

# COUNTY COURT CHANGES

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 a collaborative way. It's not just a legal matter," he said. "We're trying to take into account a family and see if we can't help them. That takes a lot of time."

"I'm just saying I have my doubts," he said.

Commissioners also said an impetus to making the changes now was the filing period for next year's election. The filing period for the judge position opened Sept. 10, and the county court wanted to make the change before anyone had filed for judge. Tallman said he was concerned that the decision had been made too quickly.

"There are things we haven't discussed about how the administrative position will work. I think we need to discuss those things," he said.

In fact, one thing that has some citizens upset is the lack of public engagement in the changes. Discussion on both of the changes started more than six months ago but, while both items were discussed at length at county court meetings, the court did not hold public hearings or otherwise advertise the issues.

"Don (Russell) researched it and found it wasn't something we had to go to the public with," said Rea, while conceding that, "We probably need to have a public hearing to let people know."

In fact, Rea said much of the discussion concerning the new county administrator happened in executive session, because of the "hiring process and discussion of applications."

The position was not advertised to the general public, but was advertised in-house as well as on the League of Oregon Cities website, which is also used by The Association of Or-

egon Counties, according to county human resources director Karen Wolff. Wolff said the job was also posted to the Local Government Personnel Institute website.

Tallman said he was concerned by the lack of public discussion and input.

"I pointed this out and said I thought we should invite the public to discuss some of these things. I don't think we should make a decision on yes or no without this being brought before the people. I would still like to hold some public meetings," he said. "I'm not looking for a fight but I think we should be thinking of all the county of Morrow. In this case I don't believe we have."

However, both Rea and Russell said they spoke with members of the general public often, if unofficially.

"From the people I've talked to, they're very positive about it," said Rea. "I can't say I've talked to everyone."

"Every public meeting I've been to, I've talked to people about it. I've brought it up at a Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group meeting, talked about it at planning commission, talked to as many people about it as I could think of," said Russell. "I've talked to them to see if they had an opinion about it and what that opinion is."

"Most people, if they have an opinion at all, think this is the way we should go," he added. "A lot of people didn't even have an opinion."

Russell, who began his term as commissioner in January of this year, said he has been busy learning all he can about county government, even taking classes geared toward new commissioners.

"Through that process, I've been able to talk to people from other counties and try to learn as much about county government as I can," he said. "Most counties—not all but most—have got a public administrator. The 36 counties in the state of Oregon, they probably all do it a little bit differently."

Morrow County has been one of eight Oregon counties that has a county court government comprised of a full-time judge and two part-time commissioners, and one of only four in which the county judge has had jurisdiction over juvenile court cases. Nineteen counties have a county commission structure with three to five commissioners who work either full or part time. Another nine counties have adopted "home rule" charters, wherein voters have the power to adopt and amend their own county government organization.

According to the job description for the position, the new county administrator will serve as a kind of county manager, the new administrator will perform "executive management level leadership supporting the County Court with the planning, coordination and implementation of county operations and works as an integral member of the County Management Team."

The administrator would, among other things, participate in county budget development, attend county court meetings, and provide "leadership and administrative guidance to all elected and appointed department heads and processes as assigned by the County Court." The administrator also would serve as a liaison with elected officials

and would supervise all department heads and other specific employees.

One other requirement placed on the new administrator will be that the administrator must live within Morrow County.

"For me personally, if they didn't want to live in Morrow County, they wouldn't be an administrator in Morrow County very long," explained Russell. "They wouldn't have anything invested in the county."

While the two county commissioners said they didn't remember the exact wage the administrator would receive, at its June 10 meeting the county court voted to approve Pay Range 27 of the Reclassified Non-Represented Employee Wage Scale, 2014-2015 (\$6,852 per month) for the Administrative Officer #5-2 position—or approximately \$82,224 per year.

Judge Tallman said he isn't sure that will be enough.

"We don't know yet how much we're going to have to spend to hire an administrator. I was anticipating that we may pay \$100-120 thousand," he said. "I think that's the major reason they're talking about half time."

"In the long run, you're not going to end up saving the county any money," said Tallman.

The commissioners said the court held Skype interviews with several candidates at the end of September and has narrowed the pool to three candidates, whom they hope to bring to the county for interviews in the next couple of weeks. However, Rea said she doesn't expect the position to be filled and functional until around the first of the year.

## 'Kennewick Man to Sacagawea' tour planned for October

The Morrow County Historical Society invites local history buffs to participate in a "Kennewick Man to Sacagawea" tour on Saturday, Oct. 24. The tour will begin at the East Benton County, WA museum and end at Confluence Art Project at Sacajawea State Park. Group members will eat lunch at Keewaydin Park, Kennewick's oldest park, weather permitting. Participants can bring their own picnic lunches or order a box lunch for \$11.

