

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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obtaining college credit by proficiency, while students are still in high school. She outlined how high school students can save money by earning college credits.

"It's fantastic to be a part of what's going on in all three communities (with Eastern Promise)," said school district superintendent Dirk Dirksen.

Dirksen announced that PGE (Portland General Electric), through the Strategic Investment Program (SIP), is donating \$500,000 to the district, 20 percent initially. He says he has determined that the district can accept the SIP money without it being offset by the district's

general fund. Dirksen also said that a donation by Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc., will fund a counselor an additional half time at Riverside and half time at Irrigon High School. He also said that district funds will double the counseling opportunities at Heppner High School.

In other business, the board:

-heard from Dirksen that the district has received a cost for asbestos abatement at \$26,000 for the old Lexington school district office. He said that the district has not yet received any offer to buy the building.

-received the following enrollment

report for April: A.C. Houghton Elementary-280, Sam Boardman Elementary-335, Heppner Elementary-172, Irrigon Elementary-175, Windy River Elementary-207, Heppner High School-167, Irrigon Junior/Senior High School-385, Riverside High School-383, Morrow Education District-37, Total-2,141.

-approved the following employment action for April: resignations-Alysun Burns, A.C. Houghton temporary second-grade teacher-last day March 27, Jason Whitbeck, Irrigon Junior/Senior High School assistant track coach, TaMara Thornton, IJSHS science teacher-last day May 1, Eric Shular, IJSHS

head junior high football coach; retirements-Kathi Dickenson, IJSHS ed assistant at the end of the 2013-14 school year; employment/promotions/transfers-Cynthia Rives, Riverside Junior/Senior High School ed assistant, Pat King, PERS retiree rehired as RJSHS special education teacher for 2014-15, Mike Royer, PERS retiree rehired as RJSHS/IJSHS counselor for 2014-15, Kelsie Fox, Heppner Junior/Senior High School temporary one-on-one special education assistant; extra duty contracts-Dave Cooley, IJSHS head softball coach, Dieter Waite, HJSHS head junior high track coach, Bridget Waite, HJSHS assistant junior high track coach.

-adopted policy on public participation in board meetings.

-learned that the district is in compliance with and implementing all the standards for public elementary and secondary schools. The standards address the district's requirements in areas such as diploma and graduation requirements, academic program offerings, implementation of state assessments and numerous other areas.

-approved the first reading of rescinded, new or revised policies on admission of non-resident students, non-resident students attendance variance, admission of non-resident students, inter-district transfer of resident

students.
-heard English/Language Arts textbook presentations by Rachel Luke and Aaron Byers and adopted the K-12 English/Language Arts curriculum.
-learned that the deadline for the required Achievement Compacts has been postponed until fall.

-learned of a budget committee vacancy. Joe Taylor has moved out of the district.

-held an executive session concerning personnel, negotiations, real estate and records exempt.

-heard the following announcements: May 5-9-teacher appreciation week; May 12-next board meeting, A.C. Houghton Elementary School, 7 p.m.

COMMISSIONER: GRIEB

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past seven years, I have built relationships with the agencies, decision-makers and policy-makers that Morrow County deals with every day. Those relationships have, and will continue, to serve the citizens of our county well. I understand the political process and know how to get our message across to get results.

What is the biggest problem facing Morrow County government in the future? With the state of Oregon facing budget problems, they are shifting more responsibility to counties to fund programs. These unfunded mandates will affect Morrow County's budget in the future. It will be more important than ever for Morrow County government to prioritize what programs are most important to the citizens of this county and also prioritize the funding of those programs. I also have to mention the planned closure of the PGE coal plant. It is scheduled to close in 2020. The loss of jobs will affect every community in our county. The lost tax revenue will affect the county budget, as well as taxing districts within our county.

What will be your first priority if you are elected as commissioner? I have a real passion for Morrow County and its people. I want to continue to make a positive difference in the lives of each and every citizen in our county. Every decision I've made and every vote I've cast over the past seven years has been with the best interest of the entire county in mind. Helping people solve problems and helping to improve communities is something I feel is very important and which I

enjoy. If re-elected I will continue to make that my priority.

