Feasibility study approved by health district board

Morrow County Health District CEO Bob Houser updated the board on financing options for future construction projects and Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney discussed a proposal for a marketing and feasibility study at the board's meeting Monday night in Heppner. The firm, Wipfli, will charge the district $55,000-$60,000 for the study, if it proceeds "expeditiously and will be completed no later than June 30 of this year." If not, Wipfli warned of the possibility of additional fees. The study is imperative if the district opts to apply for an FDA loan, said Mahoney. The board approved the expenditure, which was not in the budget.

"Scott Combs, architect will meet with the executive team, managers and providers to go over the latest plans to assess any changes needed on March 10 at 10:30 a.m. and at noon with the providers," said Houser.

Tentative plans are to remodel Pioneer Memorial Hospital and construct a new clinic in Heppner.

Also at the meeting, Houser laid out an agenda for his succession plan. His agenda includes a timeline for updating the current CEO job description, deciding whether or not to hire a chief operating officer, with the prospect of advancing the COO to CEO, advertising the COO or CEO position, interviewing, hiring and mentoring if needed with the new CEO or COO beginning to assume duties in June 2021.

If a COO is hired, the district would add the position in the next budget cycle at approximately $100,000 to $125,000 per year.

Bob Houser's contract ends December 31 of this year. Board member Aaron Palmquist commented that the district was very fortunate to have hired Houser for its CEO position.

The board also approved seeking a $147,600 bank loan from the Bank of Eastern Oregon at 4.15 percent for purchase of a new ambulance to replace Boardman's second vehicle and approved an expenditure of $12,564.88 to repair the old ambulance to keep as a spare. In related business, the board also approved selling a non-running ambulance as surplus equipment.

Boardman's new ambulance is tentatively scheduled to be delivered on March 4.

In other business, the board:

-learned Houser is working on a one-year contract with Amanda Fabian PA-C for a full-time position at Irrigon Medical Clinic.

-learned a contract has been signed with Providence Heart Institute to begin the district's echocardiogram service once an IT link is established.

-learned the CEO has hired a director of informatics, Fred Lively. Informatics includes processing data for storage and retrieval.

-approved a community benefit grant of two portable AED (automatic external defibrillator) units for use by the Morrow County Extension Office.

-approved purchase of a lab blood/gas analyzer for $10,000 to replace an analyzer that will be "non-supported" in May, meaning that replacement parts and maintenance will not be available after that date.

-learned from Houser that he has put the physician search on hold with Pacific Companies but noted the search can be restarted any time within the life of the contract without additional fees paid out monthly while it is on hold.

-received word that Mt. Valley Real Estate has moved out of the leased space in Boardman and the district is working with Eastern Oregon Physical Therapy to remodel the additional space they asked for. Home Health and Hospice will move into the space vacated by Mt. Valley.

-learned Primm Surveying will be working on the Irrigon Medical Clinic lot with mid-March the date anticipated to begin surveying.

-approved the January profit and loss statement as follows: $1,027,517 in gross patient revenue, less $3,358 in provision for bad debts, $215,892 in contractual and other adjustments for $212,533 in total revenue deductions, $181,603 in tax revenue and $218,842 in other operating revenue for $1,215,428 in total operating revenue; less $1,332,988 in total operating expenses for $60,871 in a non-operating gain for a $56,689 loss for the month, but an average monthly year to date gain of $45,565.

-received the following reports for January: Pioneer Memorial Hospital had seven admissions for January, four swing bed admissions, seven admissions for observation, 514 total outpatients, 69 emergency room encounters, 1,652 lab tests, 89 x-ray/ultrasound tests, 35 CT scans, one MRI scan, 28 EKG tests, three lower endoscopy procedures, three upper endoscopy procedures, 39 respiratory therapy procedures.

-Home Health had 116 patient visits; Hospice had two admissions and one death.

-Pharmacy had 2,863 drug doses for $99,578 in drug revenue.

-Pioneer Memorial Clinic had 412 patient visits, with nine new patients, 24 seen by a nurse and 12 no-shows; Irrigon Medical Clinic had 298 patient visits with 27 new patients, 127 seen by a nurse and 24 no-shows; Ione Community Clinic had 83 patient visits with two new patients, 11 seen by a nurse and six no-shows.

-Heppner Ambulance had 22 page outs with 16 transports for $23,732; Boardman Ambulance had 51 page-outs with 28 transports for $53,133; Irrigon Ambulance had 22 page-outs with 15 transports for $24,288; Ione Ambulance had one page-out with no transports; there were three life flights.

Morrow County students named to OSU honor roll

Several students from Boardman, Heppner, Ione and Irrigon have been named to the honor roll at Oregon State University with a 3.5 or better GPA.

From Boardman are Taylor R. Hamby, Junior, Biology; Tania Mendoza, Junior, Public Health; Edith E. Velasco, Senior, Human Devel and Family Science. Heppner students are Jessica M. Kempken, Senior, BioHealth Sciences; Kevin P. Murray, Junior, BioHealth Sciences. Oskar M. Peterson, Senior, Mechanical Engineering is from Ione and Brandy Quezada-Hermosillo, Senior, Human Devel and Family Science is from Irrigon.

A total of 1,711 students earned straight-A (4.0). Another 4,920 earned a B-plus (3.5) or better to make the listing. To be on the honor roll, students must carry at least 12 graded hours of course work.

Pot of Gold donations provide wheel chairs

Pictured with donated wheelchairs are Shelley McCabe (left) and Kelsie Worden.

The Friends helping Friends Pot of Gold donations from 2019 were recently used to purchase three wheel chairs and bath benches for Pioneer Memorial Home Health and Hospice. Donations made to the Pot of Gold all stay in the local area and help the community.

