

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

VOL. 133 N.O. 17 10 Pages Wednesday, April 30, 2014 Morrow County, Heppner.

Voters get face time at candidates' forum

By David Sykes

Six candidates showed up Sunday for Heppner's candidates forum to meet the public, discuss the issues and answer questions. Ballots will be in voters' mailboxes this week and are due back by May 20. The forum was sponsored by the Willow Creek Tea Party Patriots and was moderated by Heppner attorney Bill Kuhn. About 30 people attended the forum, which was held at city hall.

Republican gubernatorial candidate **Bruce Cuff** of Mehama was first to speak, and he said Oregon is headed in the wrong direction. Cuff's main issues were returning control back to

the local level, and reform of Oregon's tax code. He advocates cutting back the income and corporate taxes and having local sales tax pay for schools and other services.

"Public education needs competition. We need parents to be in control of education dollars for their children," he said.

He says too much money is going to the Salem through the income tax,

only to be sent back locally with too many state controls attached. He feels homeschooling should be less regulated. Cuff also favors returning authority for law

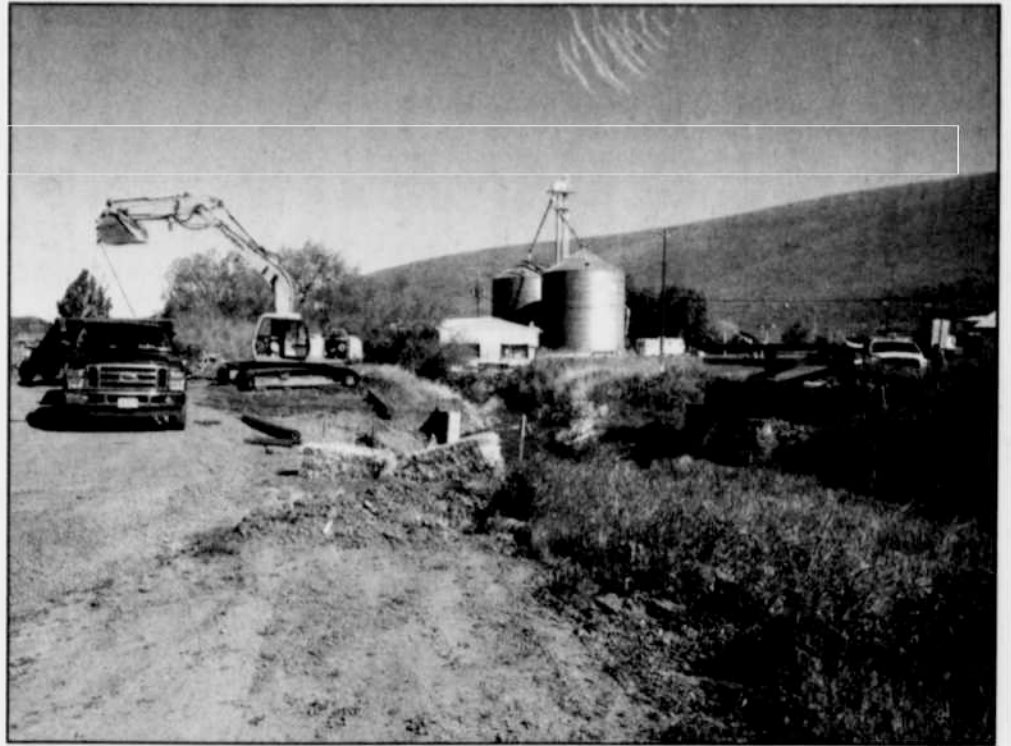
enforcement to the county sheriffs and returning local control in land-use planning from the state.

Gordon Challstrom, a Medford Republican gubernatorial candidate, said government was too big and Oregonians needed more local control over their businesses and lives.

"Radical environmentalists are keeping us from logging, fishing and mining," he said. "Government and big business are well represented in Salem, but not the individuals and small businesses."

Challstrom also advocated more local

Sperry Street Bridge is no more



The Sperry Street Bridge in Heppner was removed for good on Tuesday, an action that is seeing an alternate traffic route developed by the Department of Transportation. The bridge removal has been in the planning stages for some time because the bridge was getting old and needed repair. It was determined to be less expensive to remove the bridge and develop a new route than repair the old bridge. "Everything went fine," said Heppner City Manager Kim Cutsforth. She said on Wednesday ODOT will begin the rest of the job by removing the cement abutments and doing bank restoration. Cutsforth said an ODOT biologist will place fish barriers in the creek 40 feet above and below the former bridge area, and then tase or stun any fish in that area of the creek, so they can be removed without harm and relocated above or below the barriers. —Contributed Photo



Bruce Cuff



Karl King



Gordon Challstrom

All of county bans marijuana dispensaries

It's official; in all of Morrow County, its cities, town and county governments have passed a one-year moratorium on establishment of medical marijuana dispensaries.

