

Gazette Times

VOL. 137 NO. 4 8 Pages Wednesday, January 24, 2018 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

Chamber elects 2018 officers



The Heppner Chamber of Commerce elected its new officers at its annual meeting held last week.

The 2018 slate includes (L-R): Jeff Bailey, Bank of Eastern Oregon CEO, board member; Bob Houser, CEO, Morrow County Health District, vice president; John Gould, Manager Heppner Les Schwab, board member; Kim Cutsforth, Director Bryant Trust, board member; Matt Combe, Heppner Jr./Sr. High School Principal, chamber president; Nancy Snider, owner Wheatland Insurance, board member; Tawny Miles, Human Resource Director Morrow County Grain Growers, treasurer and Edie Ball, Administrator City of Heppner, board member.

Also at the meeting Chamber Executive Director Sheryll Bates presented Heppner resident Larry Mills with a special gift for his work within the community, including many years of announcing both the annual St. Patrick's Day and Fair and Rodeo parades.



Federal Commission sides with Umatilla Electric over territory dispute Columbia Basin claimed encroachment

By David Sykes

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) last week ruled in favor of Umatilla Electric Co-op (UEC) in a dispute with Columbia Basin Electric (CBEC) over who would build a transmission line from the planned new Wheatridge wind farm in Morrow County, out to the Bonneville Power Association (BPA) grid.

Columbia Basin had claimed that plans by UEC to build the transmission line would encroach on CBEC's exclusive service territory covered under Oregon law. CBEC had been moving forward with

plans to do a portion of the transmission line in its service area, and had already been working with local landowners on a route and securing easements. CBEC wanted to build the transmission line from the windfarm out to the edge of its service area, and from there UEC would build the rest of the line out to the grid.

The FERC ruled on Jan. 18 that construction of the transmission line would not cause CBEC to lose its exclusive retail service territory, nor would it compel retail service in CBEC's service territory to be provided by anyone other than Columbia Basin, as the co-

op had claimed.

"Of course we are disappointed in the decision," said CBEC General Manager and CEO Tom Wolff, "but we accept it and are ready to work with Wheatridge on the new windfarm project." CBEC will still be the exclusive provider of local power for the windfarm's use within the co-op's service area. The new 292-turbine 500 meg-watt windfarm covers an area just north of Lexington out to Buttercreek, and not only resides in the two different co-ops service areas, but also overlaps into Umatilla County.

Public Works adds on to office



Morrow County Public Works additional office space in Lexington is almost complete. The new space will house two offices, an employee breakroom, a conference room and an ADA restroom.

Public Works Director, Matt Scrivner said, "I am so excited about the new

conference room that will allow us to hold meetings without going to Heppner." He stated that they currently have to reserve a room in the Bartholomew Building, meet in a small room at the airport or just meet in the hallway at the current office building in Lexington.

The conference room,

scheduled for completion about March 1, will accommodate approximately 20 people and will have a separate entrance allowing it to be used for meetings after hours. Other county departments will soon have an option for holding meetings in Lexington.

Springfield woman dies seeking help after accident

Becky Sue McDuffee, 57, from Springfield was found dead on Tuesday, Jan. 16 when she attempted to seek assistance after driving off a rural farm road near milepost 59 on Highway 206 Condon.

McDuffee and her 78-year-old mother-in-law were driving on rural roads Monday night when their vehicle left the road and went off a steep incline. The elderly woman said McDuffee had left on foot around midnight and had not returned. According to a news release from the Morrow County Sher-

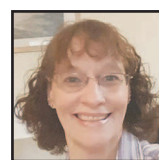
iff's Office, the weather was in the low 30's with heavy rain and fog, and she was not dressed for the weather conditions.

A passer-by noticed the vehicle off the road and called 911 around 8:24 Tuesday morning, stating he discovered the elderly female still in the vehicle when he went to assist. She was transported to Pioneer Memorial Hospital in Heppner and later released.

Morrow County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) and Morrow County Emergen-

cy Management (MCEM) activated Search and Rescue, with searchers going out on foot, on ATVs, in vehicles and by air to search for McDuffee. According to the release she was located at 12:38 p.m., deceased.

MCSO would like to remind citizens to carry appropriate and extra clothing during car travels and stick to main roads in unfamiliar areas. Those who are lost or whose car is disabled should stay with their vehicle.



Becky McDuffee

Enterprise Zone allocates \$2.7 million

Money given for education, public safety, health care and economic development

By David Sykes

The Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) recently awarded close to \$2.7 million in funds to a variety of groups across the county representing education, economic development, health care and public safety.

The funds represent money collected from businesses and industry in north Morrow County paying reduced fees in place of regular property taxes. CREZ offers reduced property taxes as an inducement for new business to locate there, and existing businesses to build expansion creating new employment. CREZ's mandate is also to decide how to distribute the collected funds.

A run down on who received the money: City of Boardman and Boardman Community Development Assoc. - \$714,785; City of Irrigon/Irrigon Housing Group - \$629,556; Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group - \$510,235; Morrow County Education Foundation - \$350,000; Boardman Rural Fire District - \$176,214; Boardman Rural Fire District - \$50,000; Boardman City Police - \$110,000; Morrow County Health District - \$100,000; Boardman Community Development Assoc. - \$55,000.

The formula for distributing a portion of the money was based on population figures. Percentages of the county's population living

in certain zip codes in the county was used, along with a base allotment of \$50,000, on how to allocate the money across the county.

In the beginning CREZ laid out four basic areas to allocate money: education, housing, community enhancement and public safety. A discussion was held on whether to change those categories and perhaps add infrastructure. After discussion the CREZ board decided to stay with the original categories. Makeup of the six-member board is two appointments each from the Port of Morrow, City of Boardman and Morrow County.

Jackson Coiner takes top honors in HES Geography Bee

Heppner Elementary School students competed in the school Geography Bee on Wednesday, Jan. 17. Fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students were given a qualifying test and the top 12 students were invited to participate in a competition in front of the school.

Students were asked a variety of questions about world and local geography.

Seven rounds of questions eventually narrowed down the competitors to a group of ten for the final round. The top two students remaining were fifth graders John Lindsay and Jackson Coiner.

Jackson Coiner was crowned the champion and will be taking the qualifying test for the state competition.



Jackson Coiner



HES students pictured who competed in the Geography Bee are front row (L-R): John Lindsay, Keegin Chitty, Rylee Palmer, Aden Lathrop and Lane Critchlow. Back row (L-R): Landon Mitchell, Hallee Hisler, Teagan Ramsey, Jackson Coiner, Sierra Greenup, Caden George and Arianna Worden.

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