

Heppner Chamber to host Christmas and Merchant Stocking Extravaganza

By Lori Roach

Heppner Christmas and Merchant Stocking Extravaganza, presented by the Heppner Chamber of Commerce and the Heppner Merchants will be held live on Facebook on December 15 at 6 p.m.

This year has been so crazy with COVID-19. It has disrupted our lives and caused so many events to be changed or cancelled. Christmas is such a special time and even though we cannot have the same type of event that we have had in the past, we would still like to create something special that will encourage locals to shop local and our Heppner

citizens to find some hope and joy this Christmas season. The Heppner Chamber Christmas Committee has done some planning and we think we have come up with an event that will encourage shoppers to shop local.

When a customer's purchase is between \$1 and \$49.99 at local participating merchants, they will get one ticket. If their purchase is \$50 or over, they will get two tickets. Customers have to write their name and phone number on the back of the ticket and then drop them in the container at the time of purchase. Tickets cannot be taken home and returned at a later time and

date. On December 15, we will be having a Facebook Live event where we will draw tickets for each stocking filled with donations from local merchants and out of town retailers we visit when we are in the neighboring communities. Be sure to 'Like' and 'Follow' the Heppner Chamber of Commerce Facebook page.

There will be only one winner allowed per household.

If you are a merchant and would like to participate please drop your donation by the Heppner Chamber office. Tickets and

a collection container will be dropped off Monday, November 23 to participating Heppner merchants. Contact Lori Roach at 541-910-7482 if you would like to participate.

This year's Heppner Christmas celebration will be a little different than it has been in the past because of COVID-19 and all the restrictions that are coming along with it, but this will still be an event to remember.

Be sure to log onto Facebook and join us on December 15 at 6 p.m. for the live Heppner Christmas and Merchant Stocking Extravaganza.

GRANTS TO CITIES

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populous, but those who are struggling to keep their small towns alive," she said. At Heppner she said the city is also wrestling with a needed sewer upgrade and the problems with the DEQ changing requirements. "When I talk to Heppner and the DEQ approved them (for a new sewer disposal system) and then pulled back and has put in further regulations," she said. Lindsay said the county commission should start talking about the different problems the cities are facing. "We can't talk about them (Heppner) were the only city that had a decrease in Enterprise Zone funds. Then I talk to Irrigon about their sewer and broadband problems. We don't talk about the fact that the Boardman Fire Department sees dollars (from the Enterprise Zone) and the Irrigon Fire Department can't survive as volunteer force. We have to look at need not just population," she emphasized on how the county needs to look at the distribution of its new money coming in.

Commissioner Don Russell who grew up and still lives in Boardman, said spending the money should be based on need but also does not take out where the population is. "All of our cities have needs," Russell said. "To say only the small cities, have needs is not so. Boardman has millions of dollars in infrastructure that is going to have to happen for its transportation needs," he pointed out. Russell said he grew up in Boardman when it probably was the smallest community in the county. "There were 152 people that were relocated with the John Day Dam and the back waters of Lake Umatilla," he said. Adding that the city of Boardman found a way through grants that

aren't available now and "other ways" to take care of their sewer systems, "as had Irrigon," he said. "I believe Ione and Lexington will too," Russell said. "I do believe we have an opportunity to help them with some of this discretionary money that is coming in, but to spread it equally between a town of 250 residents gets the same amount of money as a town of 4,500 residents or 2,000 residents I think is not equitable," he said. Adding that he did not think distribution of funds should be based solely on population either, "because then the smallest wouldn't get enough to do a project."

At an earlier Oct. 7 meeting when aid to cities first came up, Lindsay said she would like to see the \$379,000 split evenly between the five cities. The proposal caused Russell to suggest Lindsay, who lives on Sand Hollow Rd in south County, was prejudiced against Boardman when making money allocation decisions in the county because of that city's large, 66.3 percent, Hispanic population. "I am just going to throw it out there," he said in the meeting. "I wonder if you have a prejudice against people in the north end of the county because of where they live. I can't help but look at the photos in the paper and see the makeup of our ethnicity. If this were food would you do the same thing?" he asked Lindsay.

The comment made Lindsay upset saying she had just allocated county funds for a new food pantry in Boardman. "I just gave \$100,000 to the food pantry in Boardman and I was happy to do it," she told Russell. "Heck no it is not about that (ethnicity of Boardman) Don. That is pathetic," she said of his comments about race. She also brought up how the

CREZ board had recently sent one third of its money to Boardman. "I voted to send an entire one third of the money to Boardman."

The CREZII enterprise zone funds are separate from county tax money, but both she and Russell also serve and make decisions on the CREZ board. Both Russell and Lindsay are county representatives to the CREZ board and Russell is the chair. At the Oct. 7 meeting Lindsay, who is chair of the county commission, tabled the grant to cities discussion after Russell's comments, saying she was too upset to continue. "I can't believe you went there. I want to table this grant to cities so I can calm down," she told the commission.

The commissioners

Dirksen reports successes and disappointments

Morrow County School District Superintendent Dirk Dirksen told the board about the successes and disappointments of the current school year as educators, students and parents deal with the COVID crisis.

