

# District loses students due to COVID

Morrow County School Superintendent Dirk Dirksen told the school board at Monday night’s meeting at Irrigon Elementary School that the district has lost 97 students this year mainly due to the COVID-19 crisis. Board Chair Becky Kindle and board members Mary Killion and Marcie Rodelo attended the meeting in person, with members Barney Lindsay, Brian Kollman, Richard Cole and Andy Fletcher attending via Zoom.

Dirksen said Boardman schools are down 74 students from 1,095 in 2019 to 1,021 in October of this year; Heppner schools are down 21 students, from 320 in 2019 to 299 in 2020; Irrigon schools are down 86 from 828 in 2019 to 742 in 2020. The Morrow Education Center (alternative school located in Irrigon), however is up 84 students, from 60 in 2019 to 144 in 2020. District totals are down from 2,303 in October of 2019 to 2,206 in October 2020.

School enrollment as of October is as follows: A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irrigon, (kindergarten through grade three)-197; Sam Boardman Elementary, K- grade three-319; Hep-

pner Elementary, K-grade six-161; Irrigon Elementary, grades four-six-180; Windy River Elementary, Boardman, grades four-six-247; Heppner Junior/Senior High School, grades seven-12-138; Irrigon Jr./Sr. High School, grades seven-12-365; Riverside Jr./Sr. High School, Boardman-455; Morrow Education Center, Irrigon, grades k-12-144; total-2,206.

Dirksen said that MCSD has been mandated by the state to limit the time students are in school to two hours a week, because of the number of COVID cases, especially in the north end of the district, but MCSD and other school districts are trying to get the time extended to four hours. “It’s going to be a while,” he added.

In more positive news, students in all three high schools in the district, Heppner, Boardman and Irrigon, will be able to attend an upcoming FFA/AG field trip hosted out of Pendleton.

Dirksen said some limited sports on school grounds may be acceptable, however students must stay six feet apart and wear masks. If the activities are not on school grounds,

however, the limitations are not enforced.

He also said the goal of MCSD is to get electronic devices in all students’ homes to facilitate continued learning, but he noted some spots in Heppner have had difficulty with connections. If you don’t have internet and cell service, it won’t work, he added. The district has 550 hot spots, having dispersed 337, with 173 remaining to disperse.

Dirksen also noted that breakfast and lunch are still served via “grab and go” four days a week. He thanked administrators and MidCo Bus for “their hard work coordinating bus routes” (there are around 35 bus routes) and also thanked “CARE, CCS, school counselors, county nurses and school resource officers” which are “all critical to the services we supply our students.”

In other business, the board:

- received the following statement of anticipated revenues for 2020-21: revenues-\$29,543,383; 2021 estimated expenditures-\$29,540,432; beginning fund balance-\$3,367,853; projected ending fund balance-\$3,370,804.

- approved the following employment action: resignations/non-renewals-Jennifer Henderer, IJSHS ed assistant, Toni Stanger, ACH assistant custodian; retirements-Richard Bruhn, RJSHS facilities coordinator; employment/promotions/transfers-Beth Harrington, SBE assistant custodian, Jessica Ponce Marquez, RJSHS assistant custodian, Melissa Scott, IJSHS temporary junior high language arts teacher; extra duty contracts-Elizabeth McCarty, IJSHS assistant high school girls’ basketball coach, Tyler Volpi, RJSHS junior high head football coach.

- approved a resolution for receiving the following unanticipated revenue: \$500 from Umatilla Electric to Morrow Virtual Academy; \$25,000 from Amazon Web Services to MCSD for COVID-related expenses.

- learned the Oregon School Board Association annual convention will be held virtually on November 14.

- learned the end of the first quarter is October 29.

- heard the next board meeting will be held Monday, November 9, at Heppner Elementary, via Zoom.

# A View from the Hill

**By Doris Brosnan**

Leaves are falling but the spirits among the residents at Willow Creek Terrace don’t seem to be. They are taking the Covid-19 mandates in stride, and they continue to enjoy activities aimed at keeping spirits lifted. One such occasion started the new month off just right: Marjorie Gorham celebrated her birthday on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and some neighbors were still bragging on her birthday lunch choices two days later which consisted of ribs, potatoes, cottage cheese and fruit and chocolate cake. And daughter, Karen, was able to come to her window that day and enjoy a piece of birthday cake with her.