Do you feel the current court adequately represents Morrow County residents, both north and south? The current court most certainly does represent the entire county. The court has a good relationship with the cities of Boardman, Heppner, Lone, Irrigon, and the town of Lexington. For example, the county recently finished work with each community on their pre-disaster mitigation plans and the medical marijuana dispensary issue. The county court respects the independence of each community and will continue to assist them when needs arise. The court also has a good working relationship with the Port of Morrow. The county and the Port work together on many issues that are in the best interest of all of Morrow County.

Are you satisfied with the way the CREZ agreement is working for the county? Yes, so far I am. The Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ), in its present form, is a relatively new organization. It has representation from county government, the city of Boardman and the Port of Morrow. Funding has just started to come in and good things are being done with that money. The CREZ has funded education, public safety and housing projects county-wide, which I believe are three top priority needs of Morrow County. As time goes on and more funds are received, the program will be fine-tuned to continue to improve livability in Morrow County.

Are you satisfied with the way the SIP (Strategic Investment Program)

money is being spent? Yes, I am satisfied with the way the SIP money is being spent. The Strategic Investment Program dollars have been used to fund projects that are very much needed throughout the county. The road department, health department, building maintenance and vehicle rotation are some of the areas in which this money has been utilized so far. Future delegations of funds are currently in the long-range planning stage but they will undoubtedly allow the county to move forward on many new projects and catch up on some that had been put on hold. Taxing districts throughout all of Morrow County have received funding through the SIP program. The Morrow County and lone school districts have both benefited from SIP payments, as well.

Do you think the county should change its charter and/or the number of elected commissioners? I do not believe the charter or the number of county commissioners should be changed. Morrow County is currently served by one full time commissioner and two half-time commissioners. With our current county population, I feel the county government, as it stands now, serves its people well. I have always believed that you should surround yourself with good people and expect great things from them. The Morrow County Commissioners have excellent people surrounding them who do great things for this county on a daily basis. Morrow County is in good hands, and I would very much like to continue to be a part of this team.

COMMISSIONER: RUSSELL

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of Morrow, for which I currently serve as president.

Why do you feel you are better qualified than your opponent to represent the people of Morrow County as commissioner? I have a skill set based on 32 years of business, farming and community involvement, with a formal education in finance and accounting. I bring a wide variety of skills to county government, which is a little different than what is currently there. I believe it will complement the skills of the other commissioners. As a commissioner with the Port of Morrow, I have made a lot of key contacts around the region that could be called on to answer challenges. As the former president of a \$20-million-a-year company with multiple locations and 90 employees, I have a wide variety of management skills and experience.

What is the biggest problem facing Morrow County government in the future? The biggest problem remains how to manage scarce resources efficiently, to make sure that our decisions have a positive impact on county residents.

What will be your first priority if you are elected as commissioner? I would want to have meetings in each of our communities with the city managers, mayors and concerned

citizens to make sure that county government is addressing their needs and issues. I think that communication and involvement are the keys to making informed decisions.

Do you feel the current court adequately represents Morrow County residents, both north and south? I think that Terry and LeAnn work pretty hard at being engaged in the communities and different committees that the county and region needs representation on. I see a lot less effort by my opponent.

Are you satisfied with the way the CREZ agreement is working for the county? There are over 60 enterprise zones in Oregon. If we want economic growth, then they are a check box that needs to be checked. The average wage in Morrow County is the fifth highest of any county in Oregon. So in my opinion the desire for higher wages is working. The part where we are supposed to attract more people to our county is not working as well. We have county-wide housing issues that we are working on. I think that the CREZ committee has negotiated Payment in Lieu of Taxes with these companies that covers the increased demand in services. It is not a windfall, but we are not going backwards on any of our Special Districts.

Are you satisfied with the way the SIP (Strategic

Investment Program) money is being spent? The SIP money is an interesting concept, compared to the CREZ. In the CREZ the committee uses the money to first make impacted districts whole, such as emergency services, then shares the remainder. In the SIP the first \$500,000 is shared, with the remainder going directly to the county's general fund. In the case of the PGE gas plant, 1.9 million goes annually to the county general fund. I think that with this windfall the county could take a serious look at sharing gas tax revenues with cities as had traditionally been done and looking hard at reinstating the former needs and issues program.

Do you think the county should change its charter and/or the number of elected commissioners? The number of elected commissioners is not an issue for me; I think three is sufficient, as long as they are all active. This came under some considerable discussion when the county withheld gas tax revenue from the cities that had been traditionally shared. There was poor or no communication from county government before they just kept this money. I would not withhold something that had traditionally been given without first having a serious conversation with the effected parties.

