken throughout the year. This is the banquet room for the annual Heppner FFA chapter banquet in Heppner on May 10, 2012 at 6 p.m.

During the banquet, members of the Heppner FFA chapter received awards won throughout the year. The dinner was barbecued lamb, pork and tritip, as well as various side

-See FFA BANQUET/PAGE FIVE

Newly Initiated FFA Heppner chapter officers of 2012-2013 (L-R): Asst. reporter Khayman Heard; asst. secretary Tate Gentry; historian Garrett Robinson; reporter Mackenzie Correa; secretary Joslynn Troxell; president Micha Hintz; vice president Lillian Sandford; treasurer Shane Miles, and sentinel Kenzi Hughes. *–Contributed photo*

Graduations approaching

The Heppner High School Baccalaureate service will be Wednesday, May 30, at 6 p.m. at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, 525 N. Gale St. in Heppner. The HHS graduation ceremony will be Saturday, June 2, at 2 p.m. at the high school gym.

The Ione High School Baccalaureate is set for Tuesday, June 5, at 7 p.m. at Valby Lutheran Church, 60492 Valby Rd., Ione. The Ione High School graduation will be held on Friday, June 8, at 7 p.m. at the Ione High School gym.

Irrigon High School graduation will be Friday, June 1, at 7 p.m. at the school.

Riverside High School graduation will be Saturday, June 2, at 1 p.m. at the school.

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