

HEPPNER

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Safe

Heppner senior Tessa Gould slides into third base during a double-header with Irrigon. Heppner won the first game and Irrigon won the second. Photo by Sandy Matthews

Ballots arrive later due to postal changes

Election ballots were mailed from the county clerk's May 3 have begun to in mailboxes throughout Morrow County. Because of the change in the postal system, and how it affects delivery, it is taking longer for ballots to arrive in some areas.

According to the Morrow County Clerk's office, voters need to be aware that it also takes longer for the ballots to get back to the courthouse by May 21. Drop boxes are available in several areas of the county including: Boardman: 101 NW Boardman Ave. at the Morrow County Health Dept. Ione: Spring St., by community paper boxes. Irrigon: 205 NE 3rd St. at the Irrigon Annex. Lexington: 365 West Hwy. 74, Morrow County Public Works parking lot. Heppner: Morrow County Courthouse parking lot and in the county clerk's office.

This election includes board and district elec-

tions.

They include: Heppner Rural Fire Protection District, three directors with four year terms; Ione Rural Fire Protection District, three directors with four year terms; Boardman Rural Fire Protection District, three directors with four year terms and one director with two year term; Irrigon Rural Fire Protection District, positions 3, 4 and 5 with four year terms; Morrow County Unified Recreation District, Zone 1 and 2, with four year terms; Ione Library District, three directors with four year terms; Oregon Trail Library District, positions 3, 4 and 5 with four year terms; Port of Morrow, positions 1, 2 and 3 with four year terms; Heppner Cemetery Maintenance District, two directors with four year terms; Ione Lexington Cemetery District one director at large with four year term; Boardman Cemetery District, two directors at large with four

year terms; Irrigon Cemetery Maintenance District. One director at large with four year term; Willow Creek Park District, two directors at large with four year terms; Irrigon Community Park & Recreation District, positions 1, 5, 3 and 4 with four year terms; Boardman Park & Recreation District, two directors at large with four year terms; Ione School District, positions 3, 4 and 5 with four year terms; Morrow County School District, positions 2, 6 and 7 with four year terms; Morrow County Health District, positions 1, 2 and 3 with four year terms; Heppner Water Control District, two directors at large with four year terms.

Terms of Office start on June 30 and run for four years.

If there's been a vacancy in the district, the term would be the remainder of the unexpired term, making it a two-year term.

Money accumulates for Enterprise Zone

Long term income topping \$21 million

By David Sykes

The newly reorganized Columbia River Enterprise Zone in North Morrow County is turning into a major recipient of funds in lieu of taxes, from business locating at the Port of Morrow in North Morrow County. So far the zone has long-term funding coming in over the next 15 years in excess of \$21,807,000, and board members say with more business looking to locate there, this money could be just the tip of the iceberg.

So far the contributors are Rackspace, ConAgra Columbia River Technologies, Columbia Plywood and ZeaChem. The businesses are negotiating deals with the Enterprise Zone to pay "fees" instead of county taxes on new manufacturing and service facilities. These fees are based on the amount of development the company does within the Enterprise Zone, a 12-square-mile area encompassing mainly the Port of Morrow Industrial park near Boardman.

The companies locate in the zone to avoid paying higher property taxes directly to the county, thus giving the zone an economic advantage in attracting businesses to the area. The money, however will not go through the county to be divided up among county taxing districts as with "normally" collected property taxes.

In fact the Enterprise Zone Board of Directors has been meeting the past several months crafting an IGA, or intergovernmental agreement, governing how the funds will be spent. A draft IGA was passed by the board at its last meeting Monday in Boardman, and sent to the three member entities of the Enterprise Zone, Morrow County Court, City of Boardman City Council, and Port of Morrow Board of Directors for their approval.

The Enterprise Board is made up of two members from each entity, and they will be deciding, within Oregon State law, how to spend the collected money.

