Bessie Wetzell Newspaper Library
University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403

HEPPNER 50¢

Gazette Times

VOL. 131 N O. 51 6 Pages Wednesday, December 26, 2012 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Area battens down hatches in face of severe wind

Above: City workers and CenturyLink employees work to clear downed trees that fell across CenturyLink lines. This convergence of two fallen trees on Court Street in Heppner was just one example in a list of problems that ranged from lost shingles and gutters to fallen trees during the severe wind storm that tore through South Morrow County last week. There were even reports of a shed that blew off someone's property and past several houses before landing near a creek. According to Heppner City Manager Kim Cutsforth, the Lexington airport measured sustained winds of 45-48 mph during the storm, with gusts to near 80 mph. "It wasn't as bad as it could have been. The city crew got right out there…they were out late and up early in the morning. They did a great job," she said, though she added that she could tell local residents were feeling the stress of the constant wind and threat of damage. "I could tell there was a lot of anxiety from it." Below: A fallen tree in front of the Heppner library also caused some problems for city crews. *–Photo by David Sykes and April Sykes*

County-wide task force seeks to capitalize on energy projects

By David Sykes

A county-wide task force has been formed to prepare for an influx of workers for construction and operation of new wind farms, transmission lines and gas-generating plants coming to Morrow County. The majority of workers are expected to begin arriving in the county in March or April of 2014.

Although no definite number of construction or permanent workers has been determined, some of the projects slated for the county include: Cascade Crossing transmission, Coyote Springs substation, Carty gas-generating plant, UEC wind farm, and Ella Butte and Heppner Wind wind farms, as well as various data farms, substations and other projects at the Port of Morrow.

Carla McLane County Planner

County Planner Carla McLane is heading up the new task force, with Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) director Sheryll Bates serving as vice chairperson.

Last month a larger group of 30 community leaders including mayors, city managers and elected county officials, along with a number of state officials, met for a day-long session at the Port of Morrow to discuss how the county could handle the influx of people and do it to the county's economic benefit. That meeting, which was initiated by the WCVEDG, hammered out the problems and opportunities facing the county with the coming new growth.

Sheryll Bates of WCVEDG

The smaller task force, which was a result of this larger session, met Tuesday, Dec. 18, to begin the actual work of implementing ways all communities in the county can benefit from the new growth.

Members of the task force include Sheryll Bates of WCVEDG, County Planner and committee chairperson Carla McLane, Morrow County Commissioner Leann Rea, Ione Mayor-elect Linda LaRue, Irrigon City Manager Jerry Breazeale, EO Representative Oregon-Economic Revitalization Team Scott Fairley, Lexington Town Recorder Dee Burch, Heppner Mayor-elect Joe Perry, Morrow County Planning Commission Chairman David Sykes, Irrigon Mayor David Burns, Boardman Chamber Director Diane Wolfe, and Boardman City Manager Karen Pettigrew.

One issue the task force agreed to deal with is where to house both temporary and permanent workers coming to the county. The group agreed to contact RV park owners to find out what vacancy rates they have. Temporary workers could stay in the parks; however, the task force was sensitive to recreational users who may be displaced from by the workers. The group also discussed zoning rule changes that may allow temporary workers to stay on undeveloped private property for short periods of time.

The task force also talked about the impact on schools and agreed to try to get school officials involved in the planning. South Morrow County sees the influx of workers as a way to increase the number of children in the schools, which have seen a drop-off in enrollment dating back to the closure of the Kinzua Mill in Heppner in 1998.

Future meetings of the task force are planned in different cities in the county. The next meeting will be held at the Town of Lexington's new city hall building.

Scrooge vs. Santa?

"Bah, humbug!" Even polar opposites like Santa Clause and Ebenezer Scrooge put aside their differences for a temporary truce during Heppner's Celebrate Christmas event last Thursday, Dec. 20. Attendees reported a good time for all, with a festive meal, pictures with Santa, reward card and other prize drawings...and, of course, appearances by the most famous of all Christmas humbugs, Scrooge himself. *-Photo by Alita Nelson -See Page 6 for more Celebrate Christmas*

Boardman takes first step in creating gang ordinance

L-R: Boardman Councilor Ed Glenn, Mayor Chet Phillips and Councilor Steve Doherty. The mayor presented the two exiting councilors with certificates of appreciation. *–Contributed photo*

At their Dec. 11 meeting, the Boardman City Council took the first step in passing a gang ordinance. The ordinance changes the city's municipal code to include language establishing a procedure for law enforcement to identify and designate persons who are associated with criminal gangs and involved in criminal gang activity. The ordinance also includes language for those persons to appeal the gang designation.

A person who meets the criteria set in the ordinance, designating them as a gang member, will be recommended to the Morrow County District Attorney's Office to be placed on a list of designated gang members. This list will be a useful tool for law enforcement in cases where it may be a parole violation for someone to be in the company of known gang members. The designated gang members list will clearly outline those individuals.

By a vote of four to one, the ordinance had its first reading Tuesday night and is expected to have a second reading and passage at the Jan. 3, 2013 city council meeting.

In other city business, the council approved an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Port of Morrow for providing water to city water customers on Laurel Lane. The city's auditors, Fife and Cockburn, presented the annual audit review. The auditors gave the city a clean audit opinion with no exceptions. The council also said goodbye to Ed Glenn and Steve Doherty as they both attended their last city council meeting as councilors. Their terms end Dec. 31. Mayor Phillips presented them each with a Certificate of Appreciation.

G-T closed for New Year's

The Gazette-Times will be closed Tuesday, Jan. 1, for New Year's Day. The news and ad deadline for the Jan. 2 edition will be Friday, Dec. 28 at 5 p.m. Normal business hours will resume Wednesday, Jan 2.

We wish everyone a safe and happy new year.

Have a Happy New Year!
All locations will be closed New Year's Day
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net