HEPPNER Gazette Times 50¢

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# Community Enhancement grants disbursed

## *$96,567 given out in Heppner, Lexington and Ione*

**By David Sykes**

The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group (WCVEDG) has awarded Community Enhancement grants totaling $96,567 to eight different groups in Heppner, Lexington and Ione. WCVEDG received the money from the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) for disbursement into the south Morrow County area.

In addition to the Community Enhancement grants, WCVEDG has also been working on increasing rental housing of which there is a shortage in the community. A duplex is expected to break ground and begin construction soon. The group also has funds available for rehabilitating housing and business enhancement. Funds for all these projects comes from new and expanding businesses located in the enterprise zone near Boardman. The businesses receive a tax break when locating in Morrow County. Amazon server farms and Con-Agra are just two of the businesses which have expanded or located there and pay into CREZ. The money is in turn disbursed throughout the county under four categories: schools, public safety, housing and community enhancement.

### Community Enhancement Grants Funded

| Grant Recipient | Funds Requested | Project Cost |
|---|---|---|
| **City of Heppner:** Rental of 30-yard dumpster for use in city-wide cleanup during Mustang Mop Up | **$ 1,000.00** | $2,000.00 |
| **City of Heppner:** Purchase of 25 flower baskets and planters along Main Street. | **$ 2,167.00** | $4,334.00 |
| **City of Heppner – Fire Department:** The Fire Department is replacing its self-contained Breathing apparatus/turnouts | **$ 20,000.00** | $170,210.00 |
| **Fuzz Ball DBA MDH Animal Rescue:** A year round project in South Morrow county to collect feral cats for spaying and neutering and by community outreach, educate and financially assist pet owners to spay and neuter their cats. 2 Volunteers will live trap feral cats and transport them to spay and neuter clinic and return them. | **$ 3,000.00** | $ 6,000.00 |
| **Heppner DayCare and Preschool**: The project would cover cost of supplies and labor to replace the entire wooden fence with a chain link fence and slats. | **$ 500.00** | $ 1,000.00 |
| **Heppner FFA Chapter/AG Department:** Continuation and expansion of "Hunger project" to include a backpack program for Heppner Elementary and Jr/Sr. High School Students. | **$ 9,000.00** | $ 19,575.00 |
| **Ione School District/Ione Booster Club:** The Fitness Center Project includes construction of a new building to be located on Ione School District property. This project would be accessible to students and community residents and will offer a safe, secure and modern facility to use within their own community. | **$50,000.00** | $370,642.00 |
| **Neighborhood Center of South Morrow County:** Funds to provide Food Boxes for those meeting the federal guidelines for South County Residents. The need for this service and assistance has increased (have seen more usage by the elderly population than in the past) | **$ 5,000.00** | $ 10,000.00 |
| **Oregon Trail Library District:** This project will offer a "Teen Night" program for students in grades 7-12 and will be held twice a month with various activities planned by staff and teens. This project will require some equipment (Smart TV, Laptops, Projector, Outdoor Blow Up Screen, Speakers Outdoor Bluetooth, Table and Chairs) | **$ 3,900.00** | $ 7,390.00 |
| **Town of Lexington:** Purchase of three "Welcome to Lexington" signs which will also display some history of Lexington | **$ 2,000.00** | $ 4,000.00 |
| **Community Requests** | **$ 96,567.00** | $595,151.00 |

# Ballots for May 21 election mailed

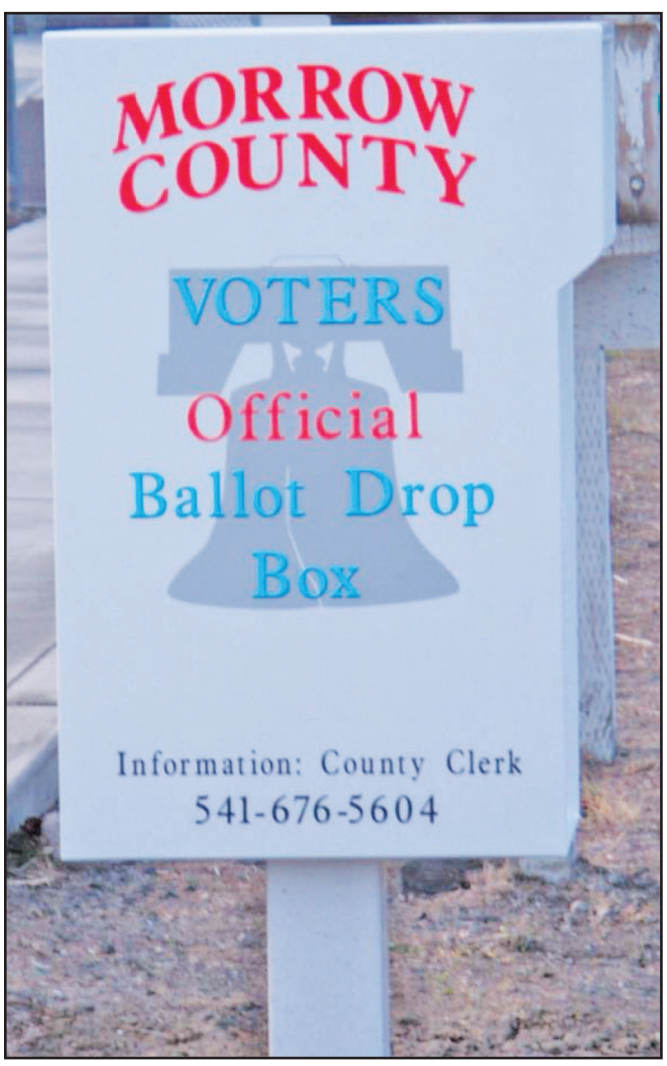
Ballots for the May 21 regular district election will be mailed on May 1. Completed ballots for the election must be received by 8 p.m. on election day. Postmarks do not count.

