

HEPPNER

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Gazette Times

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MCSO to buy Boardman property for possible expansion

District to sell or demolish Lexington School

By April Sykes

The Morrow County School Board, at its regular meeting Monday, approved the purchase of a plot of land next to Windy River Elementary School in Boardman.

MCSO Superintendent Dirk Dirksen said that the district is in the process of purchasing 7.75 acres of land for \$196,000 from Al Phillips. Dirksen said that in the event that a new school is needed in the future, the district thought it advisable that the property be near a current school rather than in a separate location.

"We don't want to have to locate another school somewhere else," commented Dirksen, who added that they don't have a current plan for possible expansion.

MCSO Business Manager Andy Fletcher said

that they hope to have the deal done by the end of September.

Also at the meeting, Fletcher told the board that the district is planning to advertise the old Lexington School building for sale. He said that the district has spoken with the Lexington Town Council concerning the matter.

Fletcher said that if the district cannot find a buyer, they plan to "take the building down." He said that one concern is to find the right buyer, so that the new owner would have the ability to maintain the building and not let it become even more dilapidated.

"If we can't find a buyer," said Fletcher, "we will work with the city (town of Lexington) to turn it into a recreation area for the kids. The kids in Lexington don't have a park."

He said that because the building is 100 percent asbestos free, it probably could be demolished for around \$60,000.

In related business, because the district will be losing storage space when the Lexington school building is sold or demolished, it has had to find alternate storage for records that have been housed there. Subsequently Fletcher has spoken with the Oregon State Archiving Department, which has agreed to take the records, which are books of pre-1940s attendance records.

Fletcher said he thought the district could transport the books to the archiving department in a pickup.

The board also heard good news in terms of student population. Dirksen said that the district has around 100 more students

Mustangs dominate Jags in season opener



Mustang Tommy Bredfield (#42) makes a run with the ball while teammate C. J. Kindle (#24) fends off a Tri-Cities Prep Jaguar during last Friday's game in Hermiston. The Mustangs dominated the game from the beginning to a crushing 47-7 finish. -Photo by Sandra Putman

-See full story and more sports news, PAGE FOUR

enrolled this September, compared to last year. He said that the increase has come "across the board", so it will not create problems with space or staffing.

In other business, the board:

-learned from Dirksen that the district has hired Peggy Doherty of Ione to fill the district's new position of care coordinator.

-heard from Dirksen that at least two MCSO high

school students could earn associate's degrees through the Eastern Promise Program by the time they graduate from high school in the spring. Through the program, students can earn college credits by passing certain approved classes.

-heard from Assistant Superintendent George Mendoza about early learning programs that would assist pre-school children and their parents. He said that

grant monies are starting to flow to fund parent training and child safety programs, among others. Governor John Kitzhaber had earlier announced an expanded emphasis on education for children from birth, perhaps even prenatally, to college age.

-heard from board member Becky Kindle that Janet Dezelle has agreed to be appointed to a three-

-See MCSO/PAGE FIVE

Cutsforth Corner fire causes major property damage



A burned and twisted pile of metal is all that remains in the wake of last week's fire, which came dangerously close to doing even more damage. -Photo by David Sykes

A fire near Cutsforth Corner last week destroyed property but caused no injuries, reports Morrow County Sheriff's Office.

The fire started Tuesday, Sept. 2, around 4:45 p.m. near the edge of Marquardt Rd., approximately a quarter mile north of Hwy 207. The cause of the fire is unknown. Landowner Jeff Cutsforth stated that he heard his dog bark and, when he looked out the window of his home, he saw the fire.

With winds gusting to 25 mph, the fire was quickly driven to the west to consume a single-wide mobile home, two sheds, five

motor vehicles and various pieces of farm equipment before fire crews were able to extinguish the blaze. In addition to the destruction of property, several acres of stubble also burned.

All of the property, with the exception of two vehicles and the contents of the single-wide trailer, is owned by the Cutsforth family. MCSO reports that the occupant of the mobile home was out of state at the time, and has been contacted.

No estimate was available of the value of the damaged property.

Fire units from Heppner, Ione, Lexington,

Boardman and Irrigon, along with multiple neighboring ranchers, responded to the scene.

The sheriff's office said in a statement that a small white car described generically as an "older hatchback or wagon" was seen leaving the area northbound on Marquardt Rd. It is unclear if the vehicle was involved or not, but authorities say they would be interested in speaking to the occupants. Anyone with information is urged to contact the Morrow County Sheriff's Office.

The incident is still under investigation.

Housing grant program receives additional CREZ funding

Willow Creek Economic Development Group to continue successful real estate purchasing program

By David Sykes

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) last week received additional funding for its successful real-estate grant program. In April WCVEDG had received \$50,000 from the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) for the "Residential Real Estate Revocable Grant Program" for South Morrow County.

"The interest in participating by individuals

purchasing real estate has been outstanding and those funds have been exhausted," WCVEDG president Ed Rollins said. He said WCVEDG was able to fund 10 grants for homes in the South Morrow County boundaries, resulting in six new residences and four rental homes.

The economic development group decided to go back to CREZ to ask for more money for the program, and last Friday was given the additional

funding.

"WCVEDG will now be able to continue to accommodate buyers and investors who would like to take advantage of this grant opportunity," Rollins said.

"One of the biggest barriers to business development in Morrow County is the lack of quality rental housing," he added.

The Residential Housing Program was developed.

-See CREZ FUNDING/PAGE EIGHT



Columbia River Enterprise Zone Chairman Don Russell (left) presents Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group Director Sheryll Bates and President Ed Rollins a \$45,000 check last week for renewed funding of the successful housing grant program.

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G-T to close early this Friday

The Heppner Gazette-Times will close early this Friday, Sept. 12. The office will close at 11 a.m. that day. Normal business hours will resume Monday, Sept. 15. We apologize for any inconvenience.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:
MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.