

# HEPPNER 50¢ Gazette Times

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## Larry Mills resigns from health district board

### Murray elected board chair

By April Sykes

Long-time Morrow County Health District Board Chairman Larry Mills announced his resignation from the board at its regular meeting Monday night in Heppner. Mills, 78, who has been a respected leader championing the health district, school district and other community organizations for more than two decades, told the board that after 15 years on the board, it was time to step down.



Larry Mills

"I think things are moving along nicely," said Mills. "I think this is a good time for me to step aside."

Mills leaves the board following a very successful election for the district in which the health district

received a 79 percent approval rate county-wide on their supplemental levy. The board and CEO Dan Grigg reluctantly accepted his resignation, expressed their thanks to Mills and the board elected current board member John Murray, 50, to the board chair position. Murray, a Morrow County native and pharmacist, is the owner of Murray's Drug in Heppner and Murray's Condon Pharmacy in Condon, along with his wife Ann. Murray has served on the board for seven years.

The board also elected Leann Rea as secretary-treasurer, replacing Murray.

Mills' resignation leaves an opening on

the board, which board members hope to fill with a Boardman or Irrigon resident. Mills reiterated, however, that as long as board members were fair, where they live was not as important. Grigg said he knew of a Boardman resident whom he thought would be good in that position and told the board that with the board's approval he would speak to that person.

The board also learned that Dr. Betsy Anderson was elected for a two-year term as the chief of staff for the district to replace Dr. Ed Berretta, who has retired. Dr. Russ Nichols was elected to a two-year term as vice chief of staff/secretary.

Also at the meeting,



John Murray

## Heppner celebrates graduation



Sammantha Lemmon and Keenan Helfrecht wear smiles representative of the day last Saturday during Heppner High School's commencement exercises. Twenty-five Heppner seniors celebrated their graduation on May 31. —Photo by David Sykes

the board approved a resolution adopting an \$11 million budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year and imposed a tax of .6050 cents per \$1,000 assessed valuation for operations and .39 cents per thousand assessed valuation for the local option tax, also for operations.

In other business, the board approved the expenditure of \$23,576-\$25,576 to fund improvements on the hospital and clinics' security systems. Grigg told the board that the Infection Control Committee and the Safety Committee "identified the need for the ability to lock down the hospital facility in emergency situations."

"This need was reconfirmed recently when

we participated in a table-top community disaster drill," Grigg said.

He said that some of the external doors at the hospital were locked manually and some others were on a timer which made it "virtually impossible to quickly lock down the facility when needed." Grigg had earlier proposed a security makeover, but the initial proposal did not include the entire facility, so board members asked him to revisit the issue to include all facilities. He recommended that the board approve the entire package for the safety of the district's staff.

The board accepted a proposal from Moon Security as follows:

\$13,960 for a hospital access control system with emergency lock-down buttons; \$2,112 for an intercom system with audio/video and remote unlock; \$2,672 for a lock and badge reader for the Irrigon Medical Clinic; \$4,830, with up to \$2,000 in additional funds for two additional doors, if necessary, for a lock and badge reader for Pioneer Memorial Clinic.

Grigg said that \$5,264 from the Hospital Preparedness Program Healthcare Preparedness Grant has been secured to offset some of the costs for the system, but those funds must be used by June 30 of this year. Another \$3,000 is

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## Skaggs retires from Neighborhood Center directorship



Retiring Neighborhood Center Executive Director Jan Skaggs stands next to a rack of clothing in the center's sales shop. While Skaggs says she always viewed the Neighborhood Center as far more than a second-hand store, much of her treasured interaction with the community over the last 23 years happened in that room. —Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

By Andrea Di Salvo

Those who frequent the Neighborhood Center of South Morrow County in Heppner, whether to donate, receive help or simply share a cup of coffee, will miss seeing a familiar face at the end of the month.

