

Electric co-op annual meeting Nov. 5

The annual meeting of Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative, Inc. is planned as a luncheon for Thursday, Nov. 5, at the St. Patrick's parish hall in Heppner. Registration starts at 11:15 a.m. with lunch served at 12 p.m. The annual meeting and election of directors

will follow the lunch. Multiple door prizes will be awarded and results of the annual fourth-grade Electrical Safety Poster contest will be announced, with winning entries on display. All members are welcome to come and learn about their electric co-op.

Health advisory issued for reservoir

The Oregon Health Authority issued a health advisory last week due to high levels of blue-green algae-related toxins in Willow Creek Reservoir outside of Heppner.

The OHA advises that swallowing or inhaling water droplets should be avoided and that drinking water directly from Willow Creek Reservoir is especially dangerous. Skin contact with the blue-green algae itself can cause rashes in people with sensitive skin.

Exposure to toxins can produce symptoms of numbness, tingling and dizziness that can lead to

difficulty breathing or heart problems, and require immediate medical attention. Symptoms of skin irritation, weakness, diarrhea, nausea, cramps and fainting should also receive medical attention if they persist or worsen. Children and pets are at increased risk for exposure because of their size and level of activity.

The public will be advised when the concern no longer exists.

For local information about water quality or blue-green algae sampling, contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at 541-506-4807.

DA's Report

Morrow County District Attorney Justin Nelson has released the following report:

-Louis Anthony Mendoza Sanchez, 24, was convicted of Interference with Making a Report, a Class A Misdemeanor; of the sentence of 180 days jail time, execution of 170 days was suspended and the defendant sentenced to 24 months bench probation, to include 30 hours of community service, no offensive physical contact with the victim, return of all jewelry within 60 days, and 10 days jail time, to run consecutive to any previously imposed sentences. The defendant was additionally convicted of Harassment, a Class B Misdemeanor. Sentence of 90 days jail time was sus-

pending and the defendant sentenced to 24 months bench probation, to include 30 hours of community service and no offensive physical contact with the victim. An additional count of Assault IV - Constituting Domestic Violence was dismissed. Fines, fees and assessments totaled \$1,100.

-In addition, Louis Anthony Mendoza Sanchez, 24, was convicted of two counts of Contempt of Court. On each count, sentence of 90 days jail time was suspended and the defendant sentenced to 24 months bench probation, to include 10 hours of community service and no offensive physical contact with the victim. Fines, fees and assessments totaled \$200.

The rest of the story

I want to thank everyone who called or stopped me on the street this week to ask more questions. It was my sole intent to provide some information but more importantly to provide a catalyst for thought and apparently generate more questions.

"Is it a practical or feasible option to split the city fire department and the rural fire district?" If you gave it any thought or talked to any of the rural fire district board or budget committee members, the answer should have been no.

There are a multitude of reasons why but the main reason is cost. The adopted operating budget for the fire department for 2014/2015 was \$135,684. The cost to the rural district was \$36,795.32 for their share by contract, or about 27 percent of the total.

The district does not have to train and clothe personnel, service and maintain the equipment and apparatus, write grants for equipment or apparatus, provide radios and 911 contract, provide for heat and electricity of the station, water or fuel for the apparatus, pay for mill site storage rent for the additional equipment, pay for insurance for the firefighters and apparatus, and the list goes on. We the firefighters do it all. We will ask for help with major repairs and purchases to replace equipment, and the rural district has been great to kick in occasionally.

So, in short, to duplicate what is already in place would cost the rural fire district hundreds of thousands of dollars. Approximately two-thirds of our calls are in the district and the remaining are in the city. Is this a good deal for the rural district? Yes, in my opinion it is a heck of a deal.

The other questions asked by several is "Why a new building?" and "What is going to happen to the existing one?" Both are good questions.

When the city hall moved to their new location several years ago, a swap of the old Gazette-Times building and lot was made for the old city hall building. The department had hopes that we would be able to add on to the existing station. We hired an architect to see what the cost would be. Due to being in the flood zone and the proximity to the Oddfellows Building and the buildings behind the station, it would have to be elevated for flooding and the walls adjacent to the other buildings would have to be fire wall constructed. The cost would have been well over \$3 million.

If the bond passes for the new station, the city has agreed to a significant amount of site work, drainage and conduit for utilities, water and sewer connections, etc. The city would then use the old station for housing of the equipment and vehicles parked outside year-round at the sewer plant. It would give public works a heated building to house and perform maintenance for the sludge truck, sewer truck, backhoe and other equipment.

In my opinion, the best choice for everyone is build a new station. Don't split the city fire department and rural fire district. It works now and it will continue to work in the future. Vote yes for the bond; it is the "right choice."

