

HEALTH DISTRICT

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thereby increasing the district's security and backup.

"Our backup system is antiquated," said Mahoney. She said that Windwave used to provide data backup and security, but then, when they got out of the business, the district tried to manage it in-house.

"It's really not the safest," she added.

In the approved agreement with 3t, the district would "own the hardware locally, but 3t would install an on-site appliance that would allow them to remotely manage data storage, maintain backups, provide virus/spam filtering and email encryption and oversee data security." Of great concern is maintaining patient confidentiality as mandated in HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act).

In management's assessment and proposal provided to the board, the district will continue to purchase, update and maintain PC workstations. District management advised against going forward with a "single sign on," because it would be cost-prohibitive, in the neighborhood of \$45,000 per set up, with an additional cost of \$6,500 per month, which would include badges at around \$500-\$600 per month. With the single-sign on, employees at the district would be provided badges that they would be able

to wave in front of the computer to gain access.

"Single sign-on is a great functionality, but given our size, it is more of a nicety than a necessity," said the district executive proposal summary.

In a related matter, Mahoney said she has had a "hard time fighting Healthland" concerning an implementation date for electronic records in the clinics.

"They missed their deadline," she said. She said that Healthland has had continuing issues in scheduling and wants to ask them for a discount and also ask them to put their deadlines in writing.

Also at the meeting Grigg announced that long-time physician Dr. Ed Berretta has announced plans to retire from his medical practice in Heppner. He said that while Dr. Berretta would not continue to keep office hours, he may still be interested in providing some other services to the district. Grigg said that the district will send a notice to all of Dr. Berretta's patients to give them "formal notice and encourage them to transition to Dr. Hambleton," or one of their other health district providers. Grigg said that they are planning a public reception for Dr. Berretta for "his many years of dedication and devotion to our community." Grigg said that he expects Dr. Hambleton to arrive in March and anticipates that

he would spend two clinic days per week in Irrigon and two in Heppner. Dr. Hambleton's proposed start date is March 11.

The board also discussed the upcoming May 20 election in which the district plans to put forth a levy to replace the current levy, which expires. Morrow County voters first passed a three-year supplemental levy for the district eight years ago and, then, after a gap, passed the current five-year supplemental levy. Board Chair Larry Mills stressed that the levy will not increase, but will remain at the .39 cents per thousand assessed valuation as in previous levies. He reiterated that the levy will ensure that the district can continue to provide existing services for emergency services, Home Health and Hospice.

As a result of the last levy, the district accomplished remodeling of the Irrigon Clinic, purchased an ambulance for Irrigon and continued to staff Irrigon and Boardman with full-time paramedics, in addition to maintaining services. With passage of a new levy, the district hopes to be able to replace ambulances for the communities of Boardman and Heppner. Mills told Grigg that as an employee of the district he can't promote passage of the levy and is required to limit his comments to the provision of facts. Mills also suggested

that a Political Action Committee, representing all communities in Morrow County, be formed as soon as possible.

In other business, the board:

- discussed the proposed new Morrow County building in Heppner, including road work and hospital and clinic road access. Board member Leann Rea, who is also a Morrow County Commissioner, gave an overview of the county's plans for the new building, which will be located near the Morrow County Courthouse.

- received an inquiry from Rea as to whether the district would be interested in purchasing the county's building located near Pioneer Memorial Clinic in Heppner. "I could see some value to have some more space," commented Grigg.

- learned that the district had an increase of almost \$100,000 in gross patient revenue over last month's figures. The district had \$668,410 in gross patient revenue in December, compared to \$573,193 in November. The district showed \$27,044 in total revenue deductions, \$641,365 in net patient revenue, compared to \$550,064 last month and \$791,932 in total operating revenue, compared to \$671,357 last month. On the expense side, the district had \$717,933 in total operating expenses, compared to \$730,399 the previous month, for

a \$73,998 gain from operations for December. In November, the district had a \$59,042 loss. The gain for December was \$84,115, compared to a \$50,638 loss in November.

- approved the 2013 audited financials.

- discussed the results of a Gallup employee "engagement survey."

