

HEPPNER

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# Gazette Times

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## Spring is in the air



Tree blossoms and budding flowers on Heppner's Main Street announce that spring is slowly but surely coming to South Morrow County. —Photo by Mallorie Jones

## A city manager's road from Heppner to Lebanon

By Alex Paul, reprinted from the Albany Democrat-Herald

LEBANON, OR—The ink was barely dry on City Manager Gary Marks' contract when Mayor Paul Aziz announced a budget cut of \$500,000 and the loss of 10 staff positions.

Marks already knew the city had been trying to fill its police chief's position for several years and his predecessor in the city manager's job lasted less than six months.

But none of those issues scared him away,

and he turned down the city manager's job in Ellensburg, Wash.

"The reason I went into this profession in the first place was because I thought I could make a difference," Marks said. "There already is a great foundation among the staff and they need a strong manager. I didn't come here with a list of changes I was going to make. I'm going to listen first and then address issues."



Gary Marks

Marks, 50, is proud to be a fifth-generation Oregonian who grew up in the Portland area, making him a bit unlikely to be a small-town fit.

But for the last 23 years, Marks has lived and worked in small communities in Oregon, Montana and Idaho.

His involvement in community politics began while he was living in Tualatin and attending George Fox University in

Newberg.

"A Subway restaurant in Tualatin was having problems about a sign and I figured out the only way I could do something about it was to run for city council," Marks said. "I knocked on more than 5,000 doors, nearly every door in the city, and beat an incumbent."

Marks majored in human relations at George Fox, noting that the program had a heavy emphasis on "people skills."

—See HEPPNER TO LEBANON/PAGE TEN

## Candidate forum planned in Heppner

The Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots will hold a candidates' forum this Sunday, April 27, from 2-4 p.m. at Heppner City Hall.

A wide range of candidates contending for offices ranging from county commissioner to state governor is slated to attend.

Those planning to participate in the forum include:

For Morrow County Commissioner—Don Russell.

For Morrow County

District Attorney—Justin Nelson.

For U.S. House of Representatives—Dennis Linthium.

For U.S. Senate—Timothy Crawley, Karl King, Jo Rae Perkins.

Oregon State Governor—Dennis Richardson (via video) and Bruce Cuff.

The public is invited to attend the forum and find out more about these candidates and where they stand on issues important to Morrow County.

## County scores a bargain on 'new' furniture

Heppner residents may have noticed a flurry of activity around the Gilliam & Bisbee Building in Heppner last week, as truck after truck pulled up and unloaded office furniture... lots of office furniture.

The deliveries, intended largely for use in the new county administrative building currently being planned, were the result of a bargain the county received through Oregon State Surplus Property Program, Morrow County Court Executive Secretary/Personnel Director Karen Wolff said. The state surplus program "exists to provide a central distribution point for surplus, seized and/or recovered public property for State Agencies and political subdivisions," according to the Oregon State website. While some property is sold to the general public, most, as with the recent county purchase, is sold at reduced



A moving company employee wheels a load of furniture into the Gilliam & Bisbee Building in Heppner last Tuesday. The truck he was unloading was one of six semis and three smaller trucks that delivered "new" furniture for the county. —Photo by April Sykes

rates to public offices.

And they do mean "reduced." Wolff said the purchase contained around \$2 million worth of

good-quality, sturdy Knoll office furniture. The cost to Morrow County was \$10,000.

Wolff said she first learned of the bargain through an email from the state surplus program in early March. A federal agency was moving to a smaller office space, and the old furniture wouldn't all fit.

"They were offering this deal, but it was all or nothing," she said. "We couldn't just take the fridge in the corner. We had to take it all."

Wolff was able to contact the Morrow County Court that day, and received approval to go for it. When she called, she learned she would be third on the list, with two counties already having responded. She put Morrow County on the list anyway. That was a Wednesday.

"Friday they called and said, 'You got it if you still want it,'" she said.

Wolff went and inspected the furniture and supplies the first part of April. They told her, she said, that it would take four semi trucks to transport it. They ended up with six semis and three moving

trucks.

"I crammed it (the furniture) into every warehouse I could find in South Morrow County," she said.

The delivery contained the gamut of office supplies, including a Polycom conference system, pictures, shredders, a couple of refrigerators, lots of chairs and "garbage cans like crazy." It also included systems furniture, which can be arranged into large or small workspaces as needed for the available office space.

"It's very flexible. The furniture should be something we can make fit into the areas where we are," said Wolff.

The furniture comes with one large string

—See FURNITURE BARGAIN/PAGE SEVEN

## Primary ballots to go out next week

Voter registration due April 29

Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers says all ballots for the upcoming primary election will go out by Wednesday, April 30. The last day for voters to register to vote in the May 20 primary is next Tuesday, April 29. Remember, ballots are not forwarded. Those who don't receive ballots but believe they should have should contact the Morrow County Clerk's office at 541-676-5604.

On the ballot for Morrow County are candidates Ken Grieb and Don Russell competing for Morrow County Commissioner, and Justin Nelson running unopposed for reelection as M.C. District Attorney. Rep. Greg Smith is also running unopposed for reelection in the 57<sup>th</sup> District, and Greg Walden faces multiple opponents for his seat in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District for U.S. Congress.

Also for local decision will be a proposed renewal of a current five-year local option tax for general operations for the Morrow County Health District. "Shall Morrow County Health District continue \$0.39 per \$1,000 of assessed value for general operations for five years beginning July 1, 2014? 'This measure renews current local option taxes,'" States the ballot question.

If passed, according to the ballot summary, "the Morrow County Health District will use the tax revenue from this measure to help maintain and improve the present level of services. The levy is the same rate approved by the voters for fiscal years

2009-2010 through 2013-2014. Increased unfunded care, increased supply and labor costs, and the need to implement electronic medical records and replace ambulances in Boardman and Heppner indicate that the permanent rate will be insufficient to continue to fund District operations at current levels. The estimated tax cost for this measure is an estimate only based on the best information available from the county assessor at the time of the estimate. The proposed rate will raise approximately \$471,662 per year in fiscal years 2014-2015 through 2018-2019, for a total of \$2,358,310."

Election Day is Tuesday, May 20. All ballots are due by 8 p.m. that day. Ballots must be received, not simply postmarked, on that day. For voter convenience, 24-hour drop boxes are located throughout the county. Locations are as follows:

**Heppner:** Courthouse parking lot (24 hours) or the Morrow County Clerk's Office, Room 102 inside the courthouse. Open 8 a.m. to noon and 1-5 p.m., M-F and Election Day (Nov. 5) from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

**Lexington:** 365 West Hwy 74 (Public Works Parking lot). Turn off Hwy. 74 onto Tom Street and left into the public works parking lot. Open 24 hours.

**Ilone:** Spring St. (in front of the turn to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street). Open 24 hours.

**Boardman:** NW Boardman Ave. (24 hours).

**Irrigon:** 205 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> St. (Irrigon Annex). Open 24 hours.

## Easter Bunny makes annual appearance



The Easter Bunny made its annual appearance at Heppner City Park last Saturday for the traditional Easter egg hunt. Here it takes a moment to pose for the camera with (L-R) Nickolas, Andrew and Hailey Wenberg of Heppner. —Contributed photo

### SPRING TIME - GARDEN TIME

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