Steve Rhea, Assistant Fire Chief and Training Officer, Heppner

Vote yes on fire hall bond

To The Editor,
As Mayor of Heppner, I am encouraging you to vote yes on the bonding for the new fire hall. The citizens of Heppner and the Rural Fire Protection District have been served well by one of the best volunteer fire departments of any small town in the state. In order to facilitate that excellent service, a new fire hall is now necessary. The current fire hall has been our best effort to meet the needs of the fire equipment and fire personnel, but its time has come. It is no longer a safe or adequate facility. It is too small to house the equipment we have, its location is problematic for maneuvering equipment in and out during an emergency situation and there is not enough auxiliary space for office functions and trainings. As a member of the fire hall committee I feel we have come up with the least-cost option that will be sufficient to meet the needs of space, safety, training and serviceability well into the future. If you have any question or concern I invite you to come down to city hall or contact a committee member to get those questions answered. Please join me in voting yes on the fire hall bond measure.

Skip Matthews, Heppner City Mayor

Support firefighters by supporting bond

Dear Voters,
As a member of the Heppner City Council and appointed Fire Commissioner for the city, I am urging both rural and in-town voters to take the time to cast their vote and pass the fire hall bond measure.

Our firefighters might be called "volunteer" firefighters, but they are really certified firefighters with the same credentials, the same training, and the same status as those getting paid as professional firefighters in other cities. They volunteer and risk their safety because they care about your home, your property and the community as a whole. It is now time to return the favor and say yes, I support you and the future volunteer firefighters we so desperately need.

Thank You,
Corey Sweeney, Heppner

Now is the time to finance replacement fire hall

Fellow Taxpayers:
I believe now is the time to finance a replacement fire hall. I don't like paying property taxes any more than the next person, but with municipal bond interest rates as low as I have ever seen, now is the time to finance a much-needed replacement Fire Hall. The plan is for a 15-year bond, not the normal 25- or 30-year issue. Low municipal bond interest rates make this possible, and saves huge dollars by cutting the payback period shorter by 10 to 15 years. It is an opportunity we should not pass by. The project has been reduced from an original \$1.4 million to the current \$975,000. Please join with me in supporting the most inexpensive avenue to a much-needed replacement fire hall.

Thomas Wolff, CPA, Heppner

Sheriff's Report

September 5 (cont.):
-A caller at Bakes Restaurant in Irrigon advised a kid was in a car by himself; the dad went in to gamble and left the child in the car. While advising the deputy, the caller advised the dad returned to the vehicle and took off. MCSO was unable to locate the vehicle.

-MCSO received report of young girls drinking and fighting at a location in Boardman, verbal only. Boardman PD responded and determined the kids were playing hide and seek.

-MCSO was advised of a 13-year-old female in Irrigon, conscious and breathing, with unknown injuries.

Irrigon fire and Irrigon ambulance responded. MCSO cited Arnulfo Noe Nunez, 20, for Failure to Obey a Traffic Control Device.

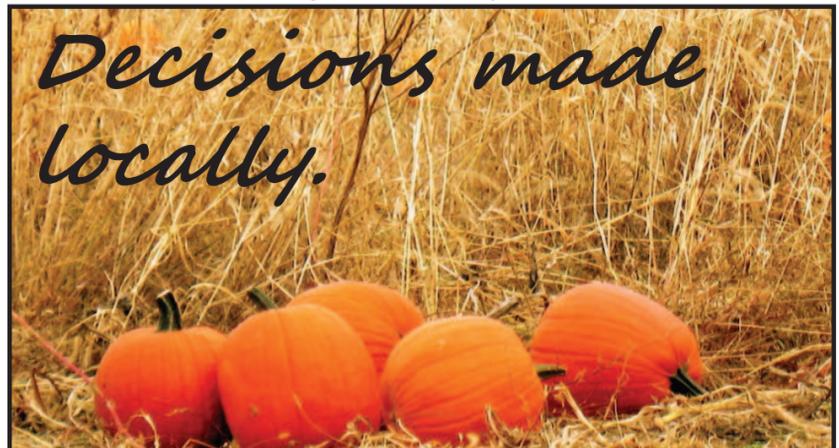
September 6: -A woman in Irrigon advised Morrow County Sheriff's Office that she heard a man and a woman fighting, looked out her window, and saw a

man knock a woman to the ground and pull her hair. The caller also heard gunshots. MCSO and Boardman Police responded.

-A woman in Irrigon reported that a older model, dark station wagon with a male in his late forties and a female in her thirties drove way down her driveway and the female asked if she could have some pears, picked tomatoes and cucumbers. The caller advised they were going to come back that day at 3 p.m.; she did not know the people and was worried they were going to return. MCSO responded and the subject did not show back up.

MARIJUANA CONVICTION

-Continued from PAGE ONE
In addition to his prison time, Bailey will have one year of post-prison supervision, as well as having to pay state fines of \$200 and restitution of \$1,500.
"While I do not support the legalization of marijuana in Oregon, I will prosecute those offenders that steal legally possessed marijuana from others," said Nelson of the conviction. "I viewed this case like any other theft. The defendant trespassed onto the victim's property and stole items of value from that victim. The defendant was held accountable for those actions."



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