"Friends helping Friends generous donation enables Pioneer Memorial Home Health and Hospice to provide quality medical equipment that is available to loan or community members. These items will help people remain safe and comfortable in their home environment as they recover from surgery or an illness. Thank you again for your donation," said Molly Rhea, Home Health and Hospice director.

The annual Remembrance Walk and 5K Run will be held Saturday, March 14, with all funds raised being added to the Pot of Gold. Pre-registrations can be sent to Friends helping Friends, Kathy Dickenson, PO Box 566, Heppner, OR 97836. Registrations forms are on the counter at Murray Drug's.

St. Pat's Weekend to be filled with fun and entertainment

Put on your green hats, jewelry and clothing to get ready for some good old "Wee Bit O' Ireland" fun Thursday, March 12 through Sunday, March 15 in Heppner.

Thursday's festivities include Father Condon's "St. Theresa, The Little Flower" play performance at St. Patrick's Parish Hall beginning at 7 p.m. Friday will bring Arts and Crafts, the annual book sale, food and other activities. An Irish dinner will be served by the St. Patrick's Altar Society at St. Patrick's Parish Hall from 4 to 7 p.m. Three-on-three basketball will start at 5 p.m. at the Heppner High School gym and from 8 p.m. to midnight Murray's Irish Beer and Wine Fest, featuring Dan Burns 3D Productions, will be held at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building. A $5 cover charge will be charged and food will be available for purchase from Quality Concessions.

Saturday, March 14, will truly be a full day, starting at daylight with the Sheep Dog Trials, a Saturday O' Brunch served by Heppner Christian Church from 8 a.m. to noon at St. Patrick's senior center and many places to shop, eat and sit. Check out the vendors and the annual book sale in the Heppner city hall conference room.

There will be a Remembrance Walk and 5K Run, the Cruz-In car show, Welly Toss, the Leprechaun Run for kids and the Bed and O'Planky team races on Main St., the Irish Coffee Hour from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and the Polar Plunge on Willow Street near the public works office. Numbered "gold" nuggets will be hidden around town and prizes should be claimed at the information booth from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Great Green Parade is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. Following the parade there will be plenty of other activities. Visit the Morrow County Heritage and Agricultural Museums and the Bouncin' Leprechauns Fun Zone. CEILI will be held from 2 to 4 p.m., Ewe-Do-Bingo and O'Ducky Race, along with several local fundraisers will be found around town.

Saturday evening will bring the Blue Mountain Old Time Fiddlers at the fairgrounds dance hall starting at 6:30 p.m. The local kids' talent show will be held at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building from 6 to 7:20 p.m. and the Gothard Sisters will perform starting at 7:30 p.m. The Wee Hours O' Benefit breakfast will be served at Angell's Kitchen on N. Chase St. from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.

On Sunday, the final competition for the Sheep Dog Trials will be held and the weekend will wrap up with Road Bowling on Balm Fork Rd. at 1 p.m., with registration at 12:45 p.m.

For more information, call 541-676-5536 or visit www.heppnerchamber.com where you can get a copy of the complete schedule and print the forms for the team competitions. You can also visit us on Facebook at "St. Patrick's Celebration Heppner Oregon USA."

Gothard Sisters to perform

The Gothard Sisters will be taking the stage at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building for the 38th Annual St. Patrick's celebration on Saturday, March 14 beginning at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free due to funding by Morrow County Recreation District.

The Gothard Sisters are a dynamic musical group of three sisters who play contemporary Celtic music. When sisters Greta Gothard, Willow Gothard and Solana Gothard fuse their musical talents together, the result is an irresistible mix of spritely violin and fiddle tones, pure sibling vocal harmonies, mandolin and pennywhistle accents, all supported by the powerful and exuberant rhythms of the Irish bodhran, African djembe and acoustic guitar, creating what Irish Central calls "an earthiness that gives the songs a lively, approachable, down-home sound."

Their collaborative process and eclectic style have evolved into a jubilant live performance, full of entertaining sibling-banter, Irish step-dancing, foot-stomping tunes, lyrical melodies, storytelling, and a genuine lightness of heart that leaves audiences feeling refreshed and inspired.

Their latest all-original album release, Midnight Sun, reached number six on the Billboard World Music charts as the highest-ranking debut on the chart. The Gothard Sisters have performed in venues large and small all over the country, including a concert at the Kennedy Center's Millennium stage in Washington DC, performances with Disney Cruise line in Europe, a 20-city concert tour of Japan in 2019 and appearances at music festivals and performing arts venues nationwide.

Writing and recording near their home in the Pacific Northwest between touring nationally, the band has released seven albums and has performed over 1,000 live shows over the course of their career.

The Gothard Sisters will perform during the 38th annual St. Pat's celebration.

Special!
Purina Home Grown Chicken Feed
$9.99
Pellets or Crumbles
Morrow County Grain Growers Green Feed & Seed
Heppner - 242 W Linden Way - 541-676-9422

Benefit for Ronald and Linda Wilhelm
March 7, 2020, 4:30pm
Elks Lodge
142 N Main St
Hepppner, Oregon
Taco Bar & Silent Auction
$ 10 per plate at door
Linda is a loving wife, mother and grandmother. She has lived in Lexington for the past 42 years. She was recently diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer. As she battles this cancer she will have to travel to and from Tri-Cities for care and treatment. Although she will be doing chemotherapy and immunotherapy, unfortunately the cancer is too advanced to cure. Doing chemo is a chance to prolong her life. The doctor told her she has around 6 months to 1 year to live. Our hope is that we can relieve some of the financial stress during this time. All proceeds will go to Linda and her husband, Ronald.
If you would like to donate items for the silent auction, please contact
Rhonda Acock.
541-571-1584

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