

Gazette Times

City grants PrineTIME Internet a franchise agreement 'Our goal is to saturate the town'

By David Sykes The Heppner City Council last week voted to give PrineTIME Internet the right to construct fiber optic equipment and string cables in the city in order to provide internet service to local residents.

PrineTIME has been operating in Heppner for several years, however the franchise agreement will now allow the company to string cable and install equipment in the city's right of ways, such as on utility poles in the city limits. 'We will be offering faster service in the future for existing PrineTIME customers,' said Ed Howard of PrineTIME. He said his company will also be installing additional equipment on the hill outside town to give better wireless service to customers. 'Our goal is to saturate the town,' he said.

In compensation for the franchise agreement PrineTIME will provide free internet service to city hall, public works buildings, the city park on Main St, the city water reservoirs, the fire hall, Hager Park and the sewer plant. City Manager Kraig Cutsforth said he had originally wanted the company to provide wireless access on all of Main Street, but that did not prove feasible.

PrineTIME is headquartered in Prineville and provides wireless internet connections to tower locations around Oregon, including Prineville, Redmond, Bend, Terrebonne, Powell Butte, Tumalo, Sisters, Heppner, Lexington and Ione.

In other business at last Monday's meeting, the council granted the following animal permits: Tylynn Cimmiyotti for five

to 10 chickens. They will be cooped up she said. JoAnna Lamb an increase for her chickens from four current birds to 10. She did not intend to use it as a business but to supply her family and neighbors and friends with fresh eggs. Zabrena Masterson for two sheep for her 4-H project for fair. She will keep the sheep from May to the middle of August. The Worden family for chickens and sheep. The sheep are for 4-H fair. The chickens will be shown at fair but also for collecting eggs for the family, they said.

In other business, the city purchased a prebuilt restroom to be placed in the lot next to the Post Office. It will give restroom facilities for people who use the vendors that sell food on a regular basis at the lot.

The city also purchased a new camera and sound system for use during council meetings in order to better use the Zoom remote meeting platform. The new system will make a better experience for people who are part of the meeting remotely during the Coronavirus distancing rules which discourage citizens from attending meetings in person. The Howard and Beth Bryant Foundation paid for \$500 of the \$1,000 cost of the system.

Cutsforth told the council the windmill construction company is buying about 250,000 - 300,000 gallons of water a month from the city for their project. He said it was double what was originally anticipated, but it was a good deal since the city has the water and is able to make some income off the sale.

In other recent business the city planning commission on April 6 approved

a variance to allow Teresa Jones to place a 27 X 48-foot manufactured home on a lot at 220 Willow Street. The reason a variance was needed is because the lot is zoned commercial. The structure will meet all the required setback and other conditions the planning commission ruled.

The commission also approved an application from John and Shelley Wight of Heppner for a variance to construct a garage with a restroom on a lot 480 S Main St. The structure will meet the setback requirements. The Wights plan on merging the tax lot with the one next to it. Approving the variance allowed the Wights to utilize a vacant lot that is adjacent to their home.

In other business the council received a report from Fire Chief Steve Rhea who said the department had received 120 N-95 masks, 24 aprons and nine sets of face shields from the State Fire Marshal's office. He said he put in another request for latex gloves in various sizes. He also said during March the department responded to one motor vehicle accident, one vegetation fire in Ione, secured the helicopter landing zone 12 times, had one chimney fire, one propane leak at the St Patrick's Apartments, a motor home fire in Lexington and responded to one hay fire. Rhea said the department also installed 10 smoke detectors in two homes in the district prior to the Covid-19 distancing policy going into effect. There are still four homes requesting smoke detectors, but they have postponed installation under the current situation.

Goats discussed at Lexington council meeting

At last week's town council meeting the Lexington council members heard a complaint from a resident regarding a neighbor who has goats on their property. According to the letter received from Kevin and Lori McCabe, the resident at 145 E East St is keeping nine goats in a space approximately 500 square feet in size. According to McCabe's letter, he estimates the space is 44,500 square feet short for the required livestock densities.

Kevin McCabe, who attended the meeting, told the council that the Lexington ordinance 03-08, Article 3.22(1)(b) states goats are considered livestock and if over the age of six months, there should not exceed one for each 5,000 square feet

of lot area. The ordinance mentioned references limitations on use in the farm residential zones. The lot in question is in a residential zone and livestock is not mentioned in the development code.

Members of the council attempted to address his concerns and Mayor Juli Kennedy agreed to talk with the owner of the goats but pointed out to McCabe that without police coverage for the town there is no way to enforce ordinance violations. Although the owner of the goats was invited to attend the meeting, she did not.

In other business, the council discussed the upcoming budget for the next fiscal year. Council member Bobbi Gordon reported that

the budget committee met on Monday, April 13 and plans to meet again May 11 to finalize the budget. The small city allotment, Morrow County grant and WCVEDG grant were some of the grants they are hoping to receive. The council also discussed a tax levy that will expire at the end of 2020 and getting another on the ballot in November.

