

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

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City seeks to expand property lien authority

Would now cover unpaid water bills and civil penalties, property cleanup and more

By David Sykes

A discussion at last month's Heppner City Council meeting about a proposed ordinance allowing the city of Heppner to place liens on properties with delinquent water bills, has now expanded into talk of giving the city authority to place liens for a variety of other charges, including civil penalties, assessments, property cleanup costs and other unnamed charges.

Last month the city council passed a motion instructing City Manager Kim Cutsforth "to start the process to lien properties for delinquent water and sewer bills." Since then Cutsforth began working with City Attorney Phillip Spicerkuhn to come up with an ordinance allowing the city to do this.

However, at Monday's meeting the council was

presented with an ordinance which expands the city's lien power beyond just water and sewer bills to include, "but not limited to, assessments for local improvements, economic development districts, system development charges, facility charges, civil penalties and nuisance abatements."

Last month Cutsforth told the council, if adopted, the new ordinance would give the city a chance to recover unpaid water and sewer bills that sometimes run more than \$1,000. Cutsforth said it gives the city a tool to collect bills when owners sometimes leave town with unpaid bills. If the home has a lien on it, the unpaid bills will be paid when the property is sold, she explained.

Monday a discussion was held whether the city should

also have the authority, not only to place a lien on property, but to actually foreclose on a home for non payment of not only water bills, but also any of the above mentioned charges incurred by a homeowner. Cutsforth said she had originally struck foreclosure language from the proposed ordinance, however Spicerkuhn argued that the language should be left in because without the foreclosure ability, the ordinance would have no teeth.

Under the proposed new law, fees incurred from civil penalties such as failure to obtain permits could now also be grounds for the city to place a lien on a person's home. Also if cleanup, such as auto body removal, or as

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Creches make beautiful Christmas display



Crèches from area residents made for a beautiful Christmas scene in a storefront window on Main Street in downtown Heppner this season.

The nativity scenes were displayed in the front windows of the former Artisan Village/Quilter's Roundup store on Main Street. At last count organizer Andrea Grigg said that they had received around 50 crèches to display. The crèches were on loan from area residents.

Grigg said that the display was a "wonderful team effort." "We were rewarded by the expressions on people's faces," she added. "Many of the sets have a special history in the lives of the owners."

Grigg said that Sheryll Bates provided input on

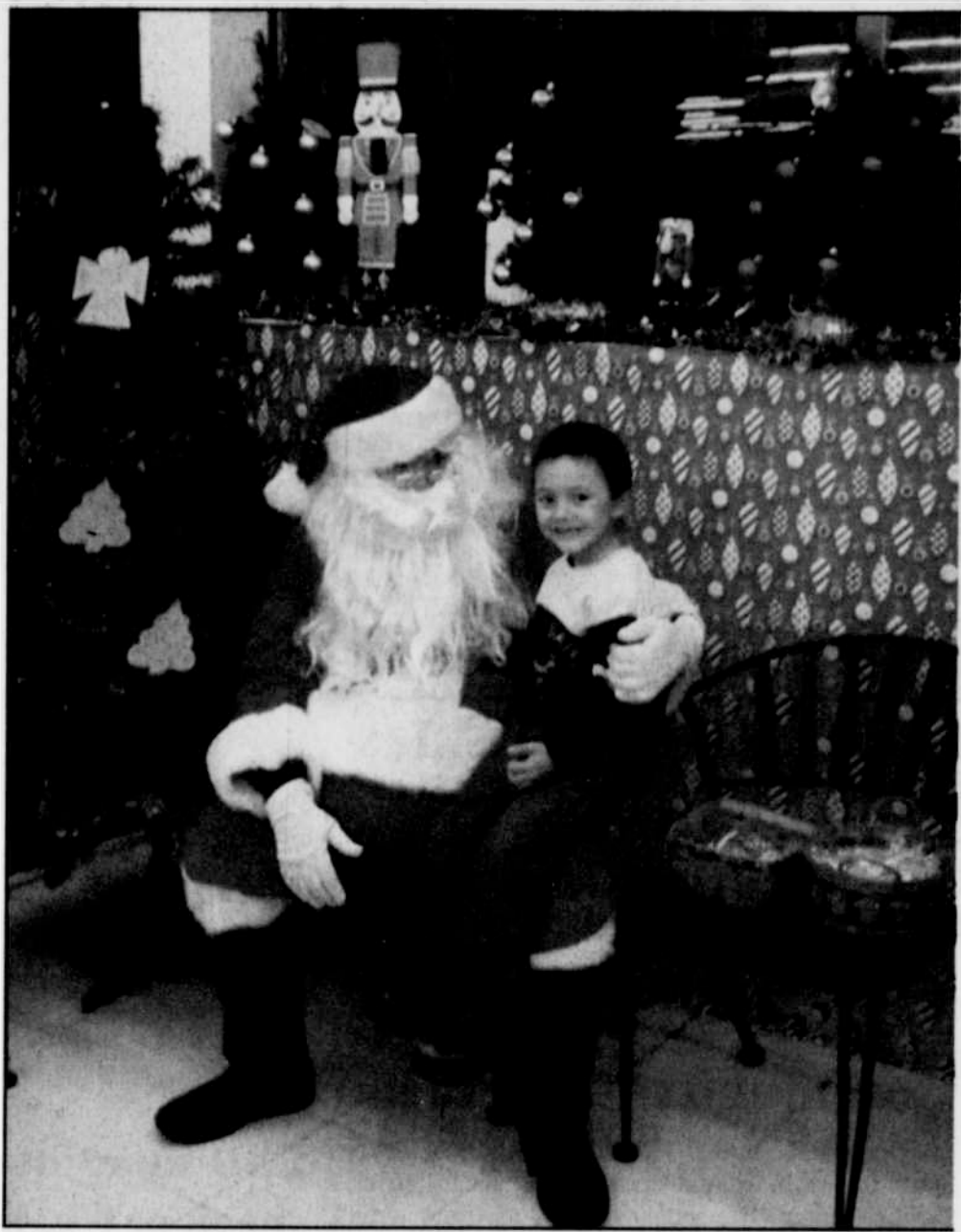
setting up the display and assisted in providing the display with lights and tables from the Chamber of Commerce; Babette Wall, Barbara Pruche, Misty Petzoldt and Peggy Fishburn helped prepare the windows; a youth group and some of their leaders from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Willow Creek Branch washed the windows; Pruche and Natalie Grigg helped check in the nativities; Petzoldt, Doris Brosnan, Neva DeMayo, Natalie Grigg and Kay Proctor helped set up the display; Ken Wenberg helped in regulating the temperature and setting up fans when the windows got fogged up and he and his wife Bonnie donated use of the space and allowed use of fabric and shelves for the display.