Jan Skaggs, 76, has been the center's executive director for 23 years, a role she first adopted in 1992. Skaggs "retired" once before, in 2000. However, when the Neighborhood

Center needed someone to fill in during the summer of 2001, she accepted the task.

"I told them, 'I'll come back for just a little bit.' That little bit turned out to be a long bit," she says.

Skaggs didn't begin life in Heppner; she was born and raised northeast of here, in Joseph, OR. She graduated from Joseph High School in 1956 and married Frank Skaggs

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## Economic Development Group begins dispersing real estate grants

By David Sykes

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group, WCVEDG, announced they have begun making grants to aid people in the purchase of residential homes in South Morrow County, the group has announced.

The grants can be up to \$5,000 toward the purchase of any residentially-zoned real estate in South Morrow County. Funding for the program comes from a \$50,000 housing program set up by earlier by the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (see April 19 Gazette).

Anyone wishing to apply for a grant should contact WCVEDG Executive Director Sheryll Bates at 541-676-5536 or email her at heppnerchamber@centurytel.net. A complete set of grant rules, map of eligible area and application form is available upon

request. Applications will be considered on a first-come basis; if the receiver sells the home within three years the money must be repaid.

Following are the rules of the grant program:

### WCVEDG Revocable Residential Real Estate Grant Program:

Goal: Provide incentive to acquisition and development of residential real estate in our service area. (Defined as townships adjacent to Willow Creek and south to the Morrow County border.) This need has been identified in each of the three incorporated cities' strategic plans as well as the consolidated Willow Creek Valley strategic plan.

WCVEDG will grant funds on a first-come, first-served basis to any person (persons), or entity authorized to do business in Oregon that is acquiring residentially-zoned real

estate in our service area.

Grant proceeds are restricted to the lesser of ten percent (10 percent) of acquisition or documented construction costs or \$5,000.

In the case of purchases that require development, 50 percent of the available proceeds will be provided at closing of the purchase transaction with the other 50 percent made available upon receipt of a qualified occupancy certificate. Construction and the corresponding occupancy certificate must be delivered within 18 months of acquisition or the remaining commitment is void and the funds are returned to the pool.

The funds will be furnished in conjunction with a grant recapture agreement executed at closing and recorded at the county courthouse affecting the deed that

will require repayment on sale if the ownership of the property is transferred within 36 months. Grant funds recaptured will be made available if another residential real estate purchase in our service area is consummated within the original 36 month period.

Any person or entity is eligible and WCVEDG encourages you to consult with qualified income tax professionals regarding the reporting of receipt of these funds.

WCVEDG will make available any proceeds returned from an early sale through this same program and hopes that recurring funding will occur but makes no representations as to the duration or amount of funding available for this purpose. Grant amounts, program parameters and availability are subject to change.

## Warm, dry May could set tone for June

May was warm and dry in Heppner, according to the National Weather Service in Pendleton, and those conditions could continue into June.

The average temperature was 57.7 degrees, which was 1.6 degrees above normal.

High temperatures averaged 71.3 degrees, which was 2.6 degrees above normal. The highest was 87 degrees on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Low temperatures averaged 44.2 degrees, which was 0.6 degrees above normal. The lowest was 35 degrees on the 12<sup>th</sup>.

Precipitation totaled 0.61 inches during May, which was 1.05 inches

below normal. Measurable precipitation of at least .01 inch was received on nine days with the heaviest, 0.23 inches, reported on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Precipitation this year has reached 6.30 inches, which is 0.98 inches below normal. Since October, the

water year precipitation at Heppner has been 8.67 inches, which is 2.67 inches below normal.

The outlook for June from NOAA's Climate Prediction Center calls for above-normal temperatures and near- to below-normal

precipitation. Normal highs for Heppner rise from 73 degrees at the start of June to 81 degrees at the end of June. Normal lows rise from 47 degrees to 51 degrees. The 30-year normal precipitation is 1.38 inches.

## Ione graduation this Friday

Ione High School's commencement ceremony will be held this Friday, June 6, beginning at 7 p.m.

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