

HEPPNER 50¢

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County transfers ownership of Gilliam-Bisbee to Heppner Community Foundation

Sets aside \$235,000 for improvements



Plans are underway to turn the Gilliam-Bisbee building into a community events center.

By David Sykes

The Morrow County Commission has approved transfer of ownership of the Gilliam-Bisbee building in downtown Heppner from the county to the newly-formed Heppner Community Foundation. At the same time the Commissioners also set aside \$235,000 in county money to be used toward upgrading the building to code.

The Community Foundation is a non-profit set up recently by Kim Cutsforth, administrator of the Howard and Beth Bryant Foundation, to accept ownership of the Bisbee building. Cutsforth has said the foundation, which donates funds to worthwhile community projects, will donate additional funds to “renovate the property for the use of the community for events and social services to include education and training,” according to the resolution passed by the county.

The county purchased the Gilliam-Bisbee building in 1997 and has mostly used the upper floors for the County Health Department and rented out additional offices upstairs to Community Counseling Solutions. Community Counseling recently moved into its new offices in Heppner and the Health Department has moved to the Bartholomew building, leaving it mostly empty. The county had been using the bottom floor for storage but has since cleared out much of their office equipment and fur-

niture, leaving that space empty.

County officials have wrestled with what to do with the Gilliam-Bisbee building, not wanting to see it deteriorate and realizing there would be costs to either demolish the structure, which is not needed, or pay for continual upkeep on the structure. Cutsforth had earlier proposed that the building be renovated with a combination of county and Bryant Foundation funds, and turn the facility into a nice community type center. In order to carry out this vision however, it was necessary to transfer ownership from the county to the new Community Foundation. In voting in favor of the proposal, Commissioner Melissa Lindsay said she had been asked to join the Heppner Foundation board, but would have no financial gain from the project.

In other business at previous meetings: At the Sept. 12 meeting:

The commission approved the purchase of a new vehicle for the Sheriff’s Parole and Probation department. The vehicle is a 2018 Dodge Durango from Salem Withnell Dodge for the amount of \$28,897. The current Dodge Charger will be rotated out of service the Sheriff’s Department said.

They voted to approve a new subdivision located outside the city of Irrigon off of Eighth Street. There will be five lots of about two acres each. The new street in the cul-de-sac will

be named Bohemia Drive and is a public access road that will not be paved. The landowners agreed to maintain the road.

In a report by County Planner Carla McLane the commission heard that with the approval in July of a 14 lot subdivision west of Boardman and the new Irrigon subdivision this will

-See GILLIAM-BISBEE/
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Seven counties elect governor



Morrow County Clerk Bobbi Childers stands next to the new ballot counting machine. -Photo by David Sykes.

By Bobbi Gordon

Morrow County was among 29 counties in the state that had a majority of the votes cast for Knute Buehler for Oregon state governor. Those counties did not carry enough weight to offset the votes in the seven counties that voted for Kate Brown. The percentage of voters in Morrow County who voted for Buehler was 67.67 percent, compared to 22.35 percent for Brown. A reported 69.06 percent of voters turned out to cast ballots statewide.

In other statewide elections, Morrow County voters cast 70.03 percent of their ballots for Greg Walden for US Representative, District 2 compared to Jamie McLeod-Skinner’s 24.8 percent. Total votes within District 2 were 56.54 percent for Walden and 39.17 percent for McLeod-Skinner, a much closer margin.

Measure 102 was the only measure that passed statewide, with Morrow County voters voting 58.21 percent no. Measure 103 was defeated at the state

level, but Morrow County voters had a majority of yes votes. County voters also had more yes votes on measures 105 and 106 that were both defeated at the state level. Morrow County agreed with the rest of the state on measure 104, defeating it with 52.30 percent of their votes.

Measure 102 is described as amending the constitution to allow bonds for financing affordable housing with nongovernmental entities. Measure 103 would amend the constitution to prohibit taxes and fees based on transactions for “groceries.” Measure 104 would amend the constitution to expand application of requirement of three-fifths legislative majority to approve bills raising revenue. Measure 105 would repeal the law limiting use of state/local law enforcement resources to enforce federal immigration laws. Measure 106 would amend the constitution to prohibit spending “public funds” directly/indirectly for abortion.

Locally, Heppner mayor or Cody High was defeated by Jim Kindel. Kindel had 407 votes compared to High’s 205. Heppner council position five was the only other position with two candidates. David Gunderson’s 403 votes defeated Sharon Inskeep’s 184.

The town of Lexington mayor and two council positions will be determined by write-in votes that will be available after Nov. 20. There were 49 write-in votes for mayor, 52 for councilor position 2 and 37 for councilor position 3. Bobbi Gordon ran unopposed for councilor position 4, receiving 74 of 82 votes.

According to Bobbi Childers, Morrow County clerk, the write-in votes will be tallied on the 21st of November. “I have uncured ballots that have until 5 p.m. on Nov. 20 to cure,” she said. Uncured ballots are ballots that may be missing signatures or have other errors. The county is also required to do a mandatory hand recount after the certification day of Nov. 26.

Neal gets rousing retirement send-off



Gary Neal and his wife Kathy (right) get a standing ovation at Gary’s retirement party last week. -Photo by David Sykes

By David Sykes

A large crowd of well-wishers gathered last Thursday to give Port of Morrow General Manager Gary Neal a rousing retirement send-off. Neal is stepping down after 29 years at the helm of the Port, which has seen tremendous growth and success during his tenure.

Speaker after speaker spoke of Neal’s hard work and dedication to the job, including State Representative Greg Smith, County Commissioner and former Port Commissioner Don Russell, Port Commissioner Larry Lindsay and several other Port Commissioners and elected officials. All had good things to say

about Neal’s time at the Port. Several local business leaders who have done business with the Port also spoke favorably of their time working with Neal.

When Neal arrived in 1989, there were a few businesses and services such as the potato flake plant, Oregon Potato, Lamb Weston and a couple of terminal docks on the river. By comparison, a recent economic impact analysis shows that port businesses now generate \$2.7 billion of economic output and have created approximately 8,500 direct and indirect jobs.

Neal graduated from Clarkston Washington High School in 1971. He attended Washington State University from 1971-1975, major-

ing in political science. He was the manager of the Port of Clarkston from 1984 to March 1989. Neal was also a Port of Clarkston commissioner from 1981 to 1984. From 1975 through 1984, Neal worked with his father in the construction development business in the Lewiston-Clarkston valley.

He began his career at the Port of Morrow in March 1989 and was named Economic Development Leader of the Year in 2000. He is currently on the board of the Bank of Eastern Oregon, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, Oregon Ports Group, Northeast Oregon Water Association and is an active committee member with several other groups. Gary and his wife

Kathy have been married over 42 years and they have two children and four grandchildren. Their son Ryan has been named the new Port Manager.

Now that he is retired Neal says he and his wife Kathy will be moving to Clarkston to be closer to his mother. They have a winter home in Arizona and plan on spending time there and also doing some traveling.

G-T Trophy Corner



The Heppner Gazette-Times wants to see pictures of your trophy animals from this hunting season. Stop by to have your picture taken, drop off photos, mail them to PO Box 337 in Heppner, email them to editor@rapidsolve.net or text cell phone photos to 541-980-6674.

Allen Osmin, son of Derek and Lora Osmin, Hermiston, shot his first bear and his first elk his year. The bear was taken during deer season on the Osmin Shilling Ranch on Wilson Creek. He took both with a 300 WinMag. Allen is the grandson of Frank and Cara Osmin on Balm Fork, Heppner.

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