

## CREZ TALKS HOUSING

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program to aid developers building rental units, when a similar plan already in place by the city of Boardman has yet to have any takers.

"No one has used it. It has been sitting there for one year," said Nelson.

She suggested there be a forum so developers' lenders and others involved in housing could sit down and come up with ideas to alleviate the crunch. Nelson also asked CREZ what the goal of the housing program will be.

"Eighty percent of the workers (at the Port of Morrow) live somewhere else, mostly in Umatilla County and Washington. We want people who work here to live here," said CREZ board chairman Don Russell.

CREZ board member and Port of Morrow Manger Gary Neal said CREZ was founded on the theory that the loss of taxes (from new businesses) would be mitigated by taxes on new housing. "But so far we are not getting the mitigating offset here in Morrow County," he said.

The CREZ was created to offer property tax breaks to new businesses moving into the enterprise zone, a 12-square-mile area around the Port of Morrow, as a way to entice industry and jobs to Morrow County. The Enterprise Zone collects fees in lieu of taxes from these businesses and then distributes this money in the county.

So far the CREZ has been very successful, having secured funding commitments of \$22 million through the year 2030. The money so far is coming mainly from a large Con-Agra food processing expansion, construction of new data farms by VA Data, a division of Amazon.com, and expansion of the Tillamook Cheese facility at the Port. All of the new expansion is creating upwards of 200 or more jobs, most of them paying above-average wages.

"When you are creating jobs they need a place to live," said Neal in discussing the need for more rentals instead of new housing. "They (workers) end up where the housing is and then they become part of that community. They don't always know if the job is going to work out and they aren't always qualified for loans when they are new to a job," he pointed out.

There seems to be always government funds around for "income restricted" or low-income housing, "but we need market rental housing," he stressed. He said once people are established in rental housing then they will later move up and purchase a home.

Also part of a proposed, but as yet not adopted, housing plan, people moving into Morrow County would receive either a grant or forgivable loan, thus attracting people to move here. Tillamook Cheese currently has a program where any employee moving to Morrow County and buying a home qualifies for a \$7,500 grant toward its purchase. The company offers the incentive because only 10 percent of Tillamook's employees who work in Boardman actually live there.

Board members also realized that each community in the county has different housing issues.

"South county is never going to have significant issues (with employment like Boardman)," CREZ board member Greg Sweek said. However, he did acknowledge that Heppner and south county have a shortage of rentals.

"People live in south county and commute to their jobs, but many of them lived there previously," he pointed out.

Phil Nachbar of GEODC was also at the meeting and suggested that Boardman work on increasing the amenities to entice people to live there.

"People look at

quality of life, shopping, community, not just commuting distance, when they choose where to live," he told the board, and suggested effort be put into other aspects of the community and then "the people would choose to live in the community and not have to have financial incentives."

Representatives of the Heppner and Boardman chambers of commerce have recently attended a job fair sponsored by Con-Agra and held in Hermiston, handing out materials to prospective hires touting the benefits of living in Morrow County.

"The Port will continue to create the new jobs," said Neal. "And we have a better chance of capturing people who are new workers. We want people to eventually own their own homes," he added.

"Is there something we can do now to capture some of these new employees coming in?" Sweek asked. "We don't have four to five months to decide this."

Neal estimated that there would be 150 to 200 workers coming in the next year, including some longer-term construction workers at the new PGE gas-fired plant. Neil also said that many of the new jobs are higher-wage, management type, which will support purchase of new homes.

"Each of our communities are different and we are working to address the differences in each of those communities," Neal told the CAPECO officials about Morrow County; CAPECO agreed to study the issue further and help CREZ formulate a housing plan.

In other business the board heard from their fiscal agent Thomas Kligel, who passed out spreadsheets detailing the CREZ's finances.

The board chose Kligel, who is also the city of Boardman financial officer, to handle its finances.

## Local FFA members awarded national FFA Degrees

Heppner graduates Devin Byron Robinson and Zechariah D. Hintz, members of the Heppner FFA chapter, were awarded the American FFA Degree at the 2013 National FFA Convention & Expo, Oct. 30-Nov. 2 in Louisville, KY.