Fire Chief Charlie Sumner reported that the fire hydrants were all flushed on Saturday with the assistance of Scott Lamb, Reid Miller and Wayne Gordon. They plan to implement a schedule for flushing the system twice a year.

Due to the limits on gathering of more than 10 people, the meeting attendance was limited.

Cody High seeks county treasurer position

Cody High is seeking the position of Morrow County Treasurer in the upcoming election. High lives in Heppner with his wife and three daughters and is currently the assistant manager of Bucknum's. He encourages residents to vote for him with his tagline, Honesty-Integrity-Independent. He describes the treasurer as the custodian of the citizens of Morrow County's tax dollars.

During a discussion with current treasurer, Gayle Gutierrez, regarding her withdrawal from the election, the conflicts with the Board of Commissioners and the salary for the position being reduced by up to 75 percent, he decided to seek the position. He said there is a need for the next county treasurer to be someone willing to work with the commissioners and other department heads but who would continue to conduct the duties as an independent elected officer and not be afraid to fight back when requested to perform actions which might violate an ORS.



Cody High

High estimates the treasurer will be responsible for over 100 different funds with revenue surpassing 90 million dollars in the coming year. The current treasurer also volunteers to be the custodian of funds for many of the taxing districts in the county to limit administrative costs and allow those tax dollars to be spent on the work of each district. He told the Gazette that he will continue to do so if he is elected as Morrow County Treasurer.

High noted, 'As the current chair of the Morrow County Fair Board and as a past mayor, city councilor, and budget member of the City of Heppner I understand the importance of, and I'm skilled in, accurate and timely financial

tracking. In my current profession as assistant manager of Bucknum's, I am responsible for helping track and record employee time sheets and schedules and the revenues and expenditures of the business. I am also responsible for keeping track of rising costs to keep our products both affordable and profitable.'

Cody continued, 'Our County is growing, thanks in large part to the amazing work the Port of Morrow is doing. During the COVID-19 crisis our communities are banding together and showing why there is no better place to live than Morrow County. This current pandemic may result in a slight decrease in state funding this year but our community spirit and the hard work done at the port will undoubtedly bring more businesses and revenue to our county in the near future. If I am elected, I will continue to serve the people of Morrow County with the same degree of integrity and professionalism that has been set by our current County Treasurer.'

County hires new Community Development Director

By David Sykes Morrow County recently hired a new Community Development Director whose job will be to supervise economic development programs throughout the county.

Gregg Zody comes to Morrow County from Bedford County, Virginia where he was most recently director of Community Development there from 2014 to present. Zody's other job experiences include working as director of planning in Orange County Virginia from 2011 to 2014 and working as a senior planner in Southern Indiana from 1999-2010. Zody says he has quite a bit of experience in rural areas, having worked as a regional planner in two of the most rural regions in Virginia.

Zody's education includes an undergraduate degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1989 with a B.S. in Urban Studies and Planning and a graduate degree from

Virginia Tech in 1991; a Master of Urban and Regional Planning with focus on public policy. 'My professional focus will be primarily ensuring rural areas are able to prosper with minimal government regulation and red tape,' Zody told the Gazette-Times.

His other duties may include organizational work in grant writing, code enforcement and website administration. He will perform a variety of complex, technical and strategic functions including input for business and strategic planning, setting goals for individuals and department managers as well as collaborating with colleagues to implement policies and develop improvements. The position calls for him to provide direct supervision for the economic development programs throughout the county including the Planning Department, Public Transportation (The Loop), and the Morrow County Fair.



Gregg Zody

On a personal level Zody earned his Master Gardener certificate from the Virginia Extension Master Gardening Program in 2018. He is single and has two dogs, Baby and PeeWee. 'I absolutely love rural Oregon, especially the great folks in Morrow County and Heppner who have made me feel so welcome and part of the community,' Zody said. He is making his home in Heppner.

No new COVID-19 cases reported in county

According to Morrow County Emergency Management, Morrow County had no new COVID-19 cases reported last week. As of Monday, April 20, public health has reported there are still only five positive cases in Morrow County. All five previously reported patients are at home and recovering.

The report also stated that 75 persons in the county have been tested.

The State of Oregon currently reports that Umatilla County has 27 positive cases with no deaths. Benton/Franklin Counties in Washington (Tri-Cities) have reported 669 cases of COVID-19 with 37

deaths. In Oregon, there are 1,910 positive cases and 74 deaths.

Morrow County Public Health reminds everyone that the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones is to wash your hands frequently, stay home and reduce travel. Stay Home, Save Lives.

Polaris advertisement featuring Ranger and Sportsman vehicles with promotional text: 'NEW YEAR'S SALES EVENT', 'REBATES UP TO \$500', 'FINANCING AS LOW AS 3.99% APR FOR 36 MONTHS**'. Includes Morrow County Grain Growers logo and contact info.