

# HEPPNER **G-T** 50¢ Gazette Times

VOL. 133 NO. 43 8 Pages Wednesday, December 10, 2014 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## City residents to see increase in water, sewer rates

*Council also approves automatic increases for next five years*

By David Sykes

The Heppner city council Monday approved an increase of \$4 per month for water and sewer usage. The increase was needed to keep up with costs of maintaining the services, city officials said. The increase will go into effect on Jan. 1 of 2015.

As part of the increase the council also approved an automatic increase of sewer and water rates ev-

ery year for the next five years. The amount of the increase will be determined by the Portland CPI (Consumer Price Index) which is used by governments to determine inflation rates. The city said the automatic increases, which will be allowed without council approval, are needed so the city can keep up with inflation.

Since the year 2000 the CPI has increased an aver-

age of 2.6 percent per year, with the high being 3.7 percent in 2007 and the low .10 in 2009. Over that time the CPI has never been negative, and likewise the city resolution only addressed increases in the CPI.

In the same action the city also increased the minimum usage from 1999 gallons per month to 2,499. So people who use up to 2,499 gallons will now pay \$21.90 per month, up from

### She must have been a very good girl...



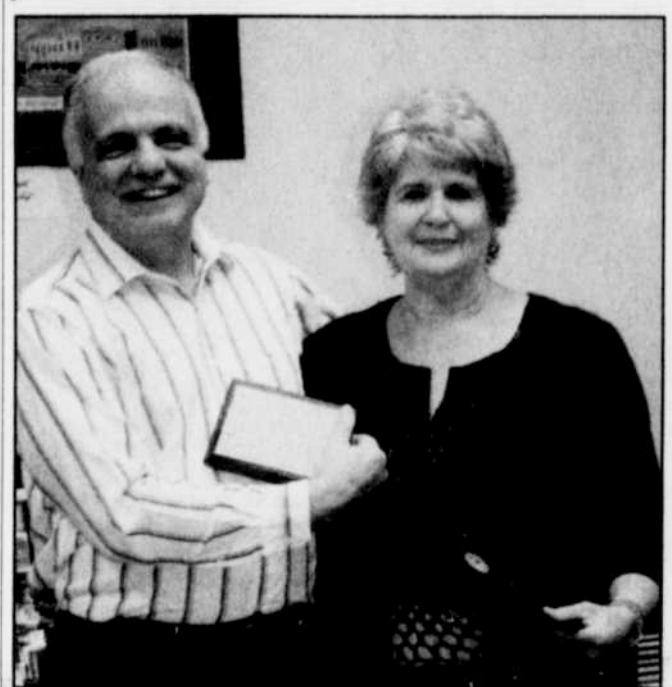
Judging by that smile, Miracle Holsinger, 11, of Heppner must have had a very good conversation with Santa last Thursday at Heppner Family Foods. Santa made an appearance to take lists and pose for photos as part of the customer appreciation open house events last week. —Contributed photo

\$19.90. The base sewage rate also went up \$2 per month to a flat \$31.10.

According to minutes from the last city utility commission meeting, the commission had also recommended a \$4 per month total utility increase, but had wanted water to go up \$2.50 and sewage to in-

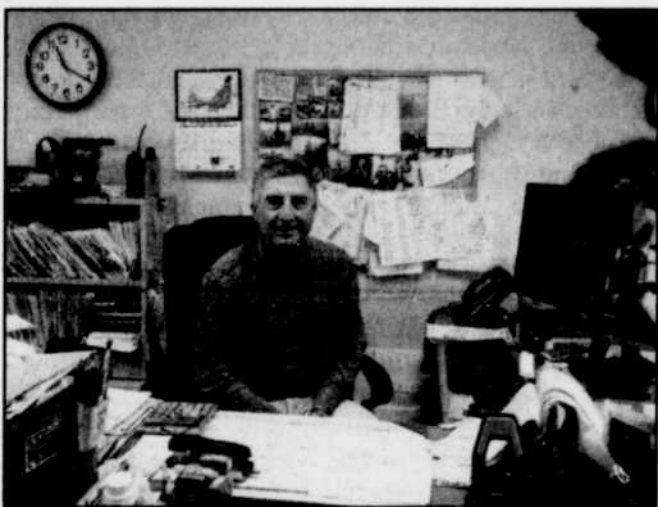
—See CITY WATER TO GO UP/PAGE THREE

## Buschke to retire from city council after 12 years



Heppner Mayor Joe Perry presents councilwoman Judy Buschke with a plaque honoring her service on the Heppner City Council. Buschke served 12 years on the council, since 2002. She was honored at a reception at Heppner City Hall prior to Monday's city council meeting. —Photo by Sandy Matthews

