

Bellamys purchase Lexington School

Plans include pump shop, office space and a place for town memorabilia

By David Sykes

If Mary Kay Bellamy of Lexington gets nostalgic for the old days when she was back in grade school in Lexington, she now won't have far to go to relive those old memories. She and her husband Sam Bellamy have just completed purchasing her old school house in Lexington.

On Saturday they took a walk through the building and around the grounds, talking about her memories and their future plans for the newly-acquired property.

"One thing I want to do is make a memorial, or museum, to the town of Lexington," says Sam Bellamy, standing in the main hallway of the historic old building. He says he wants to take memorabilia like old photos and other Lexington town items and have them on display in the foyer area of the school. "I don't think there is anything like that now about Lexington, and I would like to do something



Sam and Mary Kay Bellamy take a swing break while contemplating their new real-estate purchase, the Lexington School building. -Photo by David Sykes

like that," he says. He also has commercial plans for the property, which includes the main

WCVEDG gives out \$25,000 in Community Enhancement grants

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group gave out \$25,000 in community enhancement grants last week. There were a total of 10 grants awarded to various groups and governments.

Those receiving funds were:

Heppner Chamber of Commerce – \$1,750 for purchase of a copier to accommodate its new office needs.

Creative Care Preschool, Ione – \$2,000 for

purchase of playground upgrades.

Heppner Little League (John Day River Little League) – \$1,541 for purchase of 120 bags of infield conditioner/top-dressing, "Beam Clay."

Heppner FFA Chapter/Heppner Ag Dept. – \$1,650 for construction of a new chicken coop and outside run to increase laying hens.

Wranglers Riding Club – \$706 for purchase of an electronic sports timing system.

City of Heppner – \$1,000 for property clean-up assistance to provide dumpsters.

City of Heppner – \$1,953 for Main Street beautification with hanging baskets.

City of Ione – \$10,000 for purchase of a children's play structure in the Ione City park.

Morrow County Museum – \$1,900 to pay for

-See WCVEDG GRANTS/PAGE THREE

Public hearing planned on proposed wind farm

A public hearing on the proposed Wheatridge Wind Energy Facility is planned for Thursday, May 19, at 6 p.m. at Boardman City Hall, 200 City Center Dr., Boardman

The Oregon Dept. of Energy's Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) received an application for a site certificate from Wheatridge Wind Energy, LLC for the construction and operation of a 292-tower facility located on 13,0697 acres of privately-owned land within Morrow and Umatilla counties. The EFSC released a Draft Proposed Order recommending approval subject to conditions listed in the order.

Public comments on the draft order will be accepted now through the

close of the public hearing May 19. Written comments may be submitted prior to the hearing to Sarah Esteron, siting Analyst, Oregon Department of Energy, 625 Marion Street NE, Salem, OR 97301 or by email to WRW.Comments@state.or.us. Written or oral comments will also be accepted during the hearing.

Following the hearing the council will review the Draft Proposed Order and public comments and then issue a Proposed Order to either approve or deny the application.

A copy of the Draft Proposed Order is available at the Oregon Trail Library District Heppner Branch or online at <https://services.oregon.gov/energy/Siting/Pages/WRW.aspx>.

Summer fun begins at OHV park



Above: Riders at the Off Highway Vehicle park have some dirty fun in the new "mud pit" at the OHV park near Heppner. Below: Riders line up to register and get ready for the poker run at the OHV park Saturday. -Contributed photos



People wasted no time getting into the swing of summer this weekend, filling up the local Off Highway Vehicle park on its opening day. The fun included a poker run and trying out the new mud pit.

"There were 265 registered riders, but many more that just rode along, and others came up to just enjoy a beautiful day out

on the trails," said a park spokesperson. "And a few more that even ventured into the new mud pit," she added.

There were more than 300 people at the park on Saturday, it was estimated.

There were also others that made reservations and came up just for the prime rib dinner served at The Landing Saturday.

City council votes to increase water, sewer rates by 5%

Heppner and Lexington gas tax also being considered

By David Sykes

The Heppner city council voted Monday to raise water and sewer rates by five percent beginning in July. The additional money, estimated to be around \$30,000 per year, will be collected as a franchise fee and will be used for funding street repairs, the fire department and police payments. All council members voted in favor of the increase except for Corey Sweeney, who voted no.

There was little discussion about the rate increase during the meeting;

however, after the council session City Manager Kim Cutsforth told the Gazette she decided on a franchise fee instead of a straight rate increase so that the money could be used in departments other than water and sewer. Normally franchise fees are paid by private companies using the city right of ways, such as electric and phone companies. The new charge would be the first time the city used the franchise method to collect money on its own water billings.

In preparation for the

new fees at its April 21 meeting the utility commission had voted to recommend the city adopt a flat \$3 fee on each monthly water bill. However, Cutsforth said Monday she decided to use the franchise method instead after consulting with the city auditors. Auditors told her the franchise method would allow for the newly-collected funds to be used in departments other than water and sewer. She also changed the flat charge to a five percent fee, which she says will work out to an average \$2.55 addi-

tional cost per user and raise \$30,000 per year. The city has about 700 water and sewer users on the system.

In other tax issues Cutsforth told the utility commission at its April meeting that the city needs more revenue for streets and suggested that "a gas tax may be a way to do this. The city would only be able to collect taxes on fuel sold within the city limits. The city would not be able to collect taxes from schools or some commercial haul-

-See HEPPNER CITY COUNCIL/PAGE FOUR

MCSO board tours new Riverside lab at regular meeting

By April Sykes

The Morrow County School Board toured the new Riverside High School welding and 3-D printing lab prior to its May 9 meeting at RHS.

Following the tour and dinner, the board:

-received the follow-

ing attendance report for May: A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irrigon-275; Sam Boardman Elementary, Boardman-331; Heppner Elementary-181; Irrigon Elementary-189; Windy River Elementary, Boardman-216; Heppner Jr./Sr. High School-160; Irrigon

Jr./Sr. High School-371; Riverside Jr./Sr. High School, Boardman-396; Morrow Education Center, Irrigon-49; total-2,168.

-approved the following recommendations to rehire classified/confidential personnel for 2016-17 (Heppner listed only):

Heppner Elementary: ed assistants-Jackie Alleman, Lorna Botefuhr, Rita Britt, Rebecca Evans, Tami Lien, Janet Wilson, ed assistant/library tech-Debra Campbell, head cook-Kim Carlson, assistant custodian-Kathy Cutsforth, Linda Workman, facilities coordinator-Kelly Fox, head secretary-Brandi

-See MCSO MEETING/PAGE EIGHT

Ballots due next Tuesday

Morrow County voters are reminded that ballots for the primary election are due by 8 p.m. Election Day, Tuesday, May 17. Ballots must be received, not simply postmarked, on that day. For voter convenience, 24-hour drop boxes are located throughout the county. Locations are as

follows:

Heppner: Courthouse parking lot (24 hours) or the Morrow County Clerk's Office, Room 102 inside the courthouse. Open 8 a.m. to noon and 1-5 p.m., M-F and Election Day (May 17) from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m.

Lexington: 365 West Hwy 74 (Public Works

Parking lot). Turn off Hwy. 74 onto Tom Street and left into the public works parking lot. 24 hours.

Ione: Spring St. (in front of the turn to 3rd Street). 24 hours.

Boardman: NW Boardman Ave. (24 hours).

Irrigon: 205 NE 3rd St. (Irrigon Annex). 24 hours.



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Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 • 1-800-452-7396 For farm equipment, visit our web site at www.mogg.net