

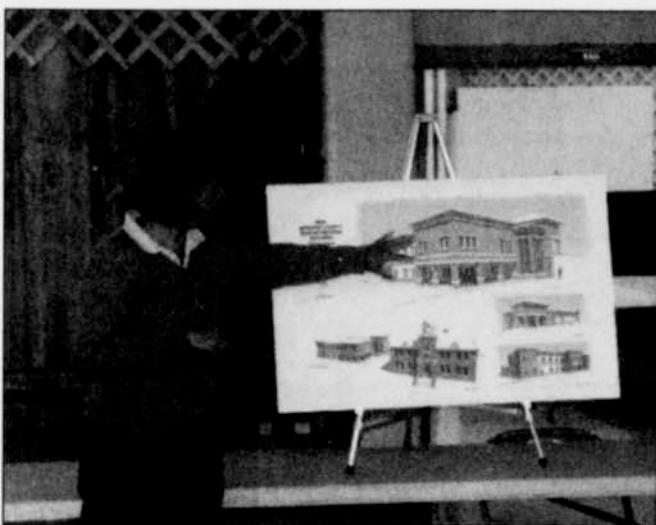
HEPPNER

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Public introduced to new county office building



Amber Van Ocker of LKV Architects talks about the new county office building her firm is designing to be built in Heppner. —Photo by David Sykes

By David Sykes

A new 11,300-square-foot office building planned for construction next to the present county courthouse was unveiled to the public for the first time at a meeting held last Wednesday at the fairgrounds in Heppner.

The project manager, as well as architects working on the project, was on hand

with artist's sketches of the buildings to answer questions and discuss the new facility.

The new two-story building will be built on the north side of the present courthouse. Three houses were purchased and will be torn down to make way for the new, as-yet-unnamed facility (see

name the building contest story "What's in a name?" in this week's Gazette). It will feature offices for the county health department, administration, accounting, juvenile, veterans and the county court. Some of those departments are located in the Gilliam Bisbee building in downtown Heppner, some are located in the current courthouse building, and some are located in the small county annex located near Rock Street in Heppner. The new building will also have public meeting and conference rooms as well as storage areas for county records.

During the design of the facility the architects were encouraged to try and incorporate a similar "look" in the new building as in the older 114-year-old county courthouse, which was built from basalt quarried on the

—See NEW ADMIN BUILDING/PAGE FOUR

WCVEDG receives \$50,000 for housing program

CREZ funds effort to stimulate home ownership

By David Sykes

In an effort to address a housing shortage and encourage home ownership in South Morrow County, the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) last Friday received a \$50,000 check from the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ), to fund a new program encouraging home purchasing and development in the South Morrow County area. The check was presented to WCVEDG president Ed Rollins by CREZ chairman Don Russell at a meeting last Friday in Boardman.

Rollins and the WCVEDG board are currently in the process of developing a "simplified residential real estate investment credit...with the intent to grant \$6-\$7,000 to anyone acquiring residentially zoned real estate in our service area," according to a draft proposal of the program provided by the economic development group. WCVEDG's service area covers mainly the south part of Morrow County.

Funds for the program are part of a larger \$150,000 amount committed earlier by CREZ to improve housing throughout Morrow County. CREZ at one time had considered contracting with the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation to administer the entire housing program, but instead decided to work directly with local groups. WCVEDG was the first to step up when it presented an outline program to the CREZ last month. WCVEDG will now flesh out the plan which will



Columbia River Enterprise Zone Chairman Don Russell (left) presents \$50,000 check to Willow Creek Economic Development Group President Ed Rollins, funding a new housing incentive program currently being developed by the local economic development group. —Contributed photo

include among other things

specific rules for the home owner grants, rules it plans to make widely available to the public when completed.

"WCVEDG is very grateful for the CREZ board's decision and ability to fund our residential real estate investment project from the money they had earmarked to address the housing deficiencies in the county. Our project was created to help address the housing issues identified in the strategic plans of all three cities in South Morrow County as well as the combined Willow Creek Valley Strategic Plan. We are anxious to finalize the parameters of our program and begin putting these dollars to work," Rollins told the Gazette-Times.

In a related matter at the same meeting Jill Parker, President of the Boardman Community Development Association (BCDA), spoke to the CREZ board about a program her community is developing that would provide grants of \$2,000 to anyone who takes a home

buying class and then purchases a home.

Holding up a three ring binder, Parker said the eight-hour course had been developed to help mainly first-time home buyers navigate the complexities of buying and owning a home. She said the program would offer a \$2,000 grant to anyone completing the course and then buying a home in Boardman, and she tentatively asked the CREZ board to fund the program with \$40,000 for the grants.

