

Amazon data centers tax deal approved

Up to four data centers at \$1 million plus each

By David Sykes

A new tax deal approved by the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) paves the way for up to four new Amazon data centers to be constructed at the Port of Morrow in Boardman. Under the agreement each center will pay over \$1 million a year in lieu of property taxes to the CREZ over the next 15 years.

The centers represent part of the large investment Amazon continues to make in Morrow County with its data or cloud computing business. Each center is a large concrete building, with emergency electrical generators on the inside, housing computers servicing clients around the world. The proposed new data centers are to be located on Gar Swanson (Commissioner Melissa Lindsay's grandfather) Drive at the Port of Morrow.

In addition to the \$1 million per center each year, with a minimum payment of \$2 million, the agreement also calls for Amazon to pay the full property tax rate plus a three percent annual increase on the first \$25 million in value. There is also a Public Safety Impact Fee of \$50,000 and a Student Success Fee of \$50,000 per year, both increased at three percent annually. Also as part of the agreement, as with previous deals, Amazon agrees to hire at least 10 full time employees, and will pay wages 130 percent of the county wide average wage.

After several months of negotiations, the CREZ approved the new deal at its April 19 meeting. It then passed the agreement on to the three sponsors of the enterprise zone for final approval. One sponsor is

the Morrow County Commission, which approved the deal on a 2-1 vote May 6, but not without some controversy first.

At the meeting Commissioner Jim Doherty said he did not like the idea of Amazon escaping payment of all bonded debt throughout the county. "It was fine that the we (Morrow County) give them an 85 percent tax break and that 15 percent (taxes collected) is fantastic," he said of the tax load, but he thought Amazon should, like the rest of the county tax payers, have to pay full price for bonded debt. Doherty gave as an example "down the road when the school bond comes in and their (Amazon's) portion is X millions of dollars and now the constituency out there who has already given up the 85 percent tax break, they have to reach in their pocket to pay their share, that's pretty grating on them," Doherty told the commission.

In addition, Doherty then asked Commissioner Don Russell if he should consider declaring a conflict of interest and perhaps recusing himself from negotiating or voting on Amazon agreements. Russell is also chairman of the CREZ which negotiates the tax deals with Amazon. Doherty said since Russell is an owner of Windwave Communications which provides fiber services to Amazon, he has a conflict of interest. Doherty suggested if a citizen ever mounted a legal challenge against the Amazon tax deals, the county may be liable for damages if the contracts were found invalid because of the conflicts. Doherty says some of those involved with the deals have vested interests and

Motherhood: an epitome of self-sacrifice

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church

The Gospel reading of this past Sunday, the fifth Sunday of Easter, was certainly appropriate to the celebration of Mother's Day. The fourteenth chapter of the Gospel of John begins: "Do not be worried and upset." When something happens to a little child, or when a child faces some dangerous situations, the first thing the child does is call for "Mother" for safety and protection. As we celebrated Mother's Day, I thought of highlighting some qualities that we can learn from our own dear mothers.

During my interaction with young people, I ask them the question of what comes to their minds when I ask them to imagine pictures of their mothers. From the light of those sharing, I share a few reflections.

Mother who bears all things: Mother is the one who undergoes excruciating pain in childbirth. In fact, I found in Wikipedia the pain of childbirth described like this: "A human body can bear only up to 45 del (unit) of pain. Yet at time of giving birth, a mother feels up to 57 del (unit) of pain. This is similar to 20 bones getting fractured at a time." Impossible to imagine? As I was thinking of writing an article on motherhood, I saw on Facebook a

"direct conflicts" through their ownerships in Windwave.

Russell said he did not have a conflict and he has checked with the state ethics agency who cleared him to participate. He said while Windwave does do business providing fiber internet services to Amazon, the company competes against other providers. He said sometimes they get the contracts and sometimes they do not. He said figures Doherty gave out at the meeting on the amount of business the company does with Amazon were completely inaccurate. "I don't know where he got those figures," he told the Gazette-Times.

At the meeting, commissioners asked County Council Justin Nelson his opinion on a possible conflict. Nelson said since he is the council for the county and not the enterprise zone, so he would only be concerned with the vote by the commissioners to approve or not approve the agreement already negotiated. Nelson said it would ultimately be a decision of the state ethics commission to determine a conflict of interest. Commission Chairman Melissa Lindsay said Doherty "raised a valid

newborn baby and the mother after the childbirth, both sleeping peacefully. I could practically feel the peace and tranquility on the face of the mother after nine months of taking care of that little babe in her womb.