Ballots may be dropped in Heppner 24 hours a day at the drop box in the Bartholomew building parking lot. Ballots may also be dropped in the county clerk's office, room 102, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5.

The Lexington ballot drop box is located in the public works parking lot at 365 W Hwy 74.

In Ione, the drop box is located on Spring Street, in front of the turn onto Third Street.

Outside drop boxes are currently open 24 hours, but all drop boxes will close at 8 p.m. on election day. Ballot drop boxes are also available in Boardman and Irrigon.




# New clothing store opens in Heppner

**By Bobbi Gordon**

Darcie Chick, Heppner, opened Sage Clothing Company on St. Patrick's weekend on Main Street in Heppner. She said she didn't know what to expect, but the first weekend boosted her confidence due to the community support.

Chick told the Gazette that she had only signed the contract on the building a few weeks before and with the help of her dad, a contractor, her husband and other family and friends they were able to get the building ready for the opening quickly. Her mom took care of the kids and the family worked late into the nights for the quick turnaround.

The goal of the store is to appeal to a broad range of people in town and be an affordable choice for Heppner and surrounding communities. According to Chick, she wanted to do something for working women and high school girls that is affordable. She said it has become a first stop for people before heading into town. "They stop here first to see if I have something," she said. "I want Heppner to know we're here and we're consistent." They are open Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 10-3.

At this time she carries women's clothing in sizes small to 3X and girls from size four or five to 14. She has found vendors and wholesalers online and tries to have a small variety of each item to keep the shopping experience unique. She is able to stay up to date on the latest styles as her vendors have access to those styles, but she tries to pick and choose items she thinks people in Heppner will like.

The store will have a grand opening and ribbon cutting for the new phase of construction on May 3 at 10 a.m. with refreshments being served. The expansion she has planned will include dressing rooms, more women's clothes and eventually some items for men and boys. She said, "It is important to shop local and I want to help bring business back to Heppner."

Darcie, 25, grew up in Hermiston and met her husband, Eric Chick, 26, at a church function when they were in high school. After high school they got married and went to college at Brigham Young University in Rexburg, Idaho before returning to Heppner. They have three children; Kolt is four, Sawyer is three and Dixie is one. Darcie is the daughter of Don and Jackie Alleman, Heppner. Eric is the son of Kevin and Candy Chick, the owners of Blue Mountain Manufacturing where Eric works. He is learning the ropes to one day take over the company.

**Darcie Chick is the owner and operator of Sage Clothing Company in downtown Heppner.** -*Photo by Bobbi Gordon.*

# Mills recognized for 25 years on county budget committee

**County Commissioners Don Russell and Jim Doherty (left to right) along with Commissioner Melissa Lindsay honored Heppner resident Larry Mills for his 25 years serving on the budget committee.**

Heppner resident Larry Mills has spent his last budget session pouring over the county finances and coming up with a budget, when he recently decided to step down after 25 years of service to the county. The budget committee meets for several days each year to go over the finances and put together the coming year's budget.

"On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, staff and the good people of Morrow County, we would like to personally thank you for serving on the Budget Committee for 'some 25' years. Your hard work, dedication and stewardship of Morrow County's budget process has paid dividends to all," the three county commissioners wrote in an appreciation letter to Mills.

"We appreciate the many hours you have devoted to reviewing our budget documents, the historical knowledge you bring to the hearings and your ability to keep the meetings on task. We are grateful for your leadership and sense of humor," commissioners Jim Doherty, Melissa Lindsay and Don Russell, said. The committee, made up of both volunteer citizens and the three county commissioners, recently finished its last meeting for the year.

**ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE:**

**MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.**