Another early-month notable celebration was on the 4<sup>th</sup>, the eighteenth anniversary of the official opening of Willow Creek Terrace. It has served so many area residents, and expectations are that it will continue to serve as long as needed. As sometimes happens, though, they had to say goodbye recently to Norma French, who relocated to the Pioneer Memorial Hospital facility.

A major focus this month is Halloween, and many residents have been busy working on spooky spirits. They have painted hall decorations and recently completed their scarecrow, which can be seen on the Facebook page and is guaranteed not to scare the littlest ghosts and goblins that will be trick or treating on Halloween. Though those guests will not be able to go inside the Terrace, they will certainly be able to help themselves to treats at the front door, and they are invited to show off their costumes by parading on the sidewalk that passes the windows. Please, call ahead 541-676-0004 so the staff can give the residents a heads up and time to get by their windows.

A yearly October tradition at the Terrace is Frankenstein Friday, which will fall on the 30<sup>th</sup>. That is the

day that “hidden treasures” and “scary things” will appear on the tables for lunch for residents brave enough to give them a try. On any other day, residents enjoy unscary foods. They have been fortunate to include produce from their garden this summer, beans, peas, carrots and tomatoes, and are so grateful to the many area gardeners who have brought bounties from their yards. One surprise was the celery, a new gift this year.

Residents appreciate knowing that they are safe and secure in the Terrace, and since safety from fire contributes to that knowledge, surely, they will not grumble next week when they practice the evacuation drill. This is Fire Prevention Week, when all sprinklers and alarms are tested and the fire marshal will complete an inspection of the Terrace.

Besides the weekly activities offered this month, the residents can choose to participate in the morning exercises and discussions, always stimulating, physically and mentally. Among this month’s topics are ketchup, pet peeves, farmers and farming, silly sayings, the Navy’s 244<sup>th</sup> birthday, “I Love Lucy” (ran for six seasons), bosses, the Cadillac’s 118<sup>th</sup> birthday, gaudy clothes, making a difference, mothers-in-law, cranky co-workers and knock-knock jokes. Such a variety of serious and not-so-much-so.

With Halloween still over two weeks away, seems unbelievable but is a fact that the residents will be invited on the 20<sup>th</sup> to start working on Thanksgiving decorations. Included will be a “thankful wreath” for the dining room, and when one considers how quickly the calendar days seem to be passing, starting in October makes sense. This writer expects that more than one resident will include on that wreath his or her view of life on the hill as one reason to be thankful.

## Sheriff’s Report

**The Morrow County Sheriff’s Office has released the following information:**

**August 6:** Morrow County Sheriff’s Office received a report on Depot Ln, Irrigon that people are parked outside the residence inside a vehicle that does not have a tire.

-MCSD received a report at SE Idaho Ave/SE Tenth St, Irrigon that a maroon GMC SUV ran the stop sign then turned around and ran another stop sign.

-MCSD received a report on S Main St, Heppner of a missing person. He last spoke to her via phone Sunday or Monday. Female was located and safe.

-MCSD received a report at Morrow County OHV Park on Forest Service 21 Rd, Heppner of cows out near the OHV park. Cows were put back in the pasture.

-MCSD received a report on Second St, Heppner that there are a half dozen cows in his yard tearing it up. RP called back and advised the owner was there rounding up the cattle.

-MCSD received a report at I 84 W, Boardman of a camp right off the water. MCSD found the location, no one around.

-MCSD received a report of a disabled vehicle at Hwy 74, Ione. Deputy provided subject with courtesy ride.

-MCSD received a report on SE Utah Ave, Irrigon that there is a vehicle playing loud music. Unable to locate.

-MCSD received a report that CCS needs transport of subject from UCJ to GSH for mental health hold. Transported male to GSH.

-MCSD received a re-

port that Jason Michael Francisco Garza was arrested by HPD on MCPP detainer. Subject was lodged at UCJ, no bail.

