

## BOARDMAN FIRE SEEKS CREZ FUNDS

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 truck to fight potential fires. Aerial trucks have long extension ladders and hoses capable of reaching the higher buildings. He gave as an example the new 85-foot-high building at the Tillamook Cheese Plant.

He also said that, with the construction of the new data centers, the electrical and HVAC services are being placed on the roofs of the buildings. This takes them away from the fire suppression systems inside a building, offering new challenges to fighting fires at these facilities.

"With this new construction there could be some problems for us," Rogelstad told the CREZ board. "We are going to need some assistance to make sure we can provide protection to the Port and to the city."

He said the classification rating, which insurance companies use to set insurance rates, has already dropped down from a four.

"We love the growth but we are going to need some help," he said.

On the personnel side, Rogelstad said he is not getting as many community volunteers to serve on the department as he used to.

He said several reasons contributed to the drop-off, including the fact that many of the workers do not live in

Boardman anymore, businesses are not as willing to let their employees leave work to go on fire calls, and the department competes with other volunteer activities such as Little League coaching for the potential pool of volunteers' free time.

He also cited increased training needed by volunteers to fight fires, saying the Occupational, Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has tightened its rules for volunteer firefighters.

"We now need four people on the ground before we can go inside a building when we roll up on a fire," Rogelstad said as an example.

He also said the number of training hours necessary to be a volunteer fireman has increased dramatically from years past. It was brought out that Boardman is not the only location experiencing the volunteer pinch, with volunteer firefighters down by 60,000 all across the United States.

On funding, Rogelstad said if the new enterprise zone businesses were not exempt from property taxes, he would be receiving .75 per thousand dollars of valuation on the new construction.

However, other factors muddy the waters when determining how much tax

money the department has lost with the CREZ exemptions, including Measure 5 and compression, which caps property tax rates.

Rogelstad also pointed out that property valuations on new business and industrial construction are coming in at sometimes 30 percent of the construction costs, which puts the tax revenues at a low level.

"Sixty percent we can live with, but not 30," he said.

With an annual budget of \$1.1 million, Rogelstad said the rural fire district is receiving \$800,000 per year in tax revenue and this is just not enough.

He pointed to Hermiston, which has a tax rate of \$1.20 per thousand and is also having troubles.

He said an earlier effort to get Boardman voters to approve a special bond issue to help the fire department failed, and he does not know if another effort would succeed.

"Nobody wants to pay more taxes, including me," he said. "But we can't run on 1990 dollars and provide this level of services. I am paying 100 percent of my employees and I need to find other revenue. I should have six employees in order to do it right."

He said the new aerial truck, which takes a year to receive after ordering,

will cost around \$1 million and could be funded at \$100,000 per year on a lease purchase deal.

CREZ board member and Port Manager Gary Neal told Rogelstad he wants him to keep the board apprised of the departments needs.

Neal also discussed the possibility of exempting the fire district from future deals involving the enterprise zone, thus assuring tax income from the new construction.

"We have in our discussions always tried to identify the fire department as an accepted effected district," Neal said.

"Discussion comes up all the time with fire chiefs about what restricts funding," Rogelstad said, "and the three main ones are Urban Renewal in the valley, strategic investment plans and enterprise zones."

"Our challenge is with special districts and whether they are going to be effected," Neal said of the CREZ board's discussions.

"State programs (such as enterprise zones) we have to live with. I would like to see the state make up the difference because the locals always carry the burden when the state is pushing for new business."

Neal has said in the past that, because there are so many enterprise zones



Boardman Rural Fire Protection District Chief Marc Rogelstad says the increased activity at the Port of Morrow is putting strain on his department.

throughout the state, in order for the Port to be competitive in attracting new business, it has to use its own enterprise zone and tax incentives to full advantage.

Neal especially takes exception with the Oregon Department of Revenue practice of coming in with lowering valuations on large industrial projects in the county.

He said the department takes the valuation out of the hands of local assessors and, "Quite frankly we (local counties) are the ones who take it when the state comes in and lowers valuations. We lose the value and the tax revenue," Neal later told the Gazette.

He said in many instances companies such as utilities rebuild their facilities to near-new condition

with new turbines, but are not revalued at a higher rate, and still get the older straight-line depreciation for tax purposes.

Both Neal and Rogelstad agree, however, that enterprise zones and their property tax exemptions are here to stay.

"Enterprise zones are something we are going to have to live with," Rogelstad says.

The board also briefly discussed a meeting planned on July 25 at 7 p.m. at the Port of Morrow Wells Springs room.

The recreation district has invited all the taxing districts in the Columbia River Enterprise Zone II to "...begin a conversation regarding Enterprise Zone negotiations," according to a meeting notice from the recreation district.

## MCDOWELL RETIRES



A recent picture of McDowell (right) on the job with Russ Brannon.

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"I liked getting peoples' lights back on when there was a problem," says McDowell, 59, who recently retired after working for Columbia Basin since graduating from Davenport High School in Washington in 1972. He recalls one of the toughest times when an ice storm knocked down 680 poles and left 2,000 people without power. Of course, then there was the time he had his picture in the paper around the time of the Condon kite festival, holding the remains of a kite he had dug out of a transformer at Fossil, and reminding people of

the dangers of kite-flying around power lines.