Grigg said that they used shaving cream on the windows to de-fog them, but that did not last as long as they had hoped.

A couple of interesting items to note: one of the sets brought in by Doris and Dan Brosnan (the one with the yellow sheep) was painted by Dan when he was in the third grade. Alissa Hill's set was given to her by her son who got it when he was in Chile.

The display will end today, December 11, and people who contributed may pick up their nativities between 6-8 p.m. that day. Some nativities will remain on display and Bates plans to bring in a larger one for the window. St. Patrick's Parish has also agreed to leave their crèche throughout the Christmas season.

He must have been a very good boy



Damien Sheoships-Ball must have been a very good boy as he is all smiles after a confidential talk with Santa during the Customer Appreciation Day December 5 in Heppner. That day also featured the community tree lighting and carolers.

Celebrate Heppner Christmas event December 19

The Celebrate Heppner Chamber Christmas Event will be held next Thursday, December 19, at 6 p.m. at the Morrow County Fairgrounds in Heppner.

Dinner will be served at 6 p.m. by Sweet Productions. The menu will include spaghetti with marinara or meat sauce, garlic bread, garden salad, Christmas cookies, hot cocoa, coffee and lemonade. The cost is \$7 per guest, \$3 for children under five or \$25 for a family of four. A no-host beer and wine catered by Bucknum's will be

available.

Those attending will receive a \$10 rewards card for every meal purchased.

Attendees may also: -Find "Scrooge" and see if you can get him to hand over a "reward card" or two;

-Get your picture taken with Santa on the stage for \$5 per picture from 6-7 p.m.;

-Find the penny board and raffle basket items in the dance hall; -Find the reward card prizes set up in the Annex. Please make sure you have

printed your name clearly on the "rewards cards" and drop them in the specific prize container before 7:15 p.m. Raffle and penny board tickets will provide for an opportunity to win some "great prizes". Raffle prizes include a Play Station 3 and a 7" Nook HD

Penny board prizes include a 40" LCD TV, a 7" Kindle Fire and a 7" Nook HD.

The announcement of "reward card" winners and drawing winners names for the penny and Christmas raffle items will be announced at 7:30 p.m.

Area pastors invited to submit Christmas messages

Businesses, individuals also invited to send in Christmas greetings

The Heppner Gazette-Times will publish a Christmas edition on Dec. 18.

Area pastors are invited to submit Christmas messages to be published in the Dec. 18 edition. The

deadline is Friday, Dec. 13, at 5 p.m.

Messages can be dropped off at the Gazette office, emailed to editor@rapidsolve.net, or faxed to 541-676-9211.

Any businesses or

individuals who would like to have a Christmas greeting in the Dec. 18 Gazette should call 541-676-9228 or email megan@rapidsolve.net by Monday, Dec. 16, at 5 p.m.

G-T sets holiday deadlines

Because of the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the Gazette-Times deadline for news and advertisements for the December 25 issue will be Friday, December 20 at 5 p.m. The deadline for the January 1 issue will be Friday, December 27 at 5 p.m.

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Heppner Gazette-Times 541-676-9228