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VOL. 139 NO. 21 10 Pages Wednesday, May 20, 2020 Morrow County, Heppner, Oregon

## Health District receives over \$5 million in COVID-19 relief funding

Morrow County Health District Chief Financial Officer Nicole Mahoney provided a recap of the district's COVID-19 relief funding Monday night showing the district has well over \$5 million at its disposal. According to the recap, state relief funding includes \$57,000 for personal protective equipment (PPE); \$84,317 for COVID-19 equipment/PPE; and \$11,291 from a grant from the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems.

Federal funding includes \$388,829.62 from the Federal Stimulus-CARES Act for lost revenue and COVID-19 expenses; \$3,372,761.98 from the Rural Cares Act for lost revenue and COVID-19 expenses; and \$1,788,357 from the Paycheck Protection Program for wages.

Mahoney said, "As long as the district can spend the monies on the appropriate purpose, they (the funds) will be grants

(not requiring payback). Otherwise they will have to be paid back." Stipulations require the district to show how the money is spent.

Other federal funding is pending and will depend if and on how much the state of Oregon gets and how much is subsequently disbursed to MCHD.

In other business at its Monday night meeting in Lexington, the board:

- put on hold a discussion with the architect concerning the proposed remodeling/rebuilding project at the Heppner campus.
- put on hold a review of a debt capacity from WIPfli (architect firm) and a status update on the district's USDA pre-application until the financial forecast and the district's debt capacity study are complete and the value of the project is determined.
- adopted a resolution authorizing the county treasurer to invest funds.
- received notice from CEO Bob Houser and

Chief Nursing Officer Jamie Houck, RN, that three per-diem RNs have converted to full time employees, which is a "plus for the RN staffing schedule." Additional RNs are needed for Pioneer Memorial Hospital, in addition to a discharge planner/nurse manager for PMH, an informatics director and an IT technician. The district earlier announced that Family Nurse Practitioner Betty Hamill, a provider in the Heppner clinic, has said that she does not plan to renew her contract which expires at the end of May because she wished to be closer to relatives in the Portland area. Houser said the district does not plan to hire another provider to fill her position, adding that Dr. Betsy Anderson, who was employed with the district earlier, will be on the schedule for this year.

-heard from Houser that discussion was held

-See HEALTH DIST./PAGE FOUR

## New dog park proposed for Heppner

City looks at county property next to sheriff's office

The Heppner city council last week heard a proposal to create a new dog park in town next to the sheriff's office up in the Lott Addition. The property is currently owned by the county, but they have indicated interest in a piece of land owned by the city on Riverside near the fire hall behind the Devin Oil gas tanks and are interested in a swap.

The county wants the Riverside parcel as a place to move their sheriff emergency management building and vehicles currently at the old mill site and has indicated the Riverside property would work for them. The land swap was discussed at the May 13 county commission meeting with Commissioner Don Russell saying he would rather the county not do the city swap and instead exercise an option to purchase the property at the mill site and keep the sheriff equipment where it is. "It's a government building that will be sold below value," he reasoned. "Why not exercise our right to purchase?" County Commissioner Melissa Lindsay and Port of Morrow Commissioner John Murray said the mill site property has some potential for economic development and it would be better if the sheriff facility were no longer there

in the way. "I don't want to stand in the way of any development down there," Russell conceded.

Lindsay was at last week's council meeting to ask for the council's blessing on the land swap. After much discussion the council authorized City Manager Kraig Cutsforth to move forward with planning commission action necessary to facilitate the swap and development of the new dog park. A public hearing of the city planning commission is scheduled for June 1 at 7 p.m. at city hall asking to partition the land next to the sheriff's office in preparation for the trade with the county. For development, a fence and some benches are planned for the dog park.

In other business at the council meeting the council heard a request for an animal permit from Jennifer Breidenbach to keep six Rhode Island Red hens for laying. She also plans to have two sets of Cornish Crossbred for meat chickens. She said they will be in two sets of ten birds and will be slaughtered at four to five weeks. The council gave its ok for the birds.

The council also gave its approval to Eastern Oregon Telecom, LLC for a franchise agreement to construct, operate and maintain a telecommunications network with the City of

Heppner. EOT will pay the city five percent of its gross revenues quarterly for the franchise agreement.

In other business the council heard a report from Public Works Director Chad Doherty who said in part that his workers had: installed an irrigation water meter for the new duplexes on Cowins St., installed a new stop sign in the alley off of Willow St, cleaned out the bubbles (bump outs) by the post office and across the street on Main St. to fill with concrete and place the planters there, refinished three city park picnic tables, picked up portable restrooms that are being installed in the food court area, installed water and sewer for the new restrooms at the food court and prepped for the new concrete pad on which the new restrooms will be placed.

They also heard from the city manager that the city had received a grant of \$43,200 from the Willow Creek Valley Economic Development Group Community Enhancement Grant fund to be used for the upgrades and improvements to Main Street, such as replacing garbage can receptacles, a new information board by the post office, adding the new restrooms at the food court, a new water fountain and new trees.