"Linemen have rescued three kites this week from power lines in Condon and a ball of string from bushes and jumper on a transformer in Fossil," the article said. "The lineman conducted an Ohms resistance test on the string and found that it would conduct electricity," the article said, warning of the dangers.

It isn't necessary to warn McDowell of the dangers of the job he has held for the past 40 years.

"You have to be constantly aware of safety out there," he explains.

Sometimes chided for

being a bit slow on certain job, he says he always emphasized safety.

"I always wanted everyone to come home at night," he says about working around power lines that can have up to 115,000 volts of electricity running through them.

"A lot of times people drive by and see one guy standing around when we are working. But that guy is the safety observer, he is watching everything while people are working, making sure everything looks okay."

Not only is the electricity a concern, but the crew is also working with booms, trucks, tools and, yes, dynamite. When asked if there is a lot of rocky ground in the Columbia Basin Electric area he says, "No, not a lot of rock; one big rock."

So, it was sometimes necessary to use blasting material to get a hole down the required six feet for a power pole, and each blast could react differently depending on the condition of the rock and soil. He was asked to blast some rock for a non-CBEC project up by the high school several years ago and, while the

blast went fine, a few rocks did go where they were not expected.

McDowell actually comes from a family of linemen. His father worked as a lineman for 30 years. McDowell took the job with Columbia Basin in 1972, straight out of high school, and lived in Condon working as a "groundsman" for five years.

"A groundsman drives trucks, takes equipment to the guys and other jobs," McDowell explains.

In 1979, he and his wife Merilee moved to Heppner, where he began his apprenticeship. Merilee told him that when he received his journeyman's lineman's card they could start a family. He received his card in 1982 and their daughter Danielle was born that same year.

He started out for foreman Billy Gentry and then later moved up to be a foreman himself, overseeing a crew of between three to five men.

There were lots of days, and nights, of bad weather and hard work, but McDowell says it was always good to keep a sense of humor with the younger guys while out on the job.

"You have to be able to keep it light and have a good time to do this job," he says while relating the story of the barbecue sauce.

It seems the crew was eating in the pickup on a particularly hot day down by Jordon Grade near Lone. He had put some sauce on

his sandwich, put the sauce container on the dashboard and then was busy thinking about the afternoon and the work to be done. Soon the younger guys on the crew couldn't hold back anymore and started laughing out loud. The sauce had run all down into the dash.

"It took me awhile to live that one down. That pickup smelled like barbecue sauce to the day we sold it," he remembers.

However, it was well known with the young guys on his crew that you don't mess with him in the morning.

"You pretty much don't talk to him before he has his coffee," one of his crewmen told the Gazette-Times.

But McDowell always kept a good relationship with the people around the co-op district, especially those in the country onto whose property he often had to go to fix things.

"It's part PR; you have to get to know people," he says.

And even though the co-op has the legal right to go onto properties and fix the power lines, McDowell liked to keep a

good relationship with the landowners.

"Most of the time they are okay about us going on their property. Usually if you stop and talk to them and let them know what we are doing, we get along with them," he recalls.

Some of the biggest changes McDowell has seen during his career are better wire material, larger poles and the shorter span between poles. He says all have cut down on the needed repair work.

Ice on the power lines causing damage has also been a problem for the repair crews, and more buried lines have alleviated some of these problems, he says.

And now that those days of rolling out of bed at 2 a.m. to drive icy foggy roads when the power goes out are over, Bill and Merilee are having more time to travel, and especially spend time with their new grandson, Henry, seven months old, who lives in Eugene with his mom and dad, Danielle and Brian Burnside. The couple also enjoys going to Mariners baseball games and visiting relatives.

## High School sports physicals planned

Heppner High School has scheduled sports physicals for Tuesday, Aug. 6, and Thursday, Aug. 8, at Pioneer Memorial Clinic.

Boys' physicals will be

on Aug. 6 from 1:30-5 p.m. on a walk-in basis. Girls' physicals will be on Aug. 8 from 1:30-5 p.m. on a walk-in basis.

Sports physicals are required for any student who has not had a physical in the past year, including first year junior high participants and sixth graders playing at the junior high level, and transfer students who do not have a copy of a physical completed in the past year.

The form for the physicals can be found at <http://osaa.org/forms/PhysicalExamination-2010.pdf>. Students must bring this form with them to the physical.

Players under the age of 18 must have their forms signed by a parent.

All news & advertising deadline: **MONDAY @ 5 P.M.**

# Morrow County FAIR and RODEO

IT'S ALMOST FAIR & RODEO TIME!

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be publishing its special fair & rodeo edition August 7.

To submit articles or to place an ad in the special edition call, stop by or email megan at

The Heppner Gazette-Times  
 188 W Willow  
 Heppner, OR  
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[megan@rapidsolve.net](mailto:megan@rapidsolve.net)

Deadline to be included in the Special Fair Edition- July 31

## Mark Your Calendar!

### MURRAY'S 17th ANNUAL BEER & WINE TASTING

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15th  
 6:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.

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