The cities of Heppner, Lone, Boardman and Irrigon all voted to enact the ban, then the town of Lexington. Lastly, the Morrow County Court passed the ban, making the ban unanimous across the county before the state deadline of May 1. The ban is for one year,

until May 1, 2015. The Oregon legislature had passed a law allowing the facilities, which sell marijuana to people with a doctor's approval. Then, realizing there were flaws in the law, the legislature passed an addendum allowing communities and counties to place a one-year moratorium on establishment of the facilities. Everyone in Morrow County took them

—See MARIJUANA BAN/ PAGE SIX

Farra recognized for 50+ years of dedication to county museum



Heppner woman Ida Farra sits next to one of her donations, a high chair in which her husband, "Bill" Farra, sat as a child. Farra has contributed more than a thousand items to the county museum. —Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

By Andrea Di Salvo

an open house recently to honor long-time volunteer and contributor Ida Farra.

The Morrow County Farm Foundation, a nonprofit that operates Morrow County's museums, honored Farra with a well-attended open house at the museum in Heppner Monday, complete with punch and cookies and a plaque recognizing her "donations, devotion and dedication" to the museum "from its beginnings and beyond."

Farra was one of five women who "put their hearts into it" and worked to get the museum up and running at its inception in 1960. Since then she has "loaned" hundreds of items to the museum, loans that she recently

made permanent as a gift. In fact, Farm Foundation Chairman Cliff Green says that, if you add up all the items contributed by Farra, the number is more than a thousand.

"That's quite a feat," he adds.

Farra shared a few remembrances of her early years with the museum, saying she was good help back then because she could climb ladders to reach high places.

"I couldn't do that now," says the Heppner woman, who is in her nineties but identifies her age only as "old enough."

—See MUSEUM CELEBRATES FARRA/PAGE EIGHT

Voters to decide health district levy

Continuation of current tax

A levy request from the Morrow County Health District will be part of the ballot voters are to receive in the mail this week.

The request will be asking for a continuation of a previously-approved levy of 39 cents per \$1,000 of property valuation over a five year period.

The anticipated uses of the levy funds are to maintain and improve access to quality care, purchase new ambulances for Boardman and Heppner, implement electronic health records in clinics, home health and hospice, and upgrade cardiac monitoring systems at Pioneer Memorial Hospital and

emergency room. In information provided by the district it was shown that Morrow County has a reasonable health district tax rate: John Day is \$2.13 per thousand, Burns has \$1.93, and Enterprise \$1.64 compared to Morrow County's current overall base and levy tax rate of just \$99 per \$1,000.

The district also points to past efficient uses of levy funds such as expansion of the Irrigon Medical Clinic, allowing for an additional physician; the upgrading of lab equipment, allowing for more diagnostic testing; the purchase of

—See LEVY ON THE LINE/ PAGE EIGHT

Health district discusses safety upgrades, procedures

By April Sykes

Morrow County Health District CEO Dan Grigg told the MCHD Board at their regular Monday-night meeting in Lexington that a need for lock-down procedures in emergency situations at Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner had been determined following a

recent disaster drill. He told the board that the Infection Control Committee and the Safety Committee identified a need for the ability to lock down the hospital in certain emergency situations. Currently some of the external doors are locked manually and others are on a timer, "making it virtually impossible to quickly lock

down the facility when needed," he said.

Grigg presented the board a bid for a card lock system "that would give us more control over locking our doors and provide increased security," he said. He said that grant funds had been secured to contribute toward the expense.

An estimate includes \$14,124 for an access-control system with emergency lock-down buttons and \$7,500 for electrical work for a total of \$21,624. A \$5,264 Healthcare Preparedness grant and another \$3,000 grant would reduce MCHD's costs to \$13,360.

The board did not approve the expenditure, with the majority of board members indicating that the proposal included only one level at the hospital and did not solve the issue of security throughout the entire facility. They asked that Grigg come back with

a new proposal.

Administration indicated concern that grant monies would not be available because the deadline for application for monies to help fund the project may have passed, but Chief Financial Office Nicole Mahoney said she would look into the possibility of extending the application deadline for grant funding.

In other business, the board:

—approved the proposed 2014-15 district budget.

—See HEALTH DISTRICT/ PAGE FIVE

Primary ballots are in the mail

Morrow County voters should receive their ballots this week. Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers says all ballots for the May 20 primary election will have gone out by Wednesday, April 30. 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.

All ballots are due by 8 p.m. Election Day, Tuesday, May 20. 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

—See BALLOTS/PAGE FIVE



Dr. Ed Berretta chats with local woman Joyce Ward at his retirement open house April 24 in Heppner. —Photo by April Sykes

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