

Local golf, track teams head to state championships

South Morrow County Teams will be well represented at their respective state championships this week.

Both Mustang golf teams will be playing at the OSAA State Golf Championships this week after placing second and third at the district championships in Pendleton. The girls' tournament is held at Eagle Crest Golf Course outside of Redmond, while the boys

will play at Quail Valley Golf Course in Banks.

Track and field teams representing both the blue and gold and the red and black will travel to Eugene this Thursday and Friday to compete at the University of Oregon's Hayward Field.

Ione will send three athletes to the OSAA 1A State Championship. Nine athletes will represent Heppner at the 2A State Championship.

-See Mustang sports PAGE THREE, Cardinal sports PAGE FOUR.

Wyden to hold town hall in Heppner

Oregon's U.S. Senator Ron Wyden will hold a Morrow County town hall May 29 at 4:30 p.m. at Heppner City Hall.

The public is welcome to attend.

When elected to the U.S. Senate, Sen.



Sen. Ron Wyden

Wyden pledged to hold at least one public town meeting in each of Oregon's 36 counties each year.

Since 1996, Sen. Wyden has held more than 700 town hall meetings across the state.

Veteran-owned business offers new event venue with 1920s glitz



Silver Fox owner Jodi Segraves stands on the stage in the new event venue. Styled in the fashion of a 1920s to 1940s nightclub, the Silver Fox is available for a range of local activities. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

By Andrea Di Salvo

Heppner's Main Street may have seen some indications

School district looks at options for Heppner schools

Plans could include demolishing Heppner High School after current bond expires

By April Sykes

The Morrow County School District, in the process of long-term facility planning, has hired the DLR Group architectural design firm, located in Seattle and other cities around the U.S.

The DLR Group has been holding a series of workshops at various schools throughout the Morrow County School District to invite input and assess what each MCSD community wants for its schools. DLR representatives stress the importance of community input in making the decisions about facility planning.

At a meeting at Heppner Elementary School May 12, one option put forth by DLR Group is to build a kindergarten through 12th grade school above the current Heppner High School site.

This suggestion, Heppner Option 1, would be

Health district continues search for new CEO, doctor

Home care services welcomes new director

By April Sykes

The Morrow County Health District Board reluctantly bade farewell to CEO Dan Grigg at its May 18 meeting in Heppner. Grigg, who has been with the district two years, has resigned as MCHD CEO to take a position as CEO of the Burns hospital.

The board informally agreed to perhaps increase the salary offering as they seek a new CEO, but did not disclose the specific amount for negotiation purposes.

"It was our own fault

that we lost you," said considering increasing the board member Leann Rea CEO's package to attract the best candidates.

concerning Grigg's departure. "We screwed up." The board earlier voted against increasing the CEO's salary to the amount he had requested.

Grigg told the Gazette-Times that it may have influenced his decision to leave the district if the board had agreed to the increase in his salary. He added that he was glad to see that the district was



Robin Warren

than just present a salary and benefit package.

While the board said farewell to Grigg, it said hello to newly-hired Home

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Future plans for the MCSD might include the demolition of Heppner High School and construction of a new K-12 facility above the current school site. -File photo

to "Offload Heppner Elementary School for private business or community amenity." With this option, the gymnasium located at Heppner Elementary would be retained for "shared use by the school and community," Heppner High School would be demolished and a K-12 school would be built above the demolished site.

Part of the reasoning behind this proposal is that the Heppner community and student population are not growing, while the Boardman and Irrigon communities have gained both businesses and students, therefore a K-12 building in Heppner would make more sense, at least cost-wise. From enrollment data as of

2014, Heppner Elementary School had 29 children in kindergarten, 17 in first grade, 23 in second grade, 20 in third, 31 in fourth, 34 in fifth and 33 in sixth. For Heppner Junior/Senior High School, there were 19 students in seventh grade, 37 in eighth, 28 in ninth, 26 in 10th, 31 in 11th and 27 in 12th.