Health district offers help with Cover Oregon enrollment

Open enrollment ends April 30

Cover Oregon open enrollment is ending on April 30. For those who are still in need of health insurance, Pioneer

Memorial Health District is offering free assistance with the application on Monday, April 21, and Tuesday, April 29, at Pioneer Memorial

Hospital. To schedule an appointment, contact Anna McElligott at 541-422-7043 or 541-571-3054.

Sheriff's Report

January 20 (cont.):
-MCSO received report from an Irrigon woman that she was staying at her daughter's place while the daughter was at work and the daughter's husband was at the location and had been harassing them. MCSO responded.
-MCSO received report of a slide off on Hwy. 207, Lexington.
-MCSO received report that someone drove through the field on S.E. Seventh Ave off Hwy. 730 Irrigon. The caller said there was debris on the roadway. She said there were usually horses in the field.
January 21: Morrow County Sheriff's Office received report of a white cargo van that keeps moving and stopping on Columbia Lane in Boardman. Boardman Police Department responded and determined that the vehicle was with the railroad.

-MCSO deputy advised he was checking on a report of a skinny cow in Boardman.
-MCSO received report from a Heppner man that his stepson was either drunk or high and may have been driving a tan Pathfinder. The caller believed him to be out of control.
-MCSO received request for phone contact from a Lexington woman regarding vehicles that her ex-husband left on the property. She wanted to know about getting them removed. A deputy made contact and advised her of her options.
-MCSO advised of assisting another law enforcement agency with a burglary that had just occurred.
-MCSO received report from an Irrigon man that his vehicle was stolen the previous Sunday and he requested deputy contact.

January 22: Morrow County Sheriff's Office received report of a car stolen the previous Sunday. The caller located his vehicle and followed it into the Irrigon Mobile Court. MCSO arrested the caller, David Lynn Hickox, 54, for Assault II, Possession of a Controlled Substance-Methamphetamine, Delivery of Methamphetamine, Menacing, and Reckless Endangering. He was to be lodged at Umatilla County Jail with \$82,000 bail.
-A caller in Heppner reported a vehicle seen in the area, driving slow and stopping. The caller said no contact was needed; he just wanted to report it.
-Umatilla County Sheriff's Office contacted MCSO and asked that MCSO locate a female and advise her that her stolen purse had been recovered. Female needed to contact

UCSO.
-A man in Heppner called MCSO and asked to speak with a deputy regarding a possible phone scam. The man received a call from Idaho saying he had some sort of case against him but if he paid now it would go away. Deputy responded and determined that the case was civil and likely fraudulent in nature/Internet scam. He advised the subject of his options.
-MCSO received a report of cars vandalized in Irrigon. The cars were written on with marker.
-A caller from Irrigon reported that her mail was scattered around. She believes someone was messing with the mail but couldn't tell if any was missing.
January 23: -A woman in Irrigon reported to Morrow County Sheriff's Office that two Hispanic males in a white

van just jumped out and took something out of a yard. Deputies responded and contacted subjects in vehicle.
-A male in Boardman reported that license plates were stolen off of one of his vehicles.
-USDA Wildlife Services advised MCSO they were treating blackbirds with bait at location listed in case anyone locates dead birds and is concerned.
-MCSO received a report of a possible stolen vehicle at a location in Irrigon. A deputy checked. No vehicle was there.
January 24: -Morrow County Sheriff's Office received a complaint in Boardman regarding two cows out, a black one with horns and a black-and-white with horns, as well. The caller believed they belonged to the people who

live on the property behind her. The black cow is aggressive. A male subject was given a verbal warning for having the cows out of the pasture and was advised he will receive a citation if it happens again.
-MCSO received a report from the Lone area that someone had been blowing up Tannerite and driving trucks through the fence. MCSO responded and contacted the subject. The caller repaired the damage and will take care of everything; does not want anything else done about it.
-MCSO was advised that Ross Van Etta wanted to turn himself in on a warrant and would meet a deputy at Irrigon Justice Court. Van Etta, 33, was arrested by MCSO on a Umatilla County warrant for Parole Violation/Failure to Register. No bail.