

~ Letters to the Editor ~

The Heppner Gazette Times will print all letters to the Editor with the following criteria met: letters submitted to the newspaper will need to have the name of the sender along with a legible signature. We are also requesting that you provide your address and a phone number where you can be reached. The address and phone number will only be used for verification and will not be printed in the newspaper. Letters may not be libelous. The GT reserves the right to edit. The GT is not responsible for accuracy of statements made in letters. Any letters expressing thanks will be placed in the classifieds under "Card of Thanks" at a cost of \$10. Email to editor@rapidsolve.net or upload to Heppner.net.

Yes for Ione schools

To the editor,
Please join me in voting yes for the Ione School District Bond on May 18, 2021. There is a critical shortage of space and our high school education has changed so much since our existing high school was built. We need appropriate space for individualized learning. Many improvements are needed for the shop, pool, and upgrades for the heating and cooling systems campus wide.

Electrical service, lighting for all existing school buildings, improvements to the kitchen, cafeteria, music program space, along with

new roofs for the elementary school, both gyms, and the principal's house all need to be upgraded. Improved handicap access, improved parking, and sewer system improvements are also needed. A need for meeting rooms, fitness center, and school safety and security improvements are some of the other needed improvements.

We need to build our future now and make sure our community and school continue to excel. Let us do our part now.

Sincerely,
Betty Gray, Ione

Vote for Kilkenny

I am writing this letter in support of John Kilkenny for Port of Morrow commissioner. John understands the importance of operating the POM with openness, honesty and transparency. He would continue to build strong relationships with the county and local communities.

John believes that the Columbia River Enterprise Zone (CREZ) should re-examine the formula for disbursement of funds. The port is a county-wide entity. While south Morrow County has a small population, there are also a great deal of needs and limited ways

to raise funds for these needs. CREZ funds should be shared across the county for the needs of each community.

CREZ funds are substantial. As these funds have increased over the past years, the distribution of CREZ funds to south Morrow County have not.

The port should have commissioners who represent all of the local communities and understand the needs of all county residents. Please vote for John Kilkenny.

Sincerely,
Donna Rietmann

Make a statement with your port commission vote

To the editor:

The upcoming Port of Morrow commission election has three candidates, Jonathan Tallman, John Kilkenny and Rick Weiss, that have all questioned the integrity of some current commissioners regarding conflict of interest. The conflict of interest revolves around port commissioners that oversee and ratify the CREZ board that distributes tax funds "to their businesses and to their budgets." (Tallman 4/28/21) "There is some sense of distrust in what the port is doing... When the commissioners are also business owners, the potential for conflicts of interest are always present." (Weiss, 4/28/21) According to Tallman the current port commissioners lack transparency and use private executive meetings to finance their own special interests. Kilkenny added, "Instead of doing everything in a closed shop they could engage the whole community which could have helped recruit Painted Hills to locate in Morrow County." According to Morrow County Commissioner Jim Doherty the port commission made no effort to work with the county or the local Cattleman's Association to win Painted Hills and the 45 full time jobs.

Is there a lack of transparency, conflict of interest, nondisclosures that benefit port commissioners? The current port has developed a troublesome reputation regarding issues of integrity and if these issues are not corrected immediately there will be more ominous problems for all citizens of Morrow County, especially property owners and their tax rates. John Kilkenny is calling for a special legal counsel at every port meeting including executive session meetings to deal with these problems. This is the quality of leadership John Kilkenny will bring to the port

Number one. Windwave Fiber Optics is owned in part by one Morrow County commissioner, two port board members, and the father of Port CEO Ryan Neal, a board member of CREZ. Windwave Fiber Optics has grown from a startup in 2004 to a \$20

million company because they do all POM optics. According to ORS 279C 335 "A public improvement contract shall be based on competitive bids." In addition, ORS 279C 365 (4) "After the contracting agency opens bids the contracting agency shall make the bids available for public inspection." ORS 279C 300 specifies the contracting agency must use either Competitive Sealed Bidding or the Competitive Sealed Proposal method (R.F.P.) otherwise known as Requests for Proposal. The port needs to produce evidence of honoring ORS law regarding its Windwave Fiber Optics business deals.

Number two. Port contracted businesses receive up to an 85 percent tax reduction which is distributed by CREZ board members. This process is open to conflict of interest, lack of transparency, special interests and cronyism where those that play the game get the money and even men and women of integrity have compromised instead of standing for what is right. A good example is Richard Stokoe, a man highly respected, was enabled to use his CREZ board position to favor Boardman police to the tune of \$200,000 while the rest of Morrow County police received nothing. The result of the CREZ process: Morrow county taxpayers, especially homeowners, pay the lion's share for schools, infrastructure, roads, county police while port businesses get sweetheart deals. For instance, Amazon in Morrow County uses up to a million gallons of water per day per campus (four buildings) at 35 cents per thousand (Boardman

businesses pay 84 cents per thousand) from water paid for with a 20-million-dollar bond financed by the citizens of Boardman. Is there any wonder Amazon intends to double the number of new buildings in Morrow County? They should pay their fair share to help overburdened Morrow County taxpayers. Amazon needs Morrow County water and power. We do not need more Amazons and we desperately need port commissioners to end sweetheart deals that favor personal special financial interests of port commissioners and CREZ board members.