-MCSD received a report on Hwy 74, Heppner of a vehicle with a broken windshield, one headlight that has been swerving all over the road. Unable to locate.

-MCSD received a report on SE Utah Ave, Irrigon that a silver Dodge Durango stopped at the stop sign on Seventh and blasted its music, spun its tires and then sped off. There were two vehicles behind him doing the same thing.

-MCSD received a report on I 84 E, Boardman that a navy-blue Honda Civic attempted to run RP off the road and passed the RP at over 120 mph. Referred to other agency.

-MCSD received a report on SE Utah Ave, Irrigon that a Ford F150 pickup cranked up his music going down Utah.

-MCSD received a report at Oregon Trail Library on N Main St, Heppner of kids in the park using vulgarity and harassing passersby.

-MCSD received a report on I 84 W, Boardman of a semi with brakes on fire.

**August 7:** Morrow County Sheriff’s Office received a report at N Main St/Center St, Heppner that RP heard a female scream and a subject ran towards the gas station. Unable to locate.

-MCSD received a report on Cain Ln, Irrigon that she has dogs chasing her horses. MCSD responded.

Two dogs returned to owner, one taken to pet rescue.

-MCSD received a report at Willow Creek Rd/Hwy 207, Heppner that there was a male sitting down near the turn off onto Willow Creek Rd.

-MCSD received a report on NW Gale St, Heppner that there is a white dog in her yard. RP called back advised they located the owners.

-MCSD received a report on SE Utah Ave, Irrigon that a blue Honda Civic sped by towards Tenth. Unable to locate.

-MCSD received a report at Irrigon Skate Park, NE Main Ave, Irrigon that Ross Carlisle Vanetta was arrested by MCSD for failure to register as a sex offender. Subject also arrested on UCCC warrant.

-MCSD received a report at Heppner Shell Station on N Main St, Heppner that a 53 yo female is highly intoxicated and sustained injuries to her legs. Patient transported to PMH.

-MCSD received a report at Hwy 74/Dee Cox Rd that a little white dog is out. Returned to owner.

-MCSD received a report on Meadowlark Rd, Heppner that a calf was attacked by a cougar, bitten twice. RP saw large cougar in the area.

-MCSD received a report at Wilson Ln/Paul Smith Rd, Boardman that a cow is out in the middle of the road.

-MCSD received a report at Pioneer Memorial Hospital on NE Pioneer Dr, Heppner that intoxicated patient is trying to leave.

-MCSD received a report on NW Third St, Ir-

rigon that a vehicle came in their driveway at a high rate of speed, turned off their lights. MCSD made contact with the parties in the vehicle. Licensed driver retrieved the subjects and the vehicle.

-MCSD received a report on Kunze Ln, Boardman that there was someone playing loud music on their car stereo. MCSD checked the area. Unfounded.

-MCSD received a report at Kunze Ln/Toms Camp Rd, Boardman of a dead fox on the side of the road.

**August 8:** Morrow County Sheriff’s Office received a report on I 84 E, Boardman of a black Toyota car that can’t maintain lane and is almost hitting vehicles. Referred to other agency.

-MCSD received a report at Kunze Ln/Toms Camp Rd, Boardman that a female with a white Cadillac Escalade is on the side of the road with a dead fox. Unable to locate.

-MCSD received a report on NW Gale St, Heppner of a male subject on his porch smoking. Unfounded.

-MCSD received a report on W Eighth Rd, Irrigon that they have a dog on her property. RP believes it might have killed/injured her chickens. Dog was transported to pet rescue.

-MCSD received a report on NE Oregon Ave, Irrigon of a domestic disturbance. MCSD responded; all parties talked to. No crime committed.

-MCSD received a report at Lakeview Heights on Willow Creek Rd, Hep-



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DEADLINE:

MONDAYS

AT 5PM

Lexington Burn Ban Lifted

The Fire Chief of the Town of Lexington is announcing the burn ban will be lifted

Thursday, October 15, 2020.

Please use screens on burn barrels.

Please call the Morrow County Sheriff Office prior to large burns.

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