Morrow County Special Transportation buses will leave Heppner Senior Center at 8 a.m., and a bus will depart from Stokes Landing Senior Center in Irrigon at 9 a.m. Buses will return to Morrow County

by 4 p.m. or earlier. Each bus can hold 14 passengers. If you wish to participate, contact Don Eppenbach, Irrigon, deppenba@msn.com, 541-571-0375, or Dave DeMayo, Heppner, ddemayo@centurytel.net, 541-676-8017, to reserve a seat on the bus. Make your reservation by Oct. 17, and pay the tour fee on the bus at departure.

The tour fee is \$10 for Morrow County Historical Society Members and \$15 for non-members. Tour fee includes museum admissions and driver donation.

Box lunch reservations must be made by Tuesday, Oct. 21. Contact Carol Michael cnrmichael@gmail.com or 541-481-9457 to order a box lunch.

## Special Transportation seeking help with logo

Morrow County Special Transportation is asking the help of youth kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Special Transportation is getting a new name—The LOOP—and it needs a new logo. Children and teens are invited to submit designs in a logo contest, with the winner to receive \$100.

Suggestions are to have the OOs look like wheels, such as the wheels on a bus, but the design can be anything that could pertain to transporting veterans, seniors, persons with dis-

abilities and others.

Designs should be put on an 8-1/2 x 11 piece of paper with the entrant's name and address on the back side of the paper. They should be mailed to: Morrow County Special Transportation, Attn: Anita Pranger, PO Box 495, Heppner, OR 97836. Entries must be received in the Special Transportation office before October 29, 2015.

Any questions, call 541-676-LOOP or toll-free at 855-644-4560.

## VA medical center holds flu shot clinics in the Boardman area

Walla Walla, WA—The flu season is here, and the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial VA Medical Center is holding a flu shot clinic for Veterans in the Boardman area on Friday, Oct. 16, at the Morrow County Telehealth Clinic (2 Marine Dr., Ste. 103 at

the Port of Morrow) from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Veterans can get a free flu shot by showing valid identification.

Health officials say the single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot each season—and it's never too early to get a flu shot. Because it can take about

two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body to protect against influenza virus infection, it is suggested to get vaccinated as early as possible.

As always, anyone with questions is asked to contact their provider team. The Walla Walla VA's full

flu shot clinic schedule is available at [www.wallawalla.va.gov](http://www.wallawalla.va.gov), or watch Walla Walla VA's Facebook and Twitter pages for reminders of all upcoming flu shot clinics.

Get additional flu facts at [www.flufacts.com](http://www.flufacts.com) and [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

## Morrow SWCD to meet

The Morrow SWCD will hold a regular board meeting Tuesday, Oct. 6, at the Port of Morrow Riverfront Center, 2 Marine Drive, Boardman, beginning at 6 p.m.

Time will be set aside at the beginning of the SWCD meeting to receive comments from the public.

The agenda for the SWCD meeting includes review and approval of the minutes of the June 25

conference call and Sept. 1 meeting minutes, bank reconciliation for August and September, budget report, staff reports and partner reports.

A board position representing the Irrigon area is currently vacant. Interested landowners are encouraged to apply.

Meetings of Morrow SWCD are open to the public.

## Holly Rebekah Lodge to resume card parties

Holly Rebekah Lodge will resume its monthly pinochle card parties this Saturday, Oct. 3.

Play will start at 7 p.m. sharp at the lodge hall in

Lexington. For \$5 a person can play cards, visit with friends and have a fun evening.

Community members are also asked to mark their

calendars for Thursday, Oct. 8. The lodge will be starting Bunco on the second Thursday of the month, also at 7 p.m., as its fundraiser for the Vocational

School Scholarships that are awarded to graduating seniors from both Heppner and Ione high schools.

The cost to play is \$5 for this event also.

The lodge will furnish sandwiches, chips and nuts, or candy at both of these events. The public is invited to bring other snacks to share.

For further information, contact LaRae Kindle at 541-676-5223.

## Justice Court Report

Morrow County Justice of the Peace Ann Spicer has released the following Justice Court report:

-Patricia Hankins, 56, of Umatilla, OR was found guilty of Violating the Basic Rule (VBR) 70/55 and was fined \$160.

-John Jacob Gintz, 46, of Enterprise, OR was found guilty of VBR 78/55 and was fined \$260.

**NIFTY AND SHIFTY, LOOK WHO'S 50!**

Oh my, how the years have passed.  
 Jay Gibbs is 50 at last!

The roads he has traveled, places he's been,  
 Those youthful times he will never see again!  
 Those brown hairs have turned mostly grey,  
 Those aging bones & muscles make it hard to play!  
 So rest in peace those years of youth,  
 His birthdate surely tells the truth!  
 On October 3rd, say Happy Birthday to Jay,  
 We, his family, are sure he won't know What to say  
 Happy 50th Birthday to a son, brother, uncle & dad,  
 Jay Gibbs—your 50th birthday can't be that bad!

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