Until the child reaches the age of reason, the mother has to be with that child as caretaker, provider, guard, protector. How can anyone repay a mother for all the sacrifices and pain she bore for? What she expects from us all may be a kind word, quantitative loving, and qualitative presence when she ages. Now days the nursing-care centers are increasing in number, since we are busy with our daily routine... We need to keep in mind that when we were babies, these mothers gave their best time for us. What is happening with us when she reaches her elder years? We have lack of time? We need to reciprocate what they have done for us when we were children.

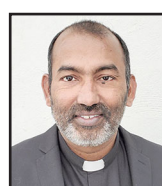
Mother who cares for all: As children we used to fight each other saying the mother was showing favoritism/partiality towards one. I know mothers who are willing to forgo all their comforts for the sake of all their kids. I have not seen any mother who eats before she dishes out to her kids. These mothers often forgo all their comforts and many other things for the good of all their children. Mothers must often care for their kids without proper sleep, not even bothering about their own health. I know cases of mothers who have even been willing to give up their lives for the survival of the children in their wombs.

Mother who protects all: A mother cannot forget her child in the womb. The Bible says, "Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore?" (Isaiah 49: 15). Usually the mother cannot forget the baby of her womb, and she lives for that child. When I was in another parish, I knew a young pregnant woman who climbed on a plastic chair to clean the household things. The chair broke and she fell on the ground. As she came down, she was so cautious that she put her arms out to protect the child in her womb of eight months. She broke her right arm in three places in order to save her little baby.

I suppose we all have witnessed the dedication and commitment with which some mothers take care of their mentally and physically challenged kids with lots of joy and happiness. Some mothers, when their kids need an organ transplant, are the first to come forward to give organs in order to give life to their children. Our mothers, I can say, are embodiments of self-sacrificing love, care and protection.


In the Gospel we heard last Sunday, Jesus says he is the way, the truth and the life. We are all runners in this universe to achieve our life goals/dreams. They have, in fact, put us all onto the right path, the way of life that we need to follow. Our mothers' lives and examples are our truth to be lived in. Our mother's life reminds each of us to live and enjoy our lives in spite of numerous hardships. I conclude with the scripture again. Book of Sirach says, "If you honor your mother, you are earning great wealth" (3:4). Let us trust in this scriptural verse and spend more time with our mothers, especially when they are experiencing their second childhoods. To be there to show them the way that they lived and showed for us. Honoring their truthful lives. Give them the lives that they long for.

I would like to hear from you regarding my article. I will be happy hear from you, your comments; my email is thankachansdb@gmail.com. You can listen to me on Sundays through this live streaming link: <https://video.nest.com/live/OuBZvzPtOA>.



Fr. Joseph

Retain
Glen DIEHL
 Justice of the peace
 Over three decades of Criminal Justice Experience
ENDORSED BY:
 Judge Ann Spicer, Retired
 Under Sheriff Steve Myren, Retired
 William Kuhn, Attorney at Law
 Under Sheriff Larry S. Sample, Retired
 Boardman Police Officers



"Having known and worked with Glen for almost 33 years I have been able see his dedication to the public and how he deals with people. Glen has vast knowledge and experience in many facets of the criminal justice system. I believe he is the most experienced and capable candidate for Justice of the Peace." - Terry Harper

VOTE
JOSEPH ARMATO
MORROW COUNTY COMMISSIONER

ZOOM & FaceBook
To Church!
Jone Community Church
(Worship and Bible Study available online!)
The Wired Word Bible Study via Zoom Sundays at 9:30 am
(call Pastor Jeff Elabaugh at 971-517-0548 for link)
Sunday Morning Worship on FaceBook
(search for Jone Community Church on your FaceBook page)



2020
CONGRATULATIONS, HEPPNER & IONE 2020 GRADUATES!
 Join us in honoring and congratulating this year's Graduating classes from Heppner and Ione. We will be publishing photos of the seniors in the May 20th issue of the Heppner Gazette-Times. The cost is \$10 to have your name, business or family included.
 Email - graphics@rapidserv.net
 Call - 541-676-9228

Honesty • Integrity • Independent
VOTE
Cody High
MORROW COUNTY TREASURER
WORKING FOR YOU