- approved Dr. Russ Nichols' credentialing, which had already been approved by medical staff.

- learned from Grigg that the search for a primary care executive director to manage the district's clinics is continuing. He said that the district has received almost 50 applications and has narrowed the choices down to the top three candidates. "All three are very good," said Grigg, "but I'm not sure they would come if asked." He said the next steps were to do Skype interviews and then schedule on-site interviews.

- learned of an employee recognition banquet planned for Friday, Feb. 28, at the Heppner Elks Lodge. All employees, providers and board members are invited to attend.

- heard the results of a patient survey that indicated that 75 percent would recommend the hospital, emergency or providers to their family and friends. The district's goal is 84 percent.

- received the following report: Pioneer Memorial Hospital had five admissions in December, three swing

bed admissions, 11 admitted for observation, one swing nursing facility admission, 430 total outpatients, 63 emergency room encounters, 1,334 lab tests, 31 x-ray procedures, 19 CT scans, 18 EKG tests, one treadmill procedure, five colonoscopy procedures, three endoscopy procedures, three colon/endoscopy procedures, 27 respiratory therapy procedures; Home Health had 108 patient visits; Hospice had one admission; Pharmacy had 1,815 drug doses for \$121,911 in drug revenue; Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 349 patient visits with 15 new patients, 32 seen by a nurse and nine no-shows; Irrigon Medical Clinic had 191 patient visits with 25 new patients, 39 seen by a nurse and 11 no-shows; Heppner Ambulance had 18 page-outs and 18 transports for \$27,478 in revenue; Boardman Ambulance had 43 page-outs with 21 transports for \$28,690 in revenue; Irrigon Ambulance had 31 page-outs with 13 transports \$16,497 in revenue; there were five flights.

- received the year end ambulance report as follows: Heppner had 260 page outs with 224 transports for an 86 percent transport rate; Boardman had 386 page-outs with 221 transports for 57 percent; and Irrigon had 288 page outs with 174 transports for 60 percent; there were 934 total page-outs, 619 transports and 36 flights for the year.

BMCC LISTENS

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Center in Boardman to give their opinion on why the levy failed, citing everything from a cluttered ballot, to misinformation and displeasure with college class offerings.

"Why are you not offering more in your nursing program instead of drones and agriculture?" asked Ron Mailloux of Boardman. Mailloux said it is hard to get into nursing programs yet the college doesn't seem to add more of those. He also criticized the college for not figuring in rising property valuations.

"I'm not anti-college or anti-education, but the way this was presented was totally wrong," Mailloux said.

If approved the new levy would have raised approximately \$28.1 million to support construction for new workforce training programs in Boardman, Hermiston and Pendleton, as well as capital improvements at college facilities throughout Morrow and Umatilla counties.

The listening session was attended by the Blue Mountain College President Camille Preus; however, the meeting was handled by Casey White-Zollman of InterMountain ESD.

Port of Morrow General Manager Gary Neal said providing for local training is essential for the changes going on in Morrow County.

"When we deal with industries there is a strong need for skilled and semi-skilled workers," he said. The Port of Morrow has seen a major increase in food processing and data center construction, and Neal said "training programs for these workers through the college could have a long-term benefit for both BMCC and our local communities."

Lisa Mittelsdorf, Director of Economic Development at the Port, said she felt people wanted to know more about where the \$28 million was going to be spent, and did not get that information prior to the election.

The new construction projects that would have been funded with the bond were the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) Center, to be located near the SAGE Center in Boardman; the Precision Irrigated Agriculture Center in Hermiston; and the Applied Animal Science Education Center in Pendleton. These new facilities would have enabled BMCC to work

with local industry partners and add approximately 30 new degree and certificate programs that would have trained students for family-wage jobs in the region.

The major expansion that was planned for Morrow County would have been a food processing and computer server training center located at Boardman. The college was looking for land near the new SAGE Center on which to locate.

The center would have taught skills for the food processing and server farm business. Server farms, which contain large computers such as those used by Amazon.com and other online retailers and businesses, are now locating at the Port of Morrow because of cheap power and ample land. BMCC's proposed levy would have added courses to train workers at these facilities.

