



# the HEPPNER GAZETTE TIMES

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## Chamber holds annual meeting, Fletcher re-elected president

After missing last year because of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, the Heppner Chamber of Commerce was back this year holding its annual meeting at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building event room in Heppner last Thursday.

The Chamber elected officers for the coming year including re-electing Columbia Basin Electric General Manager Andy Fletcher for another term as president. The new officers were sworn in by Bev Benson from the Bank of Eastern Oregon. After a lunch provided by Heppner Market Fresh Foods the group was entertained with several musical numbers



Jessica Bates provided special entertainment and sang several musical numbers for the annual meeting held last Thursday at the Gilliam and Bisbee Building in Heppner.

from Jessica Bates. Invocation for the event was given by Alvin Liu.



John Murray is presented with a plaque of appreciation from Chamber Director Sheryll Bates. John and his wife, Ann, were honored for their service on the chamber board.



This year's officers for the Heppner Chamber of Commerce are (L-R): Heppner City Manager Kraig Cutsforth and Bank of Eastern Oregon Chief Executive Officer Jeff Bailey, Chamber Board of Directors; Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative General Manager, Andy Fletcher, Chamber president; Heppner Schools Principal Matt Combe, second vice president; Morrow County Health District Chief Executive Officer Ryan Fowler, Les Schwab Manager John Gould and Nancy Snider, board of directors. Not pictured are Tawny Miles, treasurer and Kim Cutsforth, first vice president. The officers were sworn in by Bev Benson. -Photo by David Sykes.

## Morrow County ready to vaccinate its citizens

*'I hope Morrow County takes advantage of this,' says Commissioner Lindsay of the multiple county-wide COVID-19 vaccination events*

By David Sykes

Morrow County has the COVID-19 vaccines and is ready to vaccinate its citizens, Morrow County Commissioner Melissa Lindsay says. An event in Boardman Monday only attracted 150 and Lindsay says she is somewhat disappointed in the turnout since the county has plenty of the vaccines and they are the one-shot Johnson and Johnson variety. Vaccination events were also held in Boardman on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, but no turnout statistics were available for those. Below are the times and places of upcoming events in Irrigon and Heppner.

**Free vaccine events with no appointment needed:**

**Irrigon – AC Houghton Elementary**  
Friday, April 9 – 1 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 10 – 8 a.m. – 1 p.m.

**Heppner – Fairgrounds**  
Monday, April 12 – 1 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Tuesday, April 13 – 7 a.m. – 1 p.m.

The vaccines are free to anyone over the age of 18 years and all people must do is show up to get vaccinated, no appointment needed. "Morrow County vaccinated less than 150



Shelley Wight (left) of the Morrow County Health Department, along with Morrow County Commissioner Melissa Lindsay and Oregon Emergency Manager Regional Director Chris Sutton in front of the Federal Emergency Management Agency vaccine trailer at a Monday vaccination event in Boardman. The trailer is only one of three FEMA vaccination units out in the country so far, and Morrow County has the only one on the west coast, Lindsay says. -Contributed photo

people at the first day of the event in Boardman. It was a good turnout of Morrow County citizens, but we had 400 Johnson and Johnson vaccines available to give out and at least 2,000 for the total of the eight-day commitment from FEMA," Lindsay said of the initial efforts for free public vaccinations in the county.

"It is quick and easy, and we have had minimal lines," Lindsay says of the events. If you need special consideration you can call our public health dept. Additionally, those wanting a different vaccine option can still reach out to Columbia River Health, Murray's Drug and the Morrow County Public Health Dept. Morrow County is hoping to release the Pfizer vac-

cine to those 16 and older publicly in the very near future," Lindsay told the Heppner Gazette-Times Tuesday.

Lindsay was especially appreciative of the opportunity to have the FEMA vaccination trailer here in the county. "There are only three of these FEMA units out in the country so far. Morrow County has the only one on the west coast after agreeing to be the pilot project back in February. We are extremely fortunate to have gotten this opportunity in our smaller county. Emergency manager John Bowles and public health director Nazario Rivera along with their emergency operations team worked tirelessly through a lot of hurdles with OEM (Oregon

Emergency Management), OHA, (Oregon Health Authority) and FEMA to get this for the citizens of Morrow County," Lindsay told the Gazette-Times "Now I am just really hopeful the citizens will support our efforts and take advantage of this amazing resource and turn out to the events set up for Boardman, Irrigon and south county in Heppner. The first day was a little disappointing in terms of numbers but I think that will go up as we get the word out. The Johnson and Johnson one dose is more convenient, and the side effects have shown minimal," Lindsay said.

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## Kilkenny runs for Port Commissioner



John Kilkenny

John Kilkenny has filed to run for the Port of Morrow Commissioner Position 1.

Kilkenny is a lifetime resident of Morrow County. He graduated from the University of Oregon, where he received a degree in business administration. John and his wife, Diane, farm wheat and cattle on the family's century farm and have farmed in both south county and the northern part of the county for 40 years. John has spent his entire life in Morrow County except for his time at the University of Oregon, and two years working for an agricultural export company at the Port of Pasco after graduation. Diane just recently retired as interim director of public health for Morrow County. They have three grown children, Conor, Rory and Katherine.

John understands the economic importance of the port for all communities of Morrow County. He also understands the role of the Columbia River Enterprise Zone and the impact that it

has had both with encouraging business and financially supporting the citizens of our county. John believes that it is crucial that the Port of Morrow and the county of Morrow have a strong partnership formed through open communication and cooperation. He has relationships with all of the county commissioners and several port commissioners. John is known to be open minded and an independent thinker. He served on the county planning commission for many years and has firsthand knowledge of the different needs and make up of Morrow County both north and south.

Kilkenny strongly supports the diversification of industry that has been taking place at the port. He also believes it is critical for the port to recruit and encourage diverse, small to medium size, locally owned businesses which can support the activities at the port, Main Street and other businesses in the county. John is strong proponent of the county's economic future by investing in programs that provide for a future workforce. The Port of Morrow can help facilitate and partner with all the communities to expand the growing need for housing. It is very important that people not only work at the Port of Morrow but that they be able to live in the county to support our businesses and schools.

John is ready to serve on the port commission, saying he will work to do an informed and equitable job for all of the county.

## New Enterprise Zone holds first organizational meeting

*CREZ III starts planning for future economic growth*

By David Sykes

The new Columbia River Enterprise Zone III (CREZ III) held its first organizational meeting last week, preparing itself to begin negotiating tax agreements and collecting money from new businesses wanting to locate in Morrow County.

The new enterprise zone is the successor to the previous CREZ II which proved itself highly successful over the past 10 years in attracting new businesses, mainly at the Port of Morrow near Boardman. During Zone II's time, it generated millions of dollars in revenue in lieu of taxes, and it will continue to bring in substantial money for the next 15 years. Enterprise zones are an especially important recruitment tool used by the Port to

offer tax breaks and attract new businesses into the area. The tax breaks have also been used by existing businesses for expansion at the Port.

The first order of business at its first organizational meeting March 31 was the election of officers. These are the people who will begin laying plans to guide the new zone through not only future negotiations with new business and industry, but also in how to disburse the anticipated millions of dollars to be generated by the new zone.

As with Zone II, number III has the authority to grant substantial property tax breaks to businesses providing jobs and economic growth. Over the past 10

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