Devin Byron Robinson

The Degree is bestowed upon a select group of students in recognition of their years of academic and professional excellence.

Sponsored by ADM Crop Risk Services, Case IH, DuPont Pioneer, Elanco, Farm Credit and Syrgenta as a special project of the National FFA Foundation, the award recognizes demonstrated ability and outstanding achievements in agricultural business, production, processing or service programs.



Zechariah D. Hintz

members must have earned and productively invested \$7,500 through a supervised agricultural experience program in which they start, own or hold a professional position in an existing agriculture enterprise.

Recipients must also complete 50 hours community service and demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities and civic involvement.

Each of the 3,573 recipients of the American FFA Degree received a gold American FFA Degree key and a certificate after being recognized on stage at that national convention.

## Boardman adopts ordinance for west urban renewal agency

At its last meeting, the Boardman City Council adopted an ordinance forming a new urban renewal area in Boardman. The West Boardman Urban Renewal Area boundary encompasses approximately 170 acres in the area to the south of Interstate 84 to Wilson Lane and to the west of the Columbia Terrace Subdivision.

Urban renewal allows

for the use of tax increment financing paying for urban renewal projects. Tax increment revenues, the amount of property taxes generated by the increase in total assessed values in the urban renewal area from the time it is first established, are used to fund investments in the urban renewal area.

Urban renewal investments can

include construction or improvement of streets, utilities, parks and other public facilities.

The main objective of the West Boardman Urban Renewal Area will be to provide infrastructure improvements to facilitate development in the area. This new urban renewal area is the second urban renewal area formed in Boardman.

## Cub Scouts take field trip to newspaper office

The Bears Cub Scout Troop visited the Heppner Gazette-Times on Thursday, Nov. 21.

Scouts on the field trip were Felix Matthew, Roen Waite and Seth Grigg, all nine years old. Leaders are Andrea Grigg and Taomi Matthew.

The Scouts learned about writing news stories for the Gazette, how people submit stories for the newspaper and how the newspaper is put together on the computer. They also got to see the big paper cutter in the back room.

They told the Gazette staff that they had learned about the first newspaper writer in Oregon, who was Ashael Bush.



The Bears Cub Scout Troop recently visited the Gazette-Times. Pictured are (L-R) in front, Cub Scouts Seth Grigg, Felix Matthew and Roen Waite, with leaders Taomi Matthew and Andrea Grigg. -Photo by April Sykes

The boys all attend Elementary School and are school at Heppner in the fourth grade.

## Morrow County 4-H holds Achievement Night



Award recipients from the 2013 4-H Achievement Night event. -Contributed photo

Morrow County 4-H celebrated the past year at their annual Achievement Night awards celebration on Sunday, Nov. 17, at Riverside High School in Irrigon.

4-Hers from across the county received recognition for their outstanding achievements in their project areas, many perfect record books, accomplishments from the centennial Morrow County Fair and for other special county awards.

4-H leaders and outstanding clubs were also recognized for all of their hard work to make the 4-H program possible.

Morrow County 4-H Ambassadors Kane Sweeney, Tim Gould, Morgan Orem, Emily Taylor, Miranda Taylor, Sydney Qualls and Macy Gibbs worked weeks in advance to practice and polish the event, and they reportedly did a "fantastic" job at announcing and operating the entire event.

The Boardman Community Club assisted with the facilities, set up

and clean up. Achievement night begins with a family potluck for all those in attendance, followed by the awards ceremony. Each year a committee of volunteers is formed who commits its time to purchase all of the fair awards.

4-H is a year-round program, which begins Oct. 1 of each year and concludes on September 30. A slideshow of highlights from the past year is available on our website, <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/morrow/>. For more information on the 4-H program or how to sign up, call the OSU Extension Service, Morrow County office at 541-676-9642, check out the website or follow them on Facebook under "Morrow County 4-H Oregon."