Port of Morrow board member and Boardman resident Don Russell said he had tried to sign up on the college's web site and take online classes many times, but there were never enough students to actually go ahead with the classes.

Neal told the BMCC representatives that there probably would have been trouble staffing the classes

in Boardman because he was told professors in Pendleton make the decision themselves if they want to go to Boardman to teach. BMCC president Preus did not deny the staff had this authority, but said she would "check it out."

Others at the meeting said the college levy went out in the mail close to property tax statements, which was a blow against passage, and that there was not enough advertising about the details of the levy for voters to decide to vote yes.

Mailloux said that "Pendleton is dying and our (Boardman) area is growing. Give us our bang for our buck," he said.

"We are going to continue to create jobs (at the Port)," Neal said. "And people are going to continue to fill these jobs from outside the area if we don't get the needed training. I am looking to see how BMCC can be a partner in this success," he said.

Morrow County Judge Terry Tallmann said BMCC had missed the boat five or six years ago when it failed to start providing training for the burgeoning wind industry in the area.

"BMCC could have done something to work

with the wind energy business, but that (training opportunity) has passed us by," he said.

"We have an enterprise zone here attracting business," Heppner resident Louis Carlson said. "They are begging for trained people and the Port of Morrow is doing a great job."

When Neal asked how the college came up with where and how the college was going to spend the money from the bond, he was told a blue ribbon panel advised the college

and made the decisions. Neal said he had not heard anything about the panel or the decision process.

The listening tour is being conducted to help BMCC decide whether or not to put the bond up for a vote again. Officials said no decision had been made. They also said a survey had been conducted but said they would not release results of that survey at this time.

"No decision has been made on if to go out for an election again," said White-Zollman.

Thompson benefit a success



More than 150 people attended a benefit for local resident Kimberly Thompson last week. Participants reported that it was a fun night, with an auction that included multiple items, most notably the chance to shave the head of local physician Dr. Russ Nichols. Pictured is Thompson taking a razor to Nichols' head during the festivities last Thursday. -Photo by Sandy Matthews

South Morrow County Scholarship elects officers

At the annual meeting of South Morrow County Scholarship Inc., Bill Rietmann of Ione was elected president; Ginger Bowman, vice president; Del LaRue, treasurer; and Sharon Harrison, secretary. Board members serving are Martha Munkers, Missy Cutsforth and Carri Grieb.

The South Morrow County Scholarship Trust was established several years ago to provide funds

to grant scholarships to graduating seniors from Heppner and Ione high schools and to take the place of the Troedson Scholarship fund, which will be discontinued in the year 2023.

Application for this year's scholarships will be available in the form of computer disk at Heppner High School and Ione High School starting in March.

HHS plans academic support Fridays

Heppner Jr./Sr. High School has scheduled several Friday mornings for academic support. Staff members will be present to provide assistance to students.

"This is something we have always done informally, but we want to remind parents and students ahead of time," said head teacher Greg Grant.

"With the rigor of our classes, students now, more

than ever, need to spend significant time out of class to do their best."

Students are encouraged to attend between 8 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. on the listed dates.

Parents are encouraged to contact teachers or the school with any questions.

Dates for academic support are: Feb. 7 and 28; March 7, 14 and 21; April 18; and May 2 and 9.

ABRAMS AT CHAMBER

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when accepting the job.

"I believe deeply in the mission of the agency to ensure a legacy for Oregonians and their public schools through sound stewardship of Oregon's lands, wetlands, unclaimed property, estates and the Common School Fund."

According to its website, the Dept. of State Lands manages nearly 640,000 acres of grazing and agricultural land;

131,000 acres of forestland, including the Elliott State Forest in Coos and Douglas counties; and 800,000 acres of off-shore land, estuarine tidelands, and submerged and submersible lands of the state's navigable waterway system.

The land is managed to derive income; earnings from fund investments are distributed semi-annually to Oregon's 198 K-12 public school districts.

DEADLINE FOR NEWS AND ADVERTISING - MONDAYS AT 5:00 PM