Enrollment data for north end schools for 2014 is as follows:

-Boardman: Sam Boardman Elementary, K-third: kindergarten-86, first grade-86, second grade-105, third grade-81; Windy River Elementary, fourth through sixth: fourth grade-59, fifth grade-71, sixth grade-72; Riverside Junior/Senior High School, seventh-12th: seventh grade-65, eighth grade-62, ninth grade-68, 10th grade-78, 11th grade-59,

-See SCHOOL DISTRICT LOOKS AT OPTIONS/PAGE SEVEN

City adopts 'virtually flat' 2015-16 budget

By David Sykes

The City of Heppner has approved a 2015-16 budget of \$2,984,190, only slightly higher than last year's. Although the budget remained virtually flat, City Manager Kim Cutsforth said the city looked for savings in an effort to set aside more reserve and contingency funds for next year.

"We have attempted to establish or increase reserves and contingency funds via administrative cuts and another frugal planning methods," Cutsforth said in her budget message.

Cutsforth said one way the city saved money for next year was the supervi-

sory staff agreeing not to take a merit pay increase, and take only a 2.45 percent cost of living increase. This put the city manager's salary at \$62,647, up from \$60,916 in the current year, treasurer at \$54,398, up from \$52,728, and Public Works Director to \$54,836 from \$53,613 this year. The merit pay increase would have added an additional one percent to those three salaries, a savings of about \$1,672. City employees also receive a medical benefits package averaging an additional \$13,500 (approx.) per year, per employee. Total payroll and benefit expenses for the city are up 6.5 percent next year

to \$473,029.

In other savings the city was able to negotiate a contract for police service from the county sheriff with no increase next year. Cutsforth also said the public works department will be cutting uniform costs and overtime to save costs. She pointed out that making ends meet this coming year was not easy, considering some cost increases such as insurance, medical rates and electricity are all out of their control.

On the revenue side Cutsforth said a recently-enacted water and sewer rate increase will raise an

-See HEPPNER CITY BUDGET/PAGE FOUR

CREZ replenishes Boardman housing fund

South County also received funding for similar program

By David Sykes

The Columbia River Enterprise Zone voted Monday to give an additional \$100,000 to the Boardman Community Development Association to replenish its popular housing grant program. The same amount of funds was given in December of last year and, since then, all of the money has been given out to people purchasing homes in the Boardman area.

South Morrow County, represented by the Willow

Creek Economic Development Group, has had a similar program and has received a total of \$195,000 in funding from the CREZ. WCVEDG has been giving out grants in the Heppner, Lexington and Ione area since October of 2014. Irrigon has received \$50,000 under the plan.

Jill Parker, housing program manager for the Boardman association, was at the meeting and gave a letter to the CREZ board outlining the program's

success.

"We use the funds to gift \$5,000 to those purchasing their primary residences in the Boardman zip code," Parker said. She said the money is reserved for one year for people who complete a homebuyer education class or 90 days for those who have a signed real estate sale agreement.

"Our goal is to attract new families to Boardman and provide housing opportunities. We are happy to report great success,"

she wrote.

Parker also said she had a backlog of \$30,000 for people eligible for the grants. She said the group tracks the grant money and has found people from Hermiston, Tri-Cities and Stanfield moving to Boardman.

Although the Port of

Morrow at Boardman has created many jobs over the past several years, community leaders have seen that only about 25 percent of those workers live in Morrow County. One of the housing grant's objectives is an attempt to have more people live here.

Heppner has also re-

ceived money from the CREZ for a similar program, and it too has proven very popular, with more than \$100,000 given out so far in \$2,500 to \$5,000 individual grants to home buyers. The only stipulation on the South County

-See CREZ HELPS HOUSING FUNDS/PAGE THREE

G-T closed Memorial Day

The Heppner Gazette-Times office will be closed Memorial Day, May 25, for

the holiday. All news and ad deadlines will be this Friday, May 22, by 5 p.m.

The newspaper office will reopen on Tuesday, May 26.



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Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mcgg.net