

City may get stuck with cleanup bill

\$18,000 plus to remove burned out house



This house on 485 Linden Way was gutted by fire April 2. Over two months later it still has not been removed. -Photo by David Sykes.

By David Sykes

The city of Heppner may get stuck paying the tab for cleanup of a burned-out house on Linden Way, the council was told Monday night. The house was burned on April 2 and, after more than two months, there has been no effort to clean up the mess. Neighbors have been complaining of smell and the structure is unsafe and dangerous.

After contacting the insurance company with no luck, and hearing that the property owner is not cooperating, the council had enough and authorized City Manager Kraig Cutsforth to budget \$18,000 for cleanup. And, even that may not be enough. Cutsforth said Miller and Sons Excavation and Disposal turned in a bid that included an asbestos assessment. If asbestos is found the cleanup tab will be even higher since asbestos removal must be done in a special, more expensive way.

"Why did the cleanup become the city's responsibility?" councilmember Dave Gunderson wanted to know. He was told the insurance company has refused to pay for it, and

Honor Society inducts new members

The Heppner High School chapter of the National Honor Society held their induction ceremony and luncheon for the new members on Wednesday, May 29 in the high school library. Mrs. Payne, the advisor, and current members led the ceremony with the lighting ritual and pledge. This year's new inductees are Roy Collins, Jayden Wilson, Kellen Grant, Madelyn Nichols, Alexis Cutsforth and Hannah Palmer.

The National Honor Society is the nation's premier organization established to recognize outstanding high school students. More than just an honor roll, NHS serves to honor those students who have demonstrated excellence in the areas

of Scholarship, Leadership, Service and Character. These characteristics have been associated with membership in the organization since its beginning in 1921.

the owner of the property isn't cooperating and can't even be found. In January property owner Megan Futter was arrested on two counts of felony methamphetamine distribution and is currently out on bail awaiting disposition of her case. City attorney Bill Kuhn said neither the insurance company nor Futter are cooperating in any way for cleanup of the property. Undersheriff John Bowles, who is also a councilmember said Parole and Probation at this time doesn't even know where Futter is.

Neighbor Jay Keithly asked the council if any other toxic substance tests would be done on the property. Only asbestos, he was told. Fire Marshall Rusty Estes said because of a possible asbestos presence, the fire department can't even burn the rest of the house down.

There is a possibility the city could recover some of the cleanup costs through the legal system. It has the power to place a lien on the property for cleanup, and, if the lien isn't paid, foreclose and sell the land.

Gains from the sale, however, most likely will not cover the legal process and cleanup bill. "If we don't do anything it will just sit there," Bowles said in urging the council to move forward. "Let's just do it and get it taken care of," another councilmember urged. They voted unanimously to move forward with the cleanup.

In other business the council voted to have city hall closed on Friday, July 5, the day after the fourth of July holiday. They also voted to approve the city budget.

In other action, they voted to move forward with vacating a portion of Gilmore Street, formerly known as Jail Street, that lies across the creek from Hager Park between Balm and Cowins Streets. That portion of Gilmore has never been used and is not now being used as a street easement or access to anyone's property. The Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group is currently building two duplexes on property there and needs the street vacated for better use of the property.



Heppner High School students were inducted into the National Honor Society. Back Row (L to R): Roy Collins, Jayden Wilson, Kellen Grant. Front Row (L to R): Madelyn Nichols, Alexis Cutsforth, Hannah Palmer.

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Shepherds Flat looks to replace turbine blades

Eighty-eight-foot longer blades will produce more electricity



Morrow County residents may see more of these on the road if an application for new windmill blades is approved. -Photo by Cathy Smith.

By David Sykes

The Shepherds Flat wind energy facility, with 116 towers located on 11,769 acres in Gilliam and Morrow counties, has made application to put new bigger blades on its turbines, the Oregon Dept. of Energy, ODE, has announced.

Caithness Energy, LLC, which owns Shepherds Flat, says the bigger blades will "extend the useful life of the facility; take advantage of the latest turbine technology; and produce more electricity, especially at lower wind speeds." The application also asks to increase allowed electricity

production from 290 megawatts to "beyond 318."

The current blades are 328.1 feet in diameter and are allowed blade tip clearance from the ground at 82 feet. If approved the new blades would be 416.7 feet long and have minimum blade tip clearance of 70.5 feet.

Other specifics of the application say the maximum volume of concrete above grade in the turbine foundations must not exceed 66 cubic yards, and the total weight of the metal turbines shall not be more than 393 tons per turbine.

The company doesn't plan on relocating any turbines and the project will not change the original facility construction footprint, cause any additional environmental disturbance and will not make any difference in the sound coming from the turbines.

No timeline for the project was announced by Caithness, however it did ask the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council to place its application under the type B review process, which is faster than would be required under a major change or new facility.

Hopeful Saints celebrates 20th anniversary

Right: Pictured are The Rev. David Brauer-Rieke, bishop of the Oregon Synod, ELCA, Hopeful Saints Pastor Katy Anderson and The Rev. Patrick Bell, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon.

Below: Emilia Cavan (left) and Journey Cavan show off the new sign at All Saints Episcopal Church commemorating the joining of the ministries of Hope Lutheran and All Saints. -Photos by April Sykes.



Both the Episcopal and Lutheran bishops were on hand to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the joint ministry of All Saints Episcopal and Hope Lutheran churches in Heppner on Sunday, June 9, at All Saints.

County considers airport courtesy car

By David Sykes

Morrow County is considering adding a courtesy car at its airport in Lexington. The car would be available for pilots who land there and need to get a ride into town. Commissioner Don Russell who is a pilot and flown to quite

a few other small airports said most of them have the cars and it would be a good service to add here. Russell pointed out that the amount of grant dollars available for small airports depends a lot on how much the airports are used. "If you want people to land at

your airport then a courtesy car is a must," Russell said. "As a guy who has flown around the northwest, I have used a lot of courtesy cars. It makes a difference if I landed there," he said.

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