## 38 percent of county voters cast ballots as of Tuesday a.m.

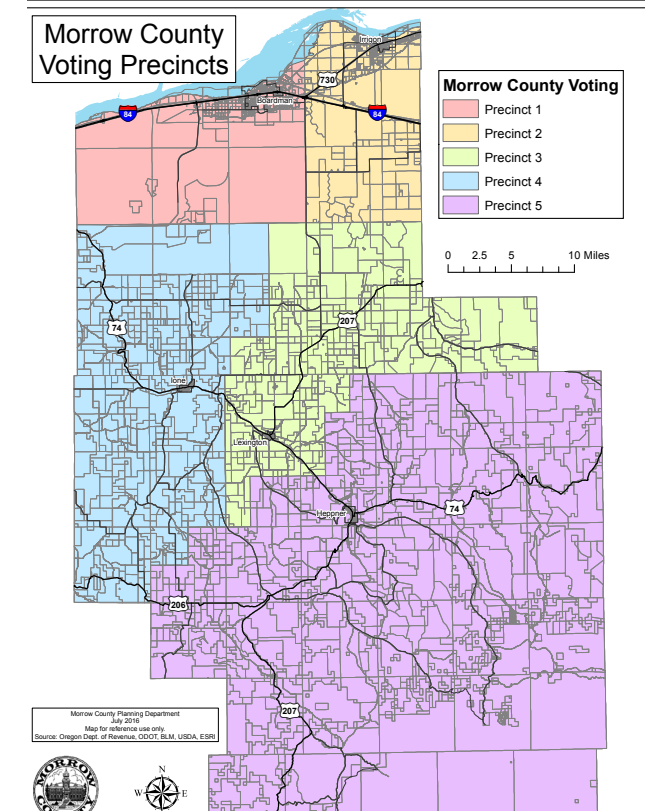
Ione highest with 59 percent

By Bobbi Gordon

According to reports available Tuesday, May 19 at approximately 11 a.m., 38 percent of the registered voters in Morrow County have cast their ballots. Of those voters, 59 percent of the voters in Ione have returned their ballots, 57 percent in Heppner/Hardman, 51 percent in Lexington, and only 28 percent each in Boardman and Irrigon. According to reports, the percentage of ballots cast is already higher than the May 2018 primary, which showed a final total of just under 35 percent.

There are 6,548 registered voters in the county and 2,486 ballots had been received by the county clerk's office by Monday evening. It was reported that Boardman has 1,928 registered and 605 received; Irrigon has 2,399 registered and 724 received; Lexington has 440 registered and 227 received; Ione has 448 registered and 279 received; and Heppner/Hardman has 1,333 registered and 771 received. Of the total ballots received, 2,466 were accepted. The balance of 140 ballots were either unaccepted or undeliverable.

Registered voters in Morrow County who are affiliated with a party are primarily Republicans. Republicans total 2,253, Democrats 1,206 and Inde-



The above map shows the areas covered by each precinct in Morrow County. 1-Boardman, 2-Irrigon, 3-Lexington, 4-Ione and 5-Heppner/Hardman.

pendents 285. Nonpartisan voters make up the balance of 2,804.

Major political parties use the primary election to nominate candidates to run for partisan office in the general election. Minor political parties nominate candidates to run for partisan office in the general election according to party rule, and those candidates do not appear on the primary election ballot. Partisan offices include U.S. President, U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative, Governor,

Secretary of State, State Treasurer, Attorney General, State Senator and State Representative.

Oregon's primary is closed, meaning only registered voters of a major political party can vote for candidates of the same party. At the primary election, voters who are not registered in one of the major political parties would receive a ballot containing nonpartisan contests, such as judicial elections, which all registered voters may vote on.



A new dog park is being planned on property located next to the sheriff's office in the Lott Addition. The park would be about 110 X 110 feet and located at the intersection of Willow View Dr, Canyon Dr., Ridge Way and Sage Hill Dr.

## Morrow County authorized to enter Phase 1 reopening

Morrow County received notification from the Governor's Office and Oregon Health Authority that Governor Kate Brown approved Morrow County's entry into Phase 1 of the State's reopening plan last Thursday afternoon.

Earlier on Thursday, Governor Kate Brown announced that Morrow County's reopening plan was pending further review by the Oregon Health Au-

thority and the Governor's Office. Morrow County officials spoke with State Officials on Thursday morning concerning the reopening plan. The Oregon Health Authority confirmed that they would consider the information that was presented and would present it to the Governor for review after her press release on Thursday.

According to the press

release received, Morrow County has complied with the Governors Emergency Orders, Oregon Health Authority recommendation, and Federal recommendations since the beginning of the pandemic. Morrow County officials indicated Morrow County was prepared to reopen on May 15, along with the other 28 counties that received approval May 14.

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