## Rhea to retire after 28 years as crop insurance agent



Steve Rhea sits at his desk in the Wheatland Insurance office in Heppner. He says he won't miss the piles of paperwork, but will miss the people. Rhea retires after nearly 30 years with the company. —Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

By Andrea Di Salvo

This month Morrow County farmers will say farewell to long-time crop insurance agent Steve Rhea. Rhea will retire at the end of the month after 28 years helping area farmers keep their crops secure.

Rhea, 60, was born and raised in South Morrow County, on a farm on Alpine Lane. He graduated from Heppner High School in 1972 and then attended Oregon State University for a year, studying wildlife science. He then returned to the area and attended Blue Mountain Commu-

nity College on a baseball scholarship; he spent two years there, earning an associate's degree in general studies in 1976.

"I really enjoyed Blue Mountain," he said. "It's a great school."

After BMCC, he returned to his studies at OSU. It was in his senior year there that his path took a different twist. Rhea said there were around 300 students in his class in the fish and wildlife program at OSU at that time.

—See RHEA TO RETIRE/PAGE THREE

## County school board keeps up to speed with HHS happenings at board meeting

By April Sykes

The Morrow County School Board heard several presentations by Heppner High School groups at its

regular meeting held at HHS Monday night.

HHS physical science teacher Jason Palmer made a PowerPoint presentation

on the technology grant he wrote, which brought the school 22 iPads for classroom use. While the iPads remain at the school, he said that the students can access information anywhere they can access the internet.

The board also saw a clever video presentation from the Heppner High School Technology Student Association members who were seeking approval for a field trip to the National TSA conference at Dallas, TX in June. The students plan to raise their own money for the trip. The trip was approved.

Sophomore FFA members Tim Gould and Rian Wizner also made a PowerPoint presentation on the Heppner FFA Leadership Conference FFA members attended back east.

In other business, the board:

—heard from Superintendent Dirk Dirksen who told the board that the process for his evaluation will get underway at a work session planned prior to the Jan. 12 board meeting. He said that his evaluation will be discussed in open session at the February board meeting. Dirksen's

last evaluation was also discussed in open session at his own request.

—received the following December enrollment report: A.C. Houghton Elementary School, Iririgon-294 students; Sam Boardman Elementary School, Boardman-354; Heppner Elementary School-188; Irrigon Elementary School-174; Windy River Elementary-200; Heppner Junior/Senior High School-161; Irrigon Junior/Senior High School-401; Riverside Junior/Senior High School, Boardman-391; Morrow Education Center, Iririgon-32; total-2,195.

—approved the following employment action: retirement-Mark Jones, PERS retirement May 1, 2015, to work through June 2015.

—approved an early graduation request for a

—See SCHOOL DISTRICT/PAGE FIVE

## G-T Trophy Corner



Madison Alldritt, 13, with her first-ever deer, harvested during the Morrow County youth doe hunt on November 22. Madison is the daughter of Mike and Bridgett Alldritt of Lexington. —Contributed photo

## Ione businesses plan Christmas open house

The Ione businesses' annual Christmas Open House will be held next Wednesday, Dec. 17, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Community members are invited to join them for goodies and a chance to win a door prize.

## Mr. Bill's Traveling Trivia Show returns to Heppner

The Heppner Day Care will again sponsor, on Dec. 13 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Elks Club, the fun and entertaining Mr. Bill's Traveling Trivia Show as a fundraiser for the nonprofit

organization. A spaghetti dinner will be available from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$5 per person and includes spaghetti. —See MR. BILL'S IS BACK/PAGE FOUR

## Area pastors invited to submit Christmas messages

*Businesses, individuals also invited to send in Christmas greetings*

The Heppner Gazette-Times will publish a Christmas edition on Dec. 24.

Area pastors are invited to submit Christmas messages to be published in the Dec. 24 edition. The deadline is Friday, Dec. 19, at 5 p.m. Messages can be dropped off at the Gazette office, emailed to editor@

rapidsolve.net, or faxed to 541-676-9211.

Any businesses or individuals who would like to purchase space on our special Christmas greeting page in the Dec. 24 Gazette should call 541-676-9228 or email megan@rapidsolve.net by Monday, Dec. 22, at 5 p.m.

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

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