"I am excited about having school and nervous at the same time," said Dirksen, meeting with some members of the board at Heppner Elementary School and others via Zoom. He commented that he "couldn't be happier" about the work that classified, certified and administrative employees have done this year amidst the pandemic.

Dirksen said keeping the schools open is a matter of the "new metrics" mandated by the state based on the COVID positivity rate but added, "We're in safe harbor until January 4." He

came back to the grants at its Oct. 21 meeting, where Russell's comments again came up resulting in an emotional exchange between the two. "My argument has nothing to do with race," Lindsay said, "much less about city. "It's about the needs of an entire county. I want to be very clear that that was an unfair statement," she told Russell about his race comments. "To hide behind those things. We know those things are happening, and then to throw a race card at someone that just wants to have a bigger discussion is wrong," Lindsay said. Russell apologized for his remarks. "I apologize for my comments; they were out of line. I will do better," he said.

said the COVID positivity rate has to be less than five percent for schools to stay open. "Busing has been a challenge," he noted, with more difficulties in the north end that they are trying to resolve. "We're trying to improve the flow (at Sam Boardman Elementary) and the parking situation has been bad for 40 years."

Dirksen said attendance in kindergarten through third grade has been around 73 percent and around 70 percent in grades four through six. Attendance in grades seven-12, however, is only at 45 percent. He said attendance for secondary kids has been "pretty much down to distance ed." Snow days this school year will be "comprehensive distance learning for all. No one will be coming into school on those days," he added.

In other business, the board:

-received the following enrollment report: A.C. Houghton Elementary, Irrigon, kindergarten through third grade-201; Sam Boardman Elementary, Boardman, K-3-321; Heppner Elementary,

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Spiritually Speaking

Well done, my good and faithful servant

By Fr. Thankachan Joseph SDB, St. Patrick Church

We are coming to an end of a liturgical year, and the theme of the last Sunday of the year is an appraisal for all the great and praiseworthy works that each one of us has managed to accomplish. In today's Gospel reading we come across a man who brought back to his master everything he had been given and yet was reprimanded. The master blames him not for misusing the gifts he had been given but, rather, for not having used them at all. Which of us could say, in all truth, that we always do our best? Do we not all bury at least some of our talents? Will He tell us, "Well done, my good and faithful servant"?



Fr. Thankachan Joseph

The Book of Proverbs last Chapter (31: 10-13, 19-20, 30-31) depicts a perfect wife, a woman who is the model for every Christian, "The woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." The perfect wife is considered the light of every household. The writer of the Book of Proverbs appreciates and praises her for her prudence and wise behavior. According to the writer she has something far more precious than jewels - namely, a loving heart and caring hands towards everyone in the family.

The first letter of St. Paul to the Thessalonians (5: 1-6) tells us that our waiting must become a longing for Jesus's coming, since His coming will mark the fulfilment of all our expectations. St. Paul urges the Christians of the Thessalonian Church to be always alert and sober in all they do and take up. Paul reminds the community that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night, so be prepared to act in a way to save oneself from that unexpected moment.

The Gospel of the day is from St. Matthew (25: 14-29), which describes the parable of the talents. This discourse of Jesus teaches us about the immediate preparation to get into the kingdom. He wants to communicate to us followers to be like the five wise virgins or like the persons who received the five and two talents, to be inventive, creative, and prepared always to welcome the master even if he comes late in the night.

Through this parable, the Lord is trying to describe how we use our God-given talents for ourselves and for others. In the parable of the talents, Jesus speaks of a wealthy man about to go on a long journey, who entrusts three of his servants with various sums of money, each according to his potential and capacities. The master entrusts the money/talents to the servants not just for custodian of it, but that they may make it yield more money through sound investment. Two of the servants actually move fast and invest the money entrusted to them and profit in both cases a hundred percent. Whereas, with the third servant chooses not to take risks and buries the precious metal in a safe place. The master appreciates and congratulates the servants who received the five and two talents for their committed, hardworking, innovative, and creative ways of going ahead to multiply the money that they received. The Lord condemns the third servant's sluggish behavior and is upset about his laziness and the useless excuse he brings. This parable seems to add a further nuance of actively and imaginatively engaging in one's responsibilities, in an attitude of vigilant expectation. As faithful disciples, we are asked to live active lives, following the commands of Jesus as we await the final coming of the Son of Man and the end of the world. Our waiting must become a longing for Jesus's coming, and His coming becomes the fulfilment of all our expectations.

The servant who received one talent was convicted for the crimes of idleness and laziness and for the excuses he brought forth. The punishment for his idleness was that the talent was taken away from him, he was deprived of everything he had received from his master, and he was left in utter poverty, since he had nothing he could call his own, except his laziness. Instead of looking at someone else and feeling jealousy and envy on the growth of others' prosperity and development, use the God-given talents in each of us and multiply them. Then we, too, will receive these words the master uttered to those faithful servants who invested their talents in the proper use, "Well done, good and trustworthy servants; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join your master's happiness" (25:22).



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