



Armato to run for county commissioner

Joseph B. Armato has filed for election for Morrow County Commissioner, position one. Joe is an active, lifelong member and sixth generation resident of the Morrow County community. He is an elected member of the Willow Creek Park District board of directors where he helps establish and balance the budget of nearly \$300,000. Armato also serves on the board of the Heppner Community Foundation, where he has assisted in overseeing the restoration and renovation of the historic Gilliam and Bisbee building in Heppner. As a 911 dispatcher for the Morrow County Sheriff's Department, Joe has been

afforded the opportunity to better understand the needs and the diversity of the communities of the county. "He serves with integrity, compassion, and good judgement." In his spare time, Joe is an assistant coach for the Heppner Middle School football team. Joe is an active and involved member of his community. His numerous civic and personal commitments reflect his ability to dedicate himself to helping improve a community. These experiences have provided him with a unique view of the diversity, needs, and greatness that Morrow County and its residents share. Joe hopes to serve our communities, north and



Joseph B. Armato

south, by focusing on economic development, improving access to county resources and maintaining a fiscally responsible county government. With your support, he looks forward to the opportunity to be a part of the continued growth of the county and its communities.

Juli Kennedy appointed Lexington Mayor

Denis Lien hired as town recorder

By David Sykes
The Lexington Town Council last week appointed Juli Kennedy as mayor. She replaces Marcia Kemp who resigned. "I'm committed to our town and really looking forward to working with the council and community members," Kennedy told the Gazette-Times following the meeting. The mayor position is four years, but she will need to run for election in next year's November general election to keep the seat.



Juli Kennedy

Lexington town council for reasons most of this town knows," she wrote. She thanked former Mayor Kemp and Sam Bellamy for "trying to make our town a better place to live."

The council did not make an appointment to fill the position but has received two letters of interest from community members. The council decided to postpone the appointment until next month's meeting.

Also at the meeting the council heard a presentation from County Assessor Mike Gorman. Gorman went over the entire budgeting process and talked to the council about the town's calendar, publishing requirements, deadlines and important aspects of the budgeting process. He said there is a good training session put on by the state later in La Grande and urged councilmembers to attend and learn more about budgeting. He also said the Oregon Department of Revenue has a web site with information about the budget process.

In other business the council voted to accept a \$6,692 bid to install the chlorination system from Lexington Pump.

The council also discussed a proposal from a construction company that wants to buy 600,000 gallons of water per month to be used in building the new Wheatridge wind farm. The company will begin building the wind and solar generating facility in Morrow County soon for NextEra Energy, and needs the water for construction purposes. Wind farms require large amounts of water to make cement for the wind tower bases.

Lexington does not have that much water to spare from its main water well source, however the company is interested in developing a well the city controls near the airport. At an earlier meeting the council discussed the proposal and wanted testing done on the well before giving its approval.



Denis Lien

be 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. He took over the job from Kevin McCabe who had been filling in part time until a new recorder could be hired. The town maintenance position is still vacant and last month the council decided to advertise the position as part time.

In other business the council received a resignation letter from councilmember Marcia Sticka. "I remove myself from the

Local priest suspended

The Diocese of Baker was recently informed by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City of a substantiated charge of sexual abuse with a minor against Reverend Papa Rao Pasala, a priest of the Diocese of Nellore, India, who has been serving as a pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Heppner and St. William Mission in Ione since 2014.

The abuse occurred in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City in 2001, and the

statute of limitations has expired.

Upon receipt of this information, Bishop Liam Cary of the Diocese of Baker immediately removed Father Pasala from his parish and suspended him from ministry. He will no longer be allowed to minister in the United States and will return to the Diocese of Nellore to face further disciplinary actions by his bishop there.

According to Rever-

end Richard Fischer, Vicar General of the Diocese of Baker, there have been no accusations made against Father Pasala during his time in the Baker Diocese. If any person has information regarding violations from 2014 until now, he or she is asked to contact the civil authorities and Leah Bickett, the Child Protection Coordinator for the Diocese of Baker, at 541-388-4004.

Judge Spicer to retire

After nine years serving as the Morrow County Justice Judge, Ann Spicer is banging her gavel for the last time on December 31. Ann served as Justice Judge from January 2011 to December 2019. With her retirement, Ann ends a long legal career serving the citizens of Morrow and Umatilla County.

Ann and her husband Bill Kuhn moved to Heppner in 1977. Ann worked first as the city attorney for the city of Umatilla, then as Morrow County Deputy District Attorney for one year, followed by two years as the Morrow County District Attorney. For twenty-seven years she practiced law with her husband in their Heppner and Hermiston offices. She capped her career with her service as Morrow County District Judge.

Ann was always active in professional organizations, serving on the Oregon State Bar Continuing Legal Education committee, Oregon State Bar Ethics committee and the Umatilla Morrow Family



Judge Ann Spicer

Law Advisory committee. She was an Oregon Legal Services pro bono intake volunteer, Hermiston Domestic Violence Victims attorney and was a member of the Oregon Justice Judges Association.

Spicer has been extremely active in community organizations including board member and chair of the Oregon Trail Library District, Heppner Soroptimist and Willow County Service Club, Heppner Economic Development Commission, 4-H cooking club leader, Heppner and Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, St. Patrick's committee and auction co-

chair and the Domestic Violence board of directors.

According to the press release, as Justice Judge, Ann is proud of the efficiency she has brought to her office. She is also extremely proud of the truancy program she developed with the Morrow County School District. She enjoyed counseling truant children and their parents about the importance of education and the need to attend and finish their public schooling education. It was also reported that she felt her greatest satisfaction as judge when she could keep children attending school.

She says her retirement pace will not be leisurely. She plans to travel extensively and take up the hobbies she never had time for while practicing law, particularly quilting. She has three grandchildren who will want all the time she can give them. She looks forward to continuing to work with community organizations and she said she just might find some mornings to sleep in.

Bailey elected as CBO officer

The Community Banks of Oregon (CBO), which represents banks headquartered in Oregon, elected its 2019-2020 board officers and directors during its annual meeting on December 6.

The CBO membership elected Ron Green, president and chief executive officer of Oregon Pacific Bank in Florence as chair. Jeff Bailey, president and chief executive officer of Bank of Eastern Oregon, Heppner, was elected secretary-treasurer. Immediate past chair is Kenneth D. Trautman, Jr, president

and chief executive officer of People's Bank of Commerce, Medford.

New directors elected to four-year terms were Randy Compton, Kate Salyers and Jim Schlotfeldt. Re-elected for director four-year terms were Trey Maust and Joseph J. Postlewait. Currently serving directors are Jarrett Stuchlik and Craig Wanichek.

"Oregon's community banks are fortunate to have this accomplished group of bankers leading the Community Banks of Oregon. Their commitment and passion for community



Jeff Bailey

banking will be invaluable to our organization and the communities we serve," said Linda Navarro, president and chief executive officer of CBO and the Oregon Bankers Association.

G-T closed for Christmas

The Heppner Gazette-Times will be closed December 24, 25 and 26 for the Christmas holiday. The paper will be delivered Tuesday, December

24 instead of Wednesday, December 25.

The deadline for all news and advertising for the December 24 issue will be Friday, December 20, at

5 p.m. The office will be open for normal business hours December 23 and 27.

The G-T wishes everyone a safe and happy holiday season.

ALL NEWS AND ADVERTISEMENT DEADLINE: MONDAYS AT 5:00 P.M.