Concern was voiced

at one meeting that two of entities might dominate the other entity when deciding which special districts receive funding. Of the six members of the board, a simple majority of four is required to approve disbursing money, however further negotiations among board members inserted a requirement into the IGA that one member of each entity must vote in favor of a requested project for its approval.

At Monday's meeting, the board received a letter from Cyde Estes chairman of the Morrow County Unified Recreation District, asking the Enterprise Board to "invite all taxing districts in the Columbia Enterprise Zone II boundary to an informational meeting prior to ratification of the IGA". The recreation district, as with several other districts such as the medical district and the school district, overlap the Enterprise Zone.

Estes emphasized that the recreation district is not opposed to enterprise agreements with businesses, but said "one of our primary concerns is that the agreement does not appear to ensure representation for us and other districts within the zone. As elected officials we would like you to address our questions regarding budget, financial process and audit procedures for those who will be managing the potentially millions of dollars that will come to the Board of Directors (Enterprise Zone board) each year. The draft agreement seems to be silent on these issues and silent on a process of accountability to the taxing districts and to the public," her letter said. "It is our sincerest hope that you will allow us an opportunity to be heard, to contribute to the process and to understand your vision for this intergovernmental agreement," she concluded.

The IGA agreement, as approved by the Enterprise Board, Monday does not spell out exactly which districts will be eligible to receive funding, but does say that "recommendations and requests from affected Special Districts of potential impacts involving the

service provided by said Districts, including but not limited to fire protection and public safety, may be considered." During discussion some board members said funds would probably go only to taxing districts that are geographically adjacent to the Enterprise Zone. This would exclude such taxing districts as the cities of Irrigon, Heppner, Lexington and Ione from applying for projects and funding from the Enterprise Zone. The IGA agreement in fact does not spell out the process districts will use to apply for funds. The Enterprise Zone board is apparently going to work later on policies that will flesh out the eight-page agreement passed Monday.

The six board members are appointed by their respective entities. Currently they are:

Morrow County-Leann Rea, commissioner, Greg Sweek, assessor; City of Boardman-Sandy Toms, mayor, Karen Pettigrew, manager; Port of Morrow-Don Russell, commissioner, Gary Neal, general manager.

The following section was approved by the board governing the distribution of money:

"Company paid fees will be distributed by the Board with the following considerations:

- Distribution will be consistent with company agreements when applicable.

- Distribution will be done at least semi-annually.

- Distribution in future years does not have to reflect distribution patterns set in previous years.

- Distribution will be carried out by the fiscal agent based on Order(s) passed and approved.

Distribution of funds is only done during a meeting that the full board is represented. In addition to the above requirement, at least one affirmative vote from each entity shall be required to pass a motion regarding distribution of funds. If at least one affirmative vote is not cast from each entity and the motion

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Precipitation now almost four inches below normal for year

According to preliminary data received by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service in Pendleton, temperatures at Heppner averaged near normal during the month of April.

The average temperature was 49.0 degrees which was 0.0 degrees below normal. High temperatures averaged 61.4 degrees, which was 0.5 degrees above normal. The highest was 79 degrees on April 27. Low temperatures averaged 36.7 degrees, which was 0.5 degrees below normal. The lowest

was 23 degrees, on April 17.

There were 9 days with the low temperature below 32 degrees.

Precipitation totaled 0.75 inches during April, which was 0.76 inches below normal. Measurable precipitation, at least .01 inch, was received on 9 days with the heaviest, 0.28 inches reported on April 19.

Precipitation this year has reached 1.68 inches, which is 3.94 inches below normal. Since October, the water year precipitation at Heppner has been 5.75 inches, which is 3.93 inches below normal.

The highest wind gust was 43 mph which occurred on April 7.

The outlook for May from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. Normal highs for Heppner rise from 64.0 degrees at the start of May to 73.0 degrees at the end of May. Normal lows rise from 40.0 degrees to 47.0 degrees. The 30 year normal precipitation is 1.66 inches.

The National Weather Service is an office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



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