Number three. The POM has done nothing of consequence for the south end, particularly the old Kinzua facility. They made no effort to work with the county, south end business, or cattlemen to win Painted Hills and 45 jobs which the Kinzua property would have been ideal. If there was any kind of priority for the Port to lend assistance to develop the Kinzua property it would have happened by now.

Number four. The POM provides jobs but close to three fourths of the employees live outside of Morrow County and do not contribute to our tax base. The current POM has demonstrated no measurable successful program to develop housing, infrastructure or healthy incentives for port workers to live in Morrow County.

Number five. Make a statement for our heritage, professional integrity and overburdened taxpayers with your vote for Port of Morrow commissioners.

Stuart Dick

For Ione Schools, vote yes

I am voting yes on the Ione School bond because our students and community need better school facilities and now is the right time to make that happen.

The list of reasons why we need better facilities is long, but it's mostly because we have an aging high school building that needs significant repairs, and it still won't really meet our students' needs after it's repaired. The facilities study the school had done says it would cost nearly \$6M dollars just to keep the current high school building functional for a while longer. To me it makes more sense to build a new high school that can meet our students' and community's needs for another 70 years than it does to pour millions of dollars into an old building that will still be inadequate and will probably need to be replaced within the next 10-20 years anyway.

Now is the right time to make it happen for several reasons, but the biggest ones are: 1) long term interest rates are at a historic low; 2) ISD's tax base is at a historic high and will go even higher as wind projects become fully taxed; 3) the state of Oregon will match up to \$4M if we pass a bond now.

That adds up to a yes for me and I hope it does for you too. We have never had a better opportunity to build for the future and we may never again. Please join me in voting yes for the Ione School District bond on May 18.

Sincerely,
Dawn Eynetich, Ione

A View from the Green

Over the Tee Cup

The Willow Creek Country Club hosted 16 ladies on April 27, a sunny and cool day.

Low gross of the field went to Virginia Grant and the low net winner was split between Pat Dougherty and Sharon Harrison. Least putts of the field went to Shirley Martin.

Flight A low gross winner was Karen Thompson. Flight B low gross win-

ner was Tiffany Clement. Karen Haguewood had low net and Judy Harris-Betts had the least putts.

Karen Smith-Griffith took low gross on flight C. Low net went to Betty Carter. Least putts winner was Jeanne Creswick.

Shirley Martin got a chip-in on number nine and Pat Dougherty got the long drive on number six.

Golfers play two man event

There were 22 golfers participating in men's play on Sunday, May 2 at Willow Creek Country Club. The event played was a two-man, 27-hole game.

In special events, Kelly Fox got an eight-foot KP on #7/16, Greg Greenup got KP with 8'6" on #4, Charlie Ferguson got a seven-foot third round KP on #4 and Steve Marlatt got a 29'10" KP on #13.

Taking first place in net was the team of Tim Wright and Tim Hedman with a score of 81. Second was Delbert Binschus and Greg Greenup with 82 and third, with 83, was the team

of Larry Samples and John Edmundson.

Dallas Harsin and Erin Mason took first in gross with 93. Dennis Peck and Dave Pranger were second with 97 and third was John McCabe and Josh Coiner with 102.

There will be no men's play Sunday, May 9 because of Mother's Day.

The weekend of May 15-16 is the two-person Quad Classic. Contact Josh Coiner for entry information. The next regular men's play will be held Sunday, May 23, with Tom Shear and Roger Ehrmantraut hosting.

Death Notices

Doloris M. Barnett - Doloris M. Barnett, 87, of Pendleton, died Sunday, May 2, 2021 at her home. She was born June 8, 1933 at American Falls, ID. At her request no service will be held. Sweeney Mortuary of Heppner is in care of arrangements.

Candidate forums good for communities

To the editor,
I have been watching the candidate forums that are sponsored by our local Chambers of Commerce. First, I would like to thank them for bringing this to

our communities so we can become familiar with the candidates. That being said, I am appalled at the innuendos and lack of facts that have been expressed there. I would encourage you

to vote for Richard Stokoe for Port of Morrow commissioner. He has served as a port commissioner, Boardman Police Chief, and volunteer with the highest ethical standards.

Karen Pettigrew,
Morrow County Citizen

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