Complete awards from achievement night are as follows; results not published here will be published in future editions of the Gazette:

**Outstanding Record Book Awards:**  
Juniors:

- Grace DeLoach
- Will Keefer
- Jaiden Mahoney
- Kylee McClure
- Matt Orem
- Ashley Price
- Olivia Schmidt
- Intermediates:**
- Kolby Currin
- Raleigh McClure
- Morgan Orem
- Riley Gorham
- Skylar Wightman
- Seniors:**
- Lilly Sandford
- Paige Bither
- Tyanna Billings
- Junior Leaders:**
- Brittany Lesperance, Lilly Sandford, Sydney Qualls, Taylor Hamby, Tyanna Billings.
- 2013 Camp Counselors:**
- Tom Gould, Tim Gould, Brittany Lesperance, Morgan Haselbusch, Madisen Haselbusch, Alexandra Dunn, Bryan Fowler, Amanda Rea, Sydney Qualls, Lexi Bray, Macy Gibbs and Ian Meakins.
- County Medals:**
- Junior Division:**
- Achievement: Serenity Rodriguez
- Beef: Jace Currin
- Cavy: Emma Hermanns
- Clothing & Textiles: Gracey DeLoach
- Community Service: Hayden Qualls
- Cooking: Jaiden Mahoney

## Sheriff's Report

**October 2 (cont.):**

-MCSO, Boardman Ambulance received report of a 54-year-old male subject in a semi with a bulk trailer being dizzy with his neck stiff and his arms going numb on I-84 Boardman.

-MCSO received report from an Irrigon woman that she found a bike in her mom's storage shed that was left there by a previous tenant and the previous tenant's son had been caught stealing.

-MCSO received report from a subject in Irrigon that she thinks another female stole her driver's license.

-MCSO received report from a man who lives on Kunze Lane that vehicles drive by his residence at a high rate of speed. He requested extra patrol.

-MCSO received report from a woman in Heppner that she found a brownish/tan purse by the Cornerstone Gallery. MCSO returned the purse to its owner.

-MCSO received report of a female who had become unconscious in a vehicle on I-84 Boardman. The caller advised that she had a root beer float right before and then when she woke up she was clutching her abdominal area. Caller said

that she had not had any intoxicants. They requested that dispatch call to the ER and advise they would be arriving.

-MCSO received report of several tractors in the road, completely blocking one side of Bombing Range and a pickup in the ditch with a tractor hooked up to it. A deputy responded, but the vehicles were no longer there.

-MCSO received report that Hermiston Police Department arrested Rebecca Ann Mayes, 21, on a Morrow County warrant for Parole Violation/Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle, Failure to Appear, Eluding and Unauthorized Use of a Motor Vehicle. She was lodged at Umatilla County Jail with no bail.

**October 3:** Irrigon Ambulance, Irrigon Fire Department received a request for an ambulance for a 53-year-old male in a wheel chair who had fallen off the ramp and received an injury to his hand.

-Morrow County Sheriff's Office reported assisting another law enforcement agency with suspicious circumstances.

-MCSO reported transporting a prisoner, Javier Roquez, Jr., from Eastern Oregon

Correctional Institution to Umatilla County Jail.

-MCSO received report of a black SUV abandoned in the parking lot on Main in Irrigon.

-MCSO received report of a horse running at large that had been cornered on Second and Wyoming streets in Irrigon.

-MCSO received request for a welfare check on a little girl who was playing at a park in Irrigon. The caller said the little girl's grandfather was traveling in a large newer RV and he had walked away and left the girl. The caller said his attitude seemed suspicious.

-MCSO received report of a small red Toyota pickup all over the road last seen headed up to Blake Ranch. The owner was identified and MCSO responded, but he was unable to locate the pickup.

-MCSO received report from an Irrigon subject who said that her brother had hit his girlfriend and kicked her in the face. The caller requested deputy contact.

-MCSO received report from an Irrigon male that his girlfriend said she was going to watch a football game in Pilot Rock at 10 a.m. and he had not heard from her. It was 11:18 p.m.