The CREZ, which receives its money from businesses paying fees instead of property taxes when locating in the enterprise zone, has already given the city of Boardman \$100,000 to fund a rental housing construction program, and so far none of that has been used. Chairman Russell asked if some of that money could be used for this new proposed education and home buying grant program. Boardman city

—See CREZ HOUSING PLANS/PAGE FOUR

Fire destroys rural home outside Ione

A fire destroyed a two-story house and other property at 65739 Carlson Lane about 15 miles outside of Ione Monday afternoon. The house, rented by Rick and Vicki Dorman, was on property owned by John and Kerry Rietmann. The Dormans were uninjured but their four dogs were killed in the house fire.

Both Heppner and Ione fire responded to the fire, which occurred just inside Heppner's fire district. Ione Fire Chief Virgil Morgan said the Ione department was paged out at 12:31 and

arrived at the property at 1:01 p.m. The Heppner fire department was already on the scene.

"Rusty was on the scene first. He said it was totally engulfed already," said Morgan.

By the time responders arrived, there wasn't much they could do but sit back and watch, Morgan said.

"Heppner's rig put water on a propane tank," said Morgan. "It (the house) was already engulfed, and we just kind of stayed back in case that tank blew." The tank didn't

blow, thanks to the fire department's efforts and a wind that blew the fire the other way. However, the inferno destroyed not only the house but also three older-model vehicles and a shed.

The fire had apparently been going for some time undetected. Morgan said the couple told him they had been to Heppner for an appointment. When they returned, they noticed smoke.

"They said they had four dogs in there, so they opened the door to see if the

dogs would come out. They didn't," he recounted.

The Dormans then said they went around the back to look in through a window, but the smoke was too thick to see anything, so they backed off and went to a neighbor's house to call 911. Morgan said it would be nearly impossible to determine the cause of the fire.

"If we did have anyone out there (to determine the cause) it would be really difficult to find the cause," Morgan said. "Everything was burned up so totally."

Healy announces retirement from CBEC

Co-op seeks new general manager

Columbia Basin General Manager Jerry Healy announces his retirement to the CBEC membership at the last annual meeting, the co-op announced in a letter to its membership recently.

Columbia Basin also announced that the board had contracted with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Executive Search Department to help find a replacement for Healy, who worked at CBEC for 33 years.

The co-op urges all

qualified candidates to apply.

"Hiring a General Manager is the most important decision that a Board makes and we take this responsibility as a challenge to build on Columbia Basin's strong reputation and enhance its future performance for our members," stated the letter from the board of directors.

Anyone interested in the position should contact Ken Holmes at 785-201-2148. All other inquiries should be directed to CBEC, 541-676-9146.

Health district works to improve heart attack response in communities

November 5, 2013 was a significant day for Barry Beyeler, Boardman City Director of Community Development. That was the day Barry's life was saved after having a heart attack in a public meeting at Boardman City Hall.

During the meeting Barry slumped over and lost consciousness. His colleagues acted quickly by calling 911, beginning CPR, and using an onsite automated external defibrillator (AED) while waiting for the paramedics to arrive. He ended up having bypass surgery, but

today is back to work and doing well.

Two weeks later, Kathy Neal, with Neal Development, shared with Dan Grigg, CEO of Morrow County Health District, the need for additional CPR training and expanded placement of AED's in the Boardman community. Upon further discussion, Morrow County Health District paramedic Delbert Turner developed a proposal to work with local business, government, schools and community leaders to educate residents of Boardman in the use of



MCHD Irrigon paramedic Kelly Shelton stands by one of the district ambulances. Paramedics like Shelton are on the front lines of the fight to save a heart attack victim's life. —Contributed photo

CPR-AED and improve access and knowledge of

—See HEART ATTACK SURVIVAL/PAGE FOUR

What's in a name?

Morrow County has announced that it is turning to county residents to select the name for the new Morrow County administrative building. To that end, the county is running a contest now through April 30; the person whose building name is selected will receive \$100 from the Morrow County Commissioners.

Participants may enter as many times as they like. Deadline for entry is April 30, 2014.

A link to the contest entry form can be found on the county's homepage, <http://morrowcountyoregon.com/>, or contact Karen Wolff at kwolff@co.morrow.or.us for more information.

Heppner, Ione to hold proms April 19

Heppner and Ione high school students will don their finest for the big dance on April 19. Both schools plan proms for that night; Ione at 8 p.m. and Heppner at 9 p.m.



Area pastors invited to submit Easter messages

Easter is April 20. The Heppner Gazette-Times invites area pastors to submit Easter messages to be published in the April 16 edition. The deadline is

Friday, April 11, at 5 p.m. Messages can be dropped off at the Gazette office, emailed to editor@gazette-times.com